



COVID-19 International Research Team

COVID-19 International Research Team Charter (COV-IRT)

Purpose

The purpose of the COVID-19 International Research Team is to rapidly improve our understanding of SARS-CoV-2 and develop a vaccine and/or therapeutics against SARS-CoV-2. We have formed a multidisciplinary team of researchers and will use a large consortium open science model to combine data, expertise, and labor to accelerate the process of finding a vaccine and/or therapeutics.

Goals

1. Enhance public datasets to reveal host infection dynamics for SARS-CoV-2 to improve medical treatment options for COVID-19 patients.
2. Determine and design optimal targets for therapeutics against SARS-CoV-2.
3. Create new drug delivery systems based on targets.
4. Test newly developed therapeutics in both in vitro and in vivo SARS-CoV-2 models.
5. Apply for human clinical trials.
6. Establish a multi-institutional collaborative team for rapid response for current and future pandemics.
7. Provide new tools and resources for the community.

Organization

COV-IRT was established by Drs. Afshin Beheshti and Todd Treangen. Dr. Beheshti is the current lead of COV-IRT. Members include researchers and scientific experts from across the world, directors from both academic institutions and hospitals, senior and junior faculty, CEOs from industry/biotech companies, postdocs and graduate students. Fluid and self-organizing subgroups exist between contributors as focus groups. These groups do not require, but often have Chairs who help the group come to decisions and self-organize around specific goals. Administrators help the larger group and the subgroups coordinate meetings and maintain data sharing, social media, and other digital platforms.

Criteria and Approval for Membership

New members are most often referred by existing members of COV-IRT, however people that offer special expertise and or have the potential to bring significant contributions may also apply. New members are assessed by Drs. Afshin Beheshti and Todd Treangen, and membership is approved based on an individual's scientific merits and their potential contributions to the group. Minimum criteria for membership may include any of the following: assisting in analysis of multi-omics data, donating samples, sharing relevant data, assisting with vaccine/drug development, testing and evaluating therapeutics against COVID-19, and potential for clinical trial assistance. An individual's expertise should benefit the group and help the group advance COVID-19 research. An investigator that would like to take part should provide a description of their relevant expertise, and must sign a statement of acknowledgement of the Expectations for Participation in COV-IRT.

Expectations for Participation in COV-IRT

Scientific excellence and respect

The COVID-19 International Research Team aspires to scientific excellence. Participation is strictly on a volunteer basis, and all members must remain in accordance with IRB and IACUC guidelines. COV-IRT expects the utmost professionalism and respectfulness from all its members, and this is a requirement of membership. In addition, all participants will refrain from political comments and debates and will focus purely on scientific discussions and analysis.

Data sharing

COV-IRT was founded on a principle of open science, transparency, and collaboration. While no member is required to share data, all members are expected to make meaningful contributions. Data, samples, and findings are expected to be shared within reason, and in accordance with IRB and IACUC guidelines. It is understood that in some cases researchers may need to wait to publish their data before sharing it. Once published, all data will be shared openly on current scientific data sharing platforms (i.e. GEO, GeneLab, etc.).

All for one and one for all

All promotional materials and derivative works, including logos, websites, and designs developed by COV-IRT will assume equal ownership across all members and can only be used in not-for-profit settings.

Meaningful contribution and engagement

As stated above, all members are expected to continuously make significant contributions to the group. Members are also expected to stay engaged in the group in the following ways: attending weekly meetings, during which COV-IRT will introduce new members, discuss new findings brought forward, and address any pressing issues or business. Members are expected to attend virtual subgroup meetings as appropriate.

Leads and Co-Leads within COV-IRT are expected to be adaptable and take feedback, continuously addressing the needs and best interests of the group as they change over time. In addition, they are expected to provide infrastructure necessary to the success of the group. This can include administrative staff, as well as digital platforms that allow for efficient communication and collaboration. The same is expected of subgroup Chairs, albeit on a smaller scale.

Guidelines for Publications

When analysis from COV-IRT members results in publications, the following criteria should be followed:

- All members who contribute to the work will be listed as an author on the publication.
- It is expected that each publication will contain both multiple co-first authors and co-senior authors.
- First authorship for manuscripts will be shared with multiple members of the group who have contributed equally to the work. This will include equal contributions to the analysis and writing the manuscript.
- Senior authorship for manuscripts will be shared with multiple members of the group who have contributed equally to the work. This will include equal contributions to organizing and managing the progress of the work, writing and editing the manuscript, and overall leadership for the work.

Press Releases

If any member of COV-IRT is part of a press release that will include other members of the group, the following guidelines should be followed:

- All members will send the final version of the press release through the appropriate channels at each member's institution.

Benefits of Participation in COV-IRT

Members will have access to the expertise and energy of a growing team of scientists from all over the world and from almost every discipline in biology and health science. In addition, they may gain access to funding and funding opportunities. Members will be part of a team whose research will save lives and alleviate the burden COVID-19 crisis felt around the world. Finally, COV-IRT aims to change the way advanced scientific research occurs, and members will be part of this revolutionary new model of collaboration.