



WARWICK

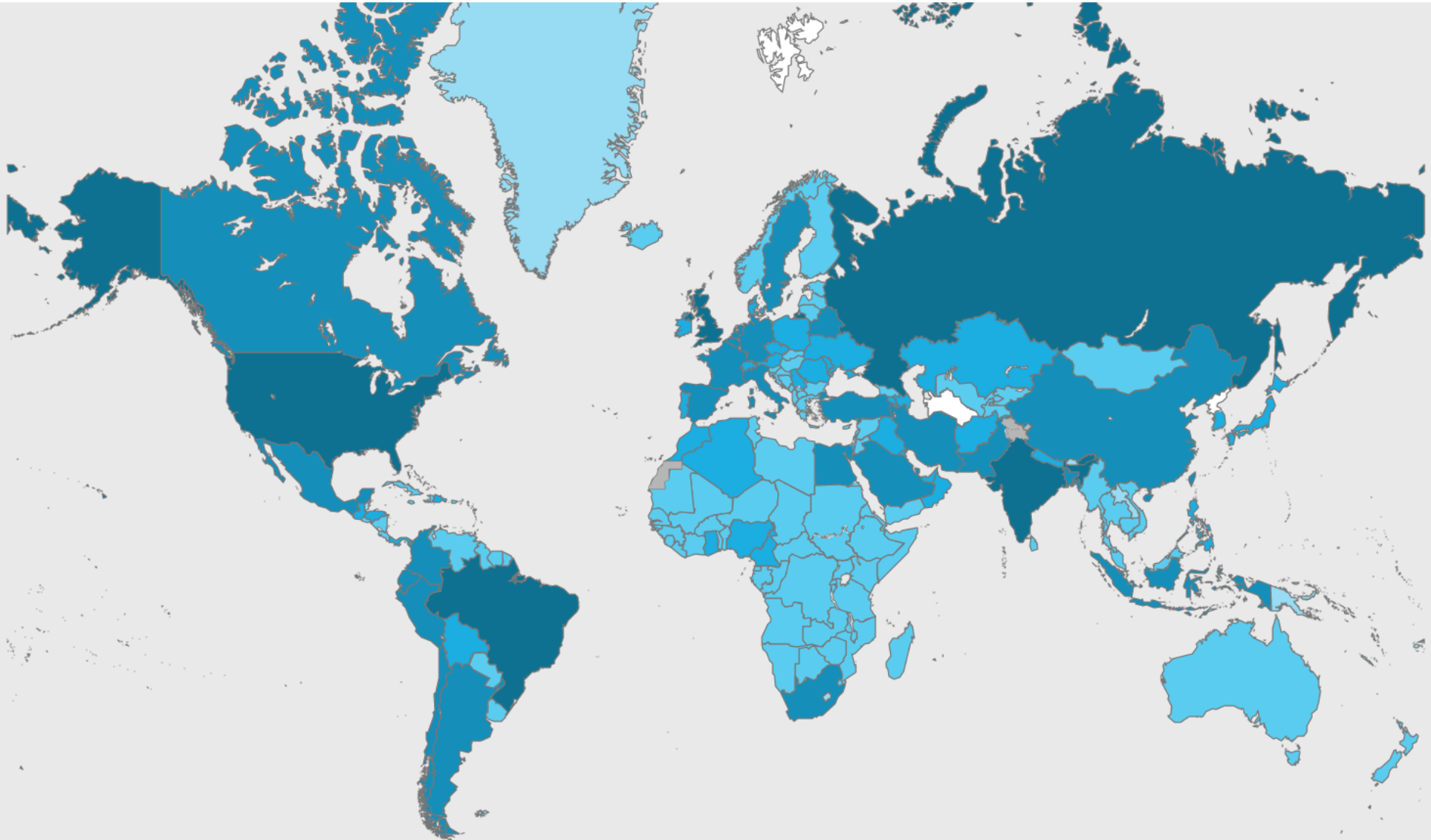
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: WARP SPEED SCIENCE TO FIND A CURE

Lawrence S. Young

2nd July 2020 Webinar.

WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard

Data last updated: 2020/7/2, 8:05am CEST

[Overview](#)[Explorer](#)

Globally, as of 8:05am CEST, 2 July 2020, there have been **10,458,422 confirmed cases** of COVID-19, including **511,082 deaths**, reported to WHO.

