Gilead drug for coronavirus - Patients are responding well

COVID-19 patients at the Chicago hospital are being treated with a Gilead drug, remdesivir, in a clinical trial. There are recoveries in fever and respiratory symptom, with nearly all patients discharged in less than a week.

# Gilead drug trial

Remdesivir was one of the first medicines identified as having the potential to impact COVID-19.

Everyone has been waiting for results from the Gilead drug trials.

Namely, if safe and effective, it could become the first approved treatment against the disease.

125 people with COVID-19 have been recruited into Gilead’s clinical trials. 113 of them had severe disease. All the patients have been treated with daily infusions of remdesivir.

Kathleen Mullane, the University of Chicago infectious disease specialist said that the most of the patients have already been discharged.

She is hesitant about drawing too many conclusions. It is hard since the trial does not include a placebo group comparison.

Additionally, fever is now not the requirement for people to go on trial. When patients come, the fever reduces quickly, and people come off ventilators a day after starting therapy.

Most patients are severe and most of them are leaving at six days.

The data is described as ‘’encouraging’’. If many of the 113 patients were at high-risk and were discharged, it is another positive signal that the Gilead drug has efficiency.

# Available data

The trial is investigating 5- and 10-day treatment courses of remdesivir. The primary goal is a statistical comparison of patient improvement between the two treatment arms.

Improvement is measured using a seven-point numerical scale that encompasses death (at worst) and discharge (best outcome), with various degrees of supplemental oxygen and intubation in between.

However, the lack of a control arm in the study could make interpreting the results more challenging.

A lack of data has led to shaky expectations for the drug. Two studies suspended the enrollment partway through because there were not enough patients available.

Moreover, a recent report of patients given the drug under a special program to make it available to those who are very ill generated both excitement and skepticism.

All the data are anecdotal until the full trial reads out, meaning that they should not be used to draw final conclusions.

To sum up, the whole world is eagerly waiting to see the final results of the trial and if a cure for COVID-19 has been found.