



Feb. 22, 2021

EMBARGOED until Monday, Feb. 22 at 5 a.m. EST (10 a.m. UK)

International study finds increased COVID-19 mortality among adults with Down syndrome

Findings support prioritizing vaccines for those with the genetic disorder

Contact: info@t21rs.org

Research by the [Trisomy 21 Research society \(T21RS\)](#) have found increased COVID-19 mortality among adults with Down Syndrome compared to the general population, supporting the need to prioritize vaccination for those with the genetic disorder.

Investigators found that adults with Down syndrome were roughly three times more likely to die from COVID-19 than the general population. This increased risk was especially apparent after the fifth decade of life: A 40-year-old with Down syndrome had a similar risk of dying from COVID-19 as someone 30 years older in the general population. However, as in the general population, the risk of death in younger people and children with Down syndrome was considerably lower than in older adults.

The results of the study were published this week in The Lancet's EClinical Medicine (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2589537021000493>).

“Our results, which are based on more than 1,000 COVID-19 patients with DS, show that individuals with DS often have more severe symptoms at hospitalization and experience high rates of lung complications associated with increased mortality. These results have implications for preventive and clinical management of COVID-19 patients with DS and emphasize the need to prioritize individuals with DS for vaccination” says [Dr Anke Huels](#), of Emory University, first author on this paper.

[Professor André Strydom](#), of King's College London and the president of T21RS, says that this international collaboration involved many members of the society and collected

data from several countries. “The results informed the decision of the CDC in the US to include Down syndrome as a ‘high-risk medical condition,’ which will prioritize them for vaccination. Similar decisions have been made in the United Kingdom and Spain and we hope that other countries will soon follow”.

The T21RS’s clinical committee developed the survey under the leadership of professor [Stephanie Sherman, PhD](#) of Emory University and Professor Alberto Costa of Case Western Reserve University. Other members of the T21RS COVID-19 Initiative leadership team included Mara Dierssen, of the Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology.

To collect data for the study, T21RS COVID-19 Initiative launched an international survey of clinicians and caregivers of individuals with Down syndrome infected with COVID-19 between April and October, 2020. Survey respondents were mainly from Europe, the United States, Latin America and India. (The survey was available in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, German, Bengali, Hindi and Mandarin).

The study was funded by Down Syndrome Affiliates in Action, Down Syndrome Medical Interest Group-USA, GiGi’s Playhouse, Jerome Lejeune Foundation, LuMi and IDSC Foundation, The Matthew Foundation, National Down Syndrome Society, National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices, and also supported by stakeholder representatives from Global Down Syndrome Foundation (USA), DSA (UK), DSMIG (UK), DSMIG (USA), DSRF-UK, DSi, DSE international, Trisomie21-France, Down España, National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC), Down Madrid, Fundació Catalana Síndrome de Down (Spain), EDSA, Royal College of Psychiatrists, CoorDown (Italy), Associazione Italiana Persone Down (AIPD; Italy), AFRT (France), Fundación Iberoamericana Down 21 (Spain), FIADOWN (Latin America), Federação Brasileira das Associações de Síndrome de Down (Brazil) and the European Down Syndrome Association.

The study included data from a large hospital survey in the UK (ISARIC-4C). Survey data was collected between April-Oct. 2020.