COVID-19 Topics to Cover

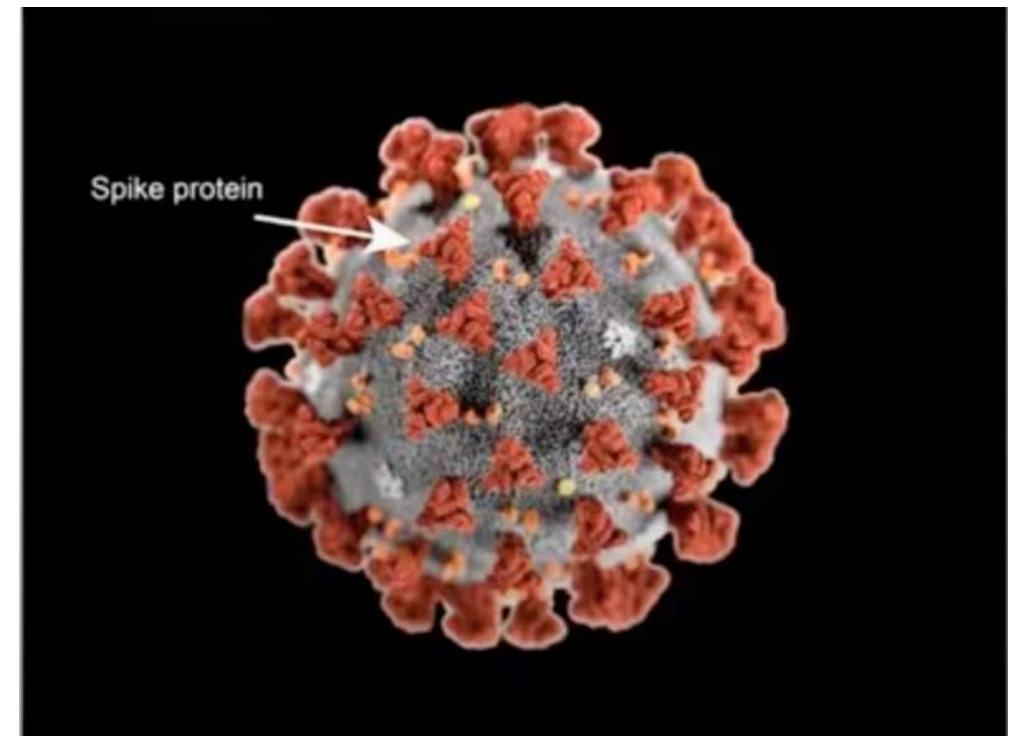
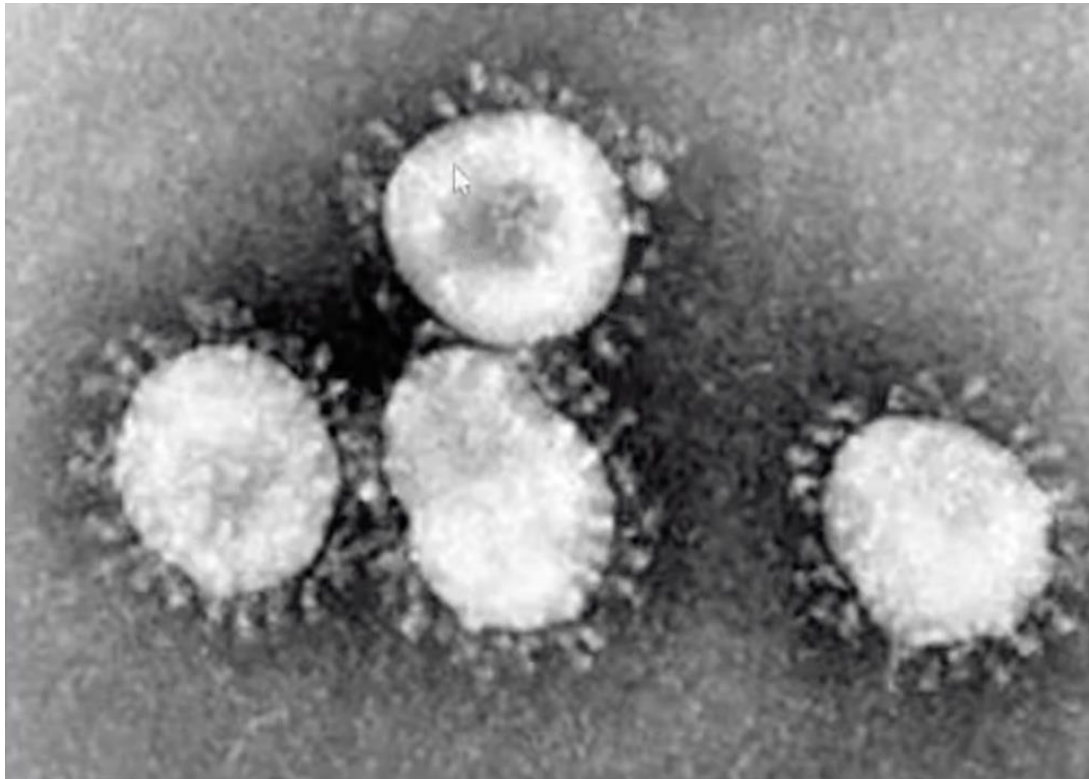
- SARS-CoV-2 infection, replication, evolution and variation.
- Pathogenesis of COVID-19, immune responses and the cytokine storm.
- Repurposed drugs for COVID-19 therapy.
- Towards effective vaccines: what might work and why?

