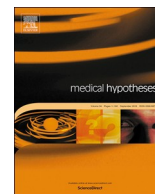




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Lithium for the 2019 novel coronavirus



In December 2019 a novel coronavirus outbreak started in Wuhan, China. The new illness has spread quickly around the world, causing thousand of deaths. Several drugs such as chloroquine or remdesivir are currently undergoing clinical studies to test their efficacy in the treatment of the disease.

Lithium has been reported as a potential antiviral drug for certain viruses, and several of them are members of coronavide family. Hong-Jie reported that lithium inhibited in vitro the entry and replication of the porcine epidemic diarrhoea (PEDV) coronavirus in Vero cells [1]. The expression of viral RNA and protein of PEDV in Vero cells was suppressed in a dose-dependent manner by lithium. Moreover lithium inhibited early and late apoptosis induced by PEDV. Sally M Harrison reported the effectiveness of lithium inhibiting in two model of cell types, the coronavirus bronchitis virus [2], and these findings were referenced by Jing Li et al. [3].

Lithium has been used for decades in the treatment of several mental illness, and today is a cheap, safe, well known, and widely spread drug. I suggest that epidemiological studies should be developed to figure out the incidence of COVID-19 in people treated with this drug, and in the case of favorable results, considerer lithium as a possible treatment for new outbreak.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2020.109822>.

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