



Antiviral Drug Umifenovir

Why in News

The **Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow**, a constituent lab of the [Council of Scientific and Industrial Research \(CSIR\)](#), has received permission for carrying out **Phase III trials** for the use of **Umifenovir** against [Covid-19](#).

- These trials will be **randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled** that will test the [efficacy, safety and tolerability of the drug](#).

Key Points

- **Safe:** Umifenovir has already been used for the treatment of influenza in China and Russia and therefore is safe. It recently came into prominence due to its potential use for Covid-19 patients. The clinical trial is to evaluate its efficacy in Indian patients.
- **Strengthens Immune System:** It acts by preventing entry of the virus into human cells and also by priming the immune system.
- **Indigenously Developed:** All the raw materials for the drug are indigenously available and if the clinical trial is successful, Umifenovir can be a safe, efficacious, affordable drug against Covid-19.
- **Potential Prophylactic Use:** It has the potential for prophylactic use. A prophylactic is a medication or a treatment designed and used to prevent a disease from occurring.
- **CSIR's Efforts Against Covid-19:**
 - The CSIR is evaluating Mycobacterium W (Mw) for faster recovery of hospitalised Covid-19 infected patients.
 - The clinical trial of the [Favipiravir drug](#) has also been allowed by the [Drug Controller General of India](#) (DCGI).

Randomised, Double-blind, Placebo-controlled Trials

- **Randomized trials** mean that subjects are randomly assigned to placebo and intervention groups. Placebo is anything which looks like real treatment but it is actually not. **For example-** sugar pills and saline injections.
- **Double-blind** means that neither the patients nor the researchers know who is getting a placebo and who is getting the treatment. This ensures that the result of trials are not affected by the biases of researchers and patients.
- **Placebo-controlled** refers to a control group receiving a placebo. This sets it apart from studies that simply give participants treatment and record the results.
 - Here, a control group is given a placebo while another group is given the drug (or other treatment) being studied. That way, researchers can compare the drug's effectiveness against the placebo's effectiveness.

[Source: TH](#)

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