Coronaviridae

Coronaviruses (subfamily orthocoronavirinae)

Positive single-stranded RNA virus

Described in 1968 by June Almeida and David Tyrell



Timelines of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak



Dec 8th

First case of mysterious pneumonia associated with Wuhan wet market

Jan 1st

Wet market closed

Jan 8th

First official announcement by Chinese state

Jan 11th

First death announced in China. Genome sequence

Jan 20th

China reports cases outside Hubei province – Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen.

Jan 23rd

Sequence said to be identical to that of bat coronavirus and similar to pangolin

Jan 27th

Evidence that 2019-nCoronavirus was present in samples from Wuhan wet market

Jan 30th

WHO declare a global emergency

Jan 31st

First two cases in UK.

Feb 9th

Death toll in China is 811 with 37,198 infections

Feb 11th

WHO calls disease COVID-19 and virus SARS-CoV-2

Feb 23rd

Italy confirms 3 deaths from COVID-19

Feb 26th

Cases confirmed across Europe, Brazil, Middle East, Pakistan.

Feb 29th

23 cases in UK and US reports first death.

March 8th

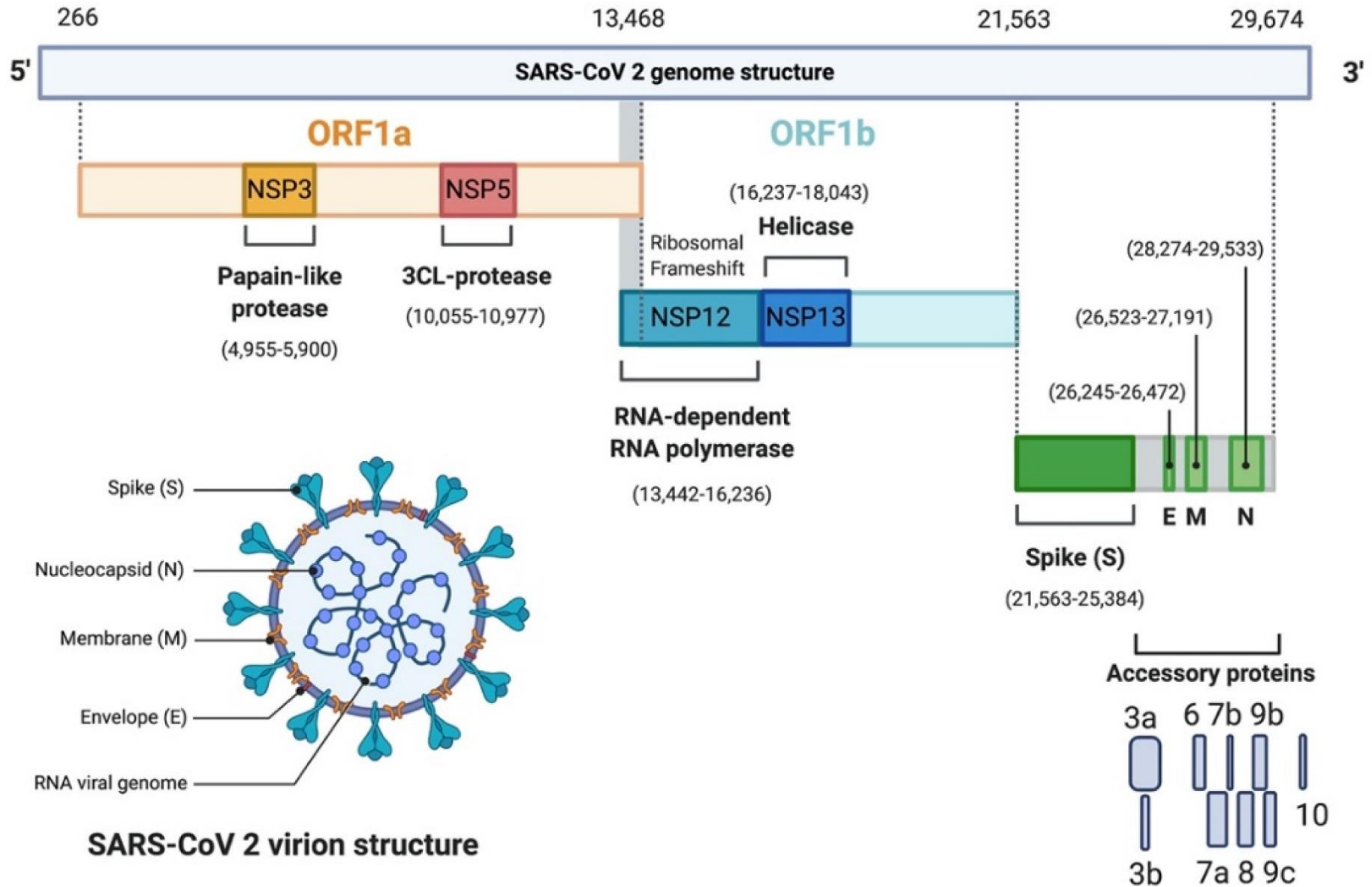
US reports more than 500 cases and state of emergency in 8 states.

