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COVID-19: The EasyCov Saliva-Based Screening Test Confirms its Effectiveness in Real Situations

Scientists from the Sys2diag laboratory (CNRS/Alcen) and doctors from Montpellier University Hospital (CHU) presented their initial results today from a clinical trial for the EasyCov SARS-CoV-2 screening test. In addition to improvements that provide results more quickly—40 minutes instead of 60—the saliva-based test has shown good performance in real situations. These initial results were obtained using a sample group of 220 subjects recruited from the hospital's (drive-through) screening centre.

A clinical trial for the EasyCov test, which detects the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in saliva, has yielded its initial results after gathering data from 220 subjects recruited from Montpellier University Hospital (CHU) beginning on 16 September. This test was thus conducted in real conditions, with a combination of non-infected subjects, as well as both symptomatic and asymptomatic ones. Nasal swab and saliva samples were simultaneously taken from the subjects, and were then double-blind tested using two RT-PCR methods (nasal swab and saliva sample) and the EasyCov test (saliva).

The EasyCov SARS-Cov-2 screening test demonstrated its performance by detecting 35 positive cases in the cohort among the 40—both symptomatic and asymptomatic—identified using RT-PCR, which is to say 87.5% of the positive patients identified by RT-PCR. In addition, it has very few false positives (99.4% specificity).

The saliva-based SARS-Cov-2 screening test developed by the Sys2diag laboratory (CNRS/Alcen) is simpler and quicker than an RT-PCR test conducted using nasal swab samples, and could thus be used to complement existing screening measures. The RT-LAMP technique on which EasyCov is based can amplify viral RNA, and then reveal whether it is present in a saliva sample. The 60 minutes initially required for heating before the results can be read were reduced to 40 minutes, with no loss of performance.

In all 720 individuals should be included by the end of the study. The complete research will soon be submitted to a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

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