COVID-19 IMMUNITY TASK FORCE

Research Roundup

Your weekly review on COVID-related research

International Research Review

Interim analysis suggests the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is not effective against the South African variant

A randomized control trial in South Africa, the results of which have been published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, has found that the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, although safe, is not effective against the B.1.351 variant, also known as the South African variant.

Read Summary

A year in review: Immunological insights into the COVID-19 pandemic

With over 121 million cases and 2.6 million deaths world-wide, the COVID-19 pandemic has irrevocably changed life as we know it. However, it has also demonstrated the extraordinary benefits of having the global scientific community unite and work collectively to meet such challenges. A new review published this week in *Nature Reviews Immunology* highlights some of the key immunological discoveries over the past 12 months.

Read Summary

Spotlight on CITF-funded Research

Why do some people experience mild COVID-19 symptoms and others have severe illness? Pre-existing antibodies could explain the range of COVID-19 illness

CITF-funded researcher Dr. Pascal Lavoie, from the University of British Columbia, and his collaborators are suggesting that the presence of antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 may not necessarily indicate a previous infection. Using highly sensitive tests, they discovered pre-existing antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 in many uninfected adults.

Read More

A new testing strategy for the prompt detection of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern

It has become increasingly important to adapt testing capacities to detect variants of concern. In a recent article, CITF-funded researcher Dr. Marc Romney and his team at the University of British Columbia proposed a new testing strategy that can rapidly detect circulating variants, and which enabled them to uncover a large swath of cases of a variant previously undocumented in BC. What's more, this new method is quicker and cheaper than the current standard, does not require specimens carrying high viral loads, and can be scaled-up to test all SARS-CoV-2 positive samples.

Read More

A novel mechanism leading to blood clot formation found in severely ill COVID-19 patients

In this publication partially funded by the CITF, Dr. Ishac Nazy and the McMaster Platelet Immunology Laboratory have found some of the reasons behind why some patients with severe COVID-19 have blood clots. The team found that blood from critically ill COVID-19 patients contains molecules that can activate cells involved in blood clotting.

Read More

How well does vaccination work in residents of long-term care homes? Researchers aim to find out.

Long-term care homes have been at the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada, with 70 percent of COVID-19 deaths having occurred in long-term care or nursing homes. The CITF is supporting a study led by McMaster University researchers aimed at understanding how well vaccination works in residents of long-term care homes and which factors may be directly linked to outbreaks.

Read More

Researchers investigate COVID-19 among high-risk food workers in Quebec and Ontario

Throughout this pandemic, thousands of Canadians have had to continue working to provide essential services, such as in food production and packing plants, as well as in grocery stores, restaurants, and bars. At times, this has meant working in close proximity to colleagues and customers. The CITF is supporting two studies looking at the impact of various aspects of COVID-19 on food industry workers in Quebec and Ontario.

Read More

Share your Research

Have a publication we should review or know about? Please share with us at **research@covid19immunitytaskforce.ca**