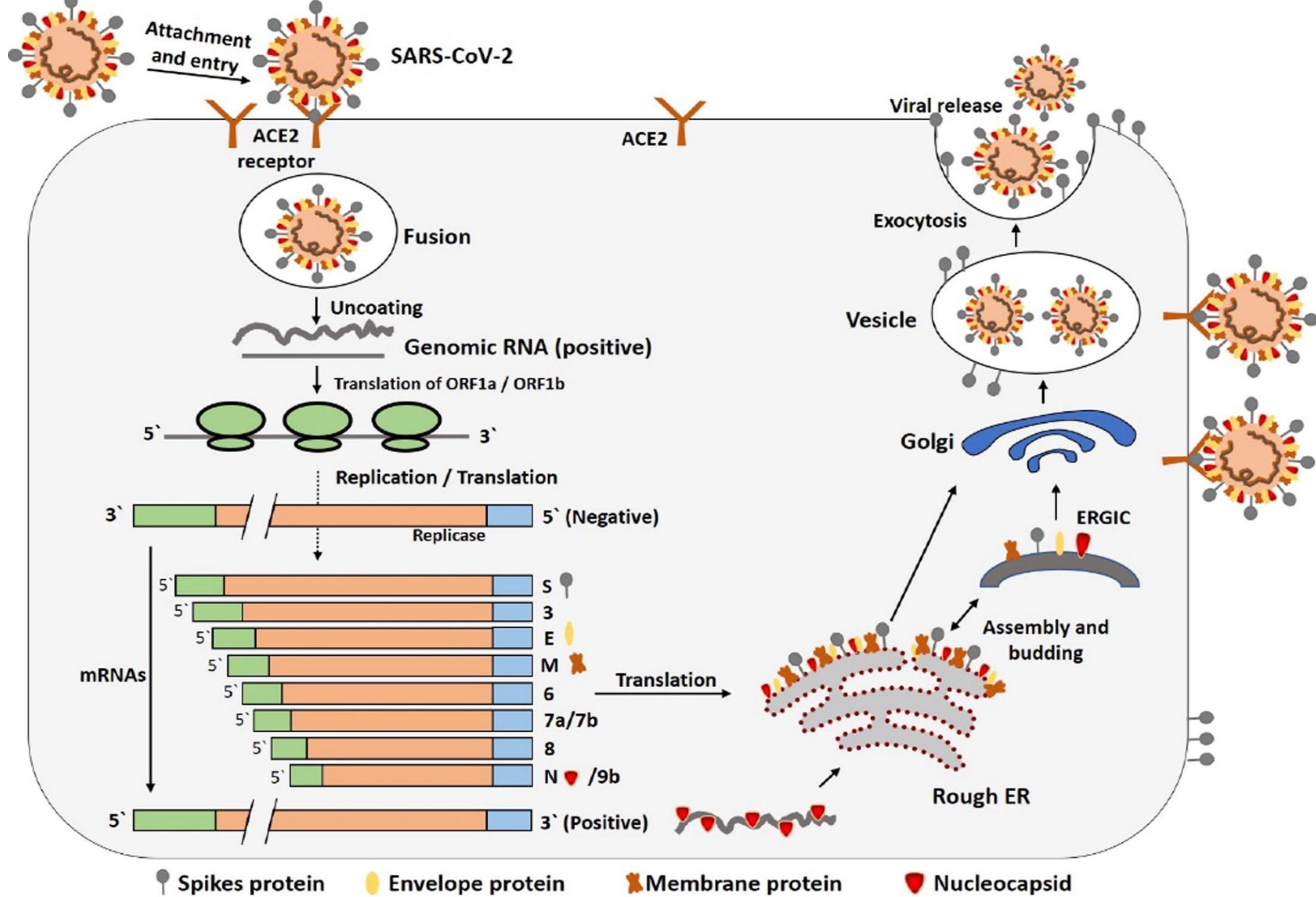
March 11th

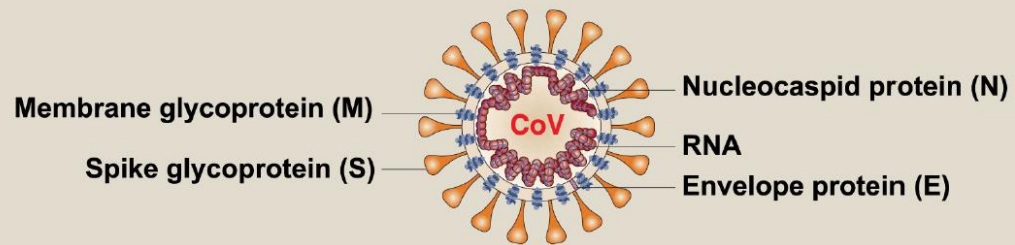
WHO declares the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic

March 23rd

UK PM announces lockdown, around 422 deaths in UK.







Realm: Riboviria

Order: Nidovirales

Suborder: Cornidovirineae

Family: Coronaviridae

Subfamily: Orthocoronavirinae

Genus: Alphacoronavirus

Betacoronavirus

Gammacoronavirus

Deltacoronavirus

Lineage A: HCoV-229E

Lineage A: HCoV-NL63

Lineage A: HCoV-OC43

Lineage A: HCoV-HKU1

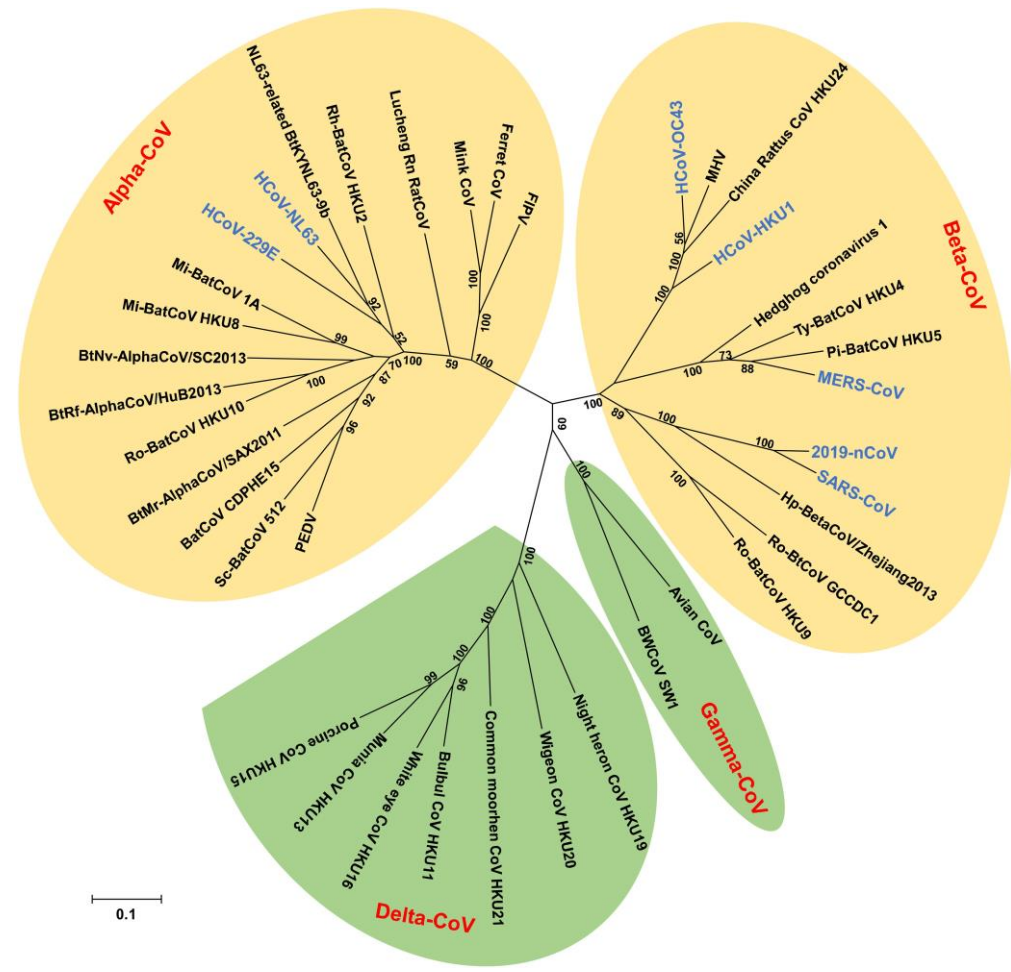
Lineage B: SARS-CoV

Lineage B: SARS-CoV-2

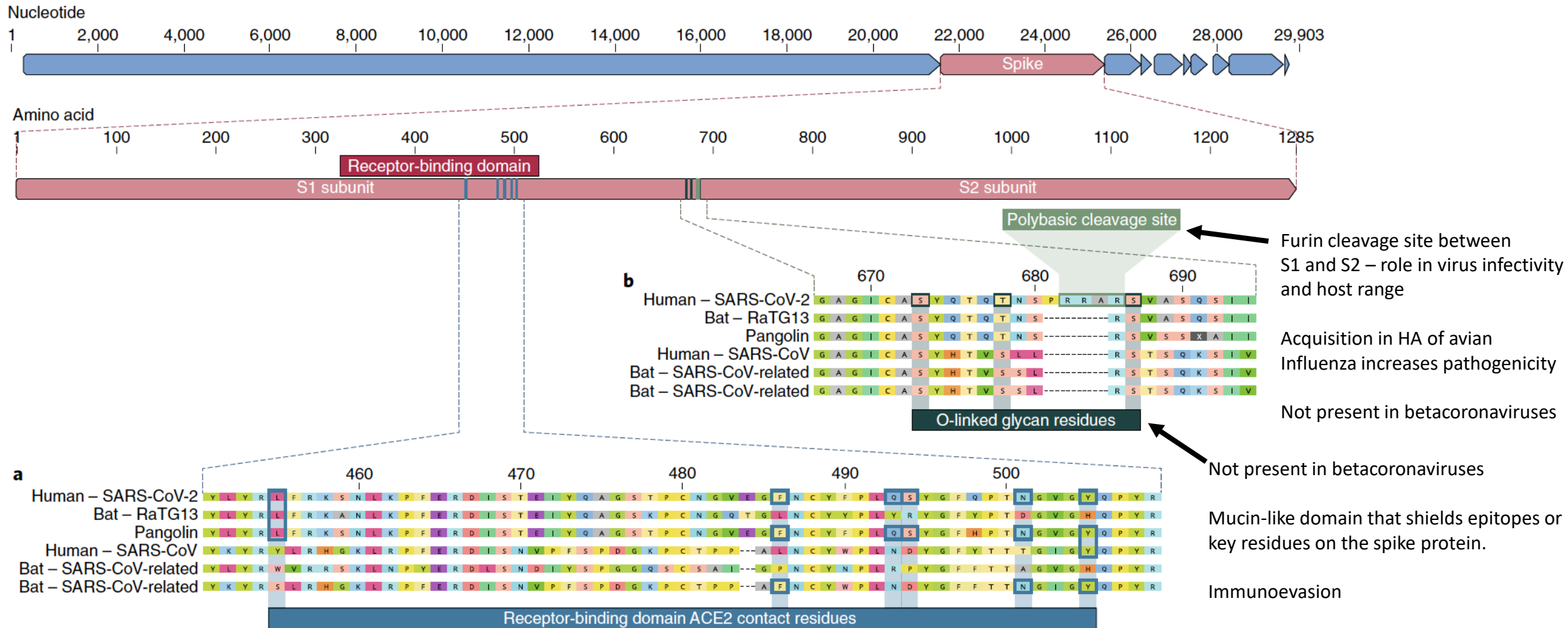
Lineage C: MERS-CoV

Avian coronavirus

BuCoV-HKU11



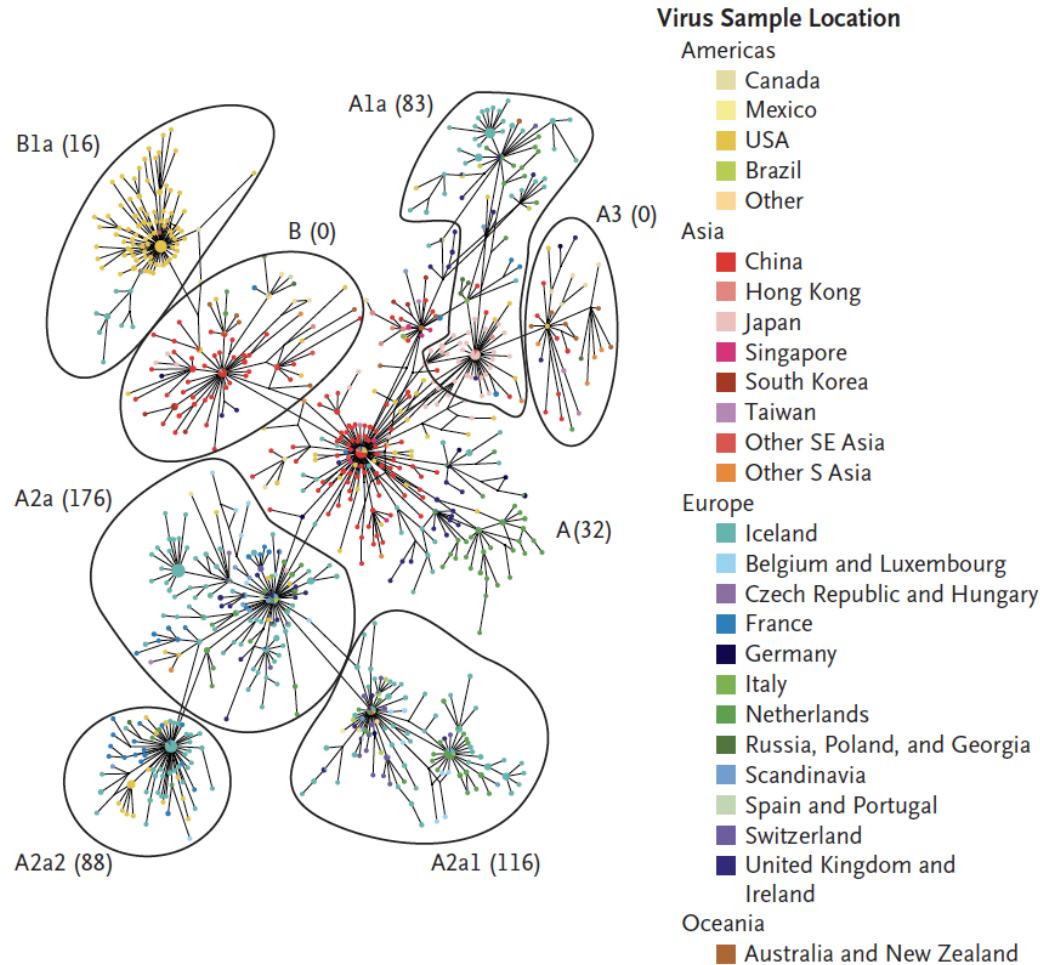
Evolution of SARS-CoV-2



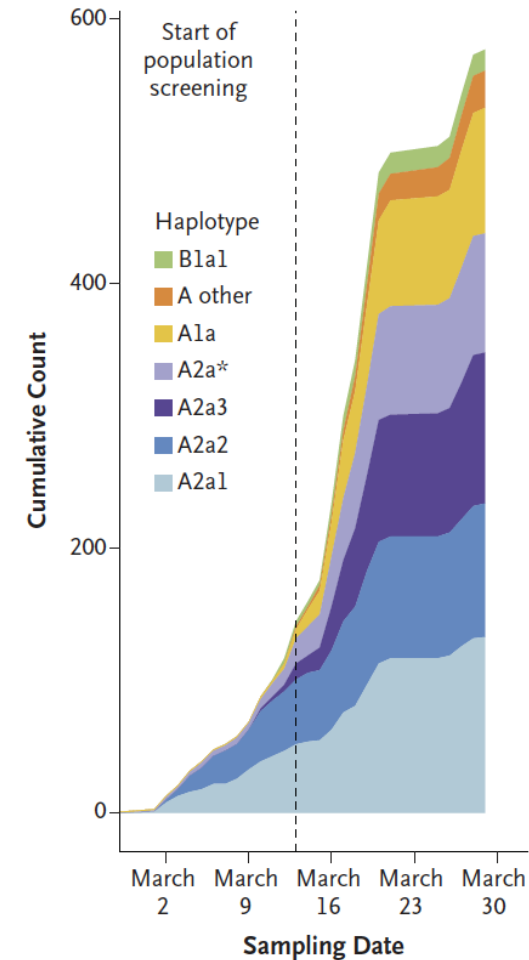
Natural selection in: (i) an animal host before zoonotic transfer or (ii) in humans following zoonotic transfer

Virus genome sequencing identifies geographically segregated haplotypes

B Median-Joining Network of Haplotypes

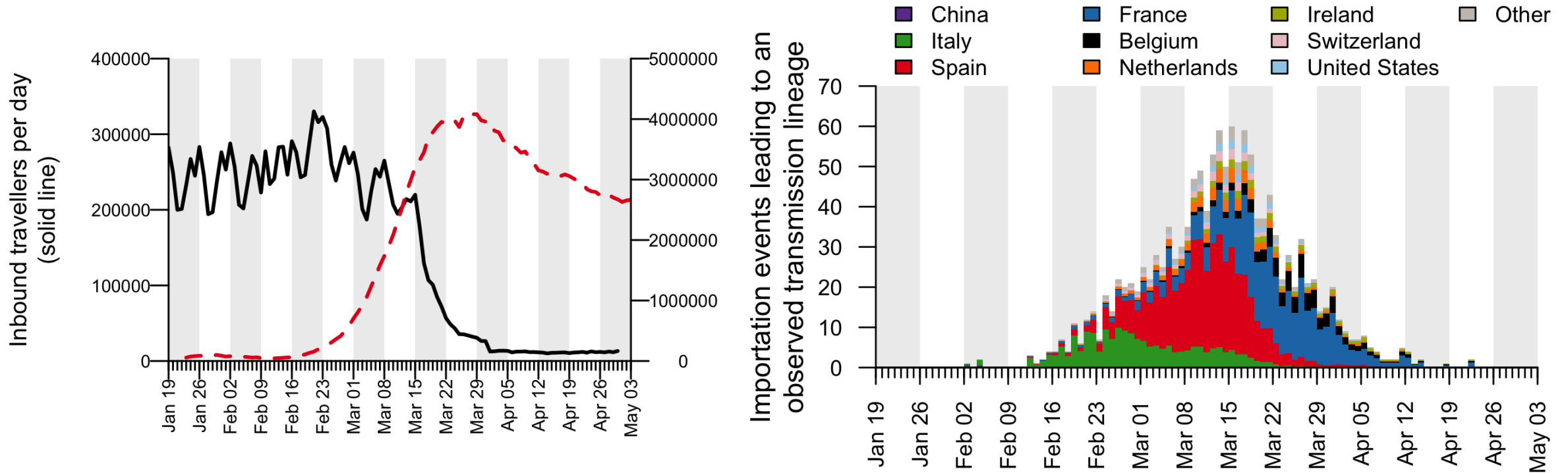


C Cumulative Counts of SARS-CoV-2 Haplotypes



$1 \times 10^{-3} / \text{site/year} = 1 \text{ mutation every } 1\text{-}10 \text{ transmissions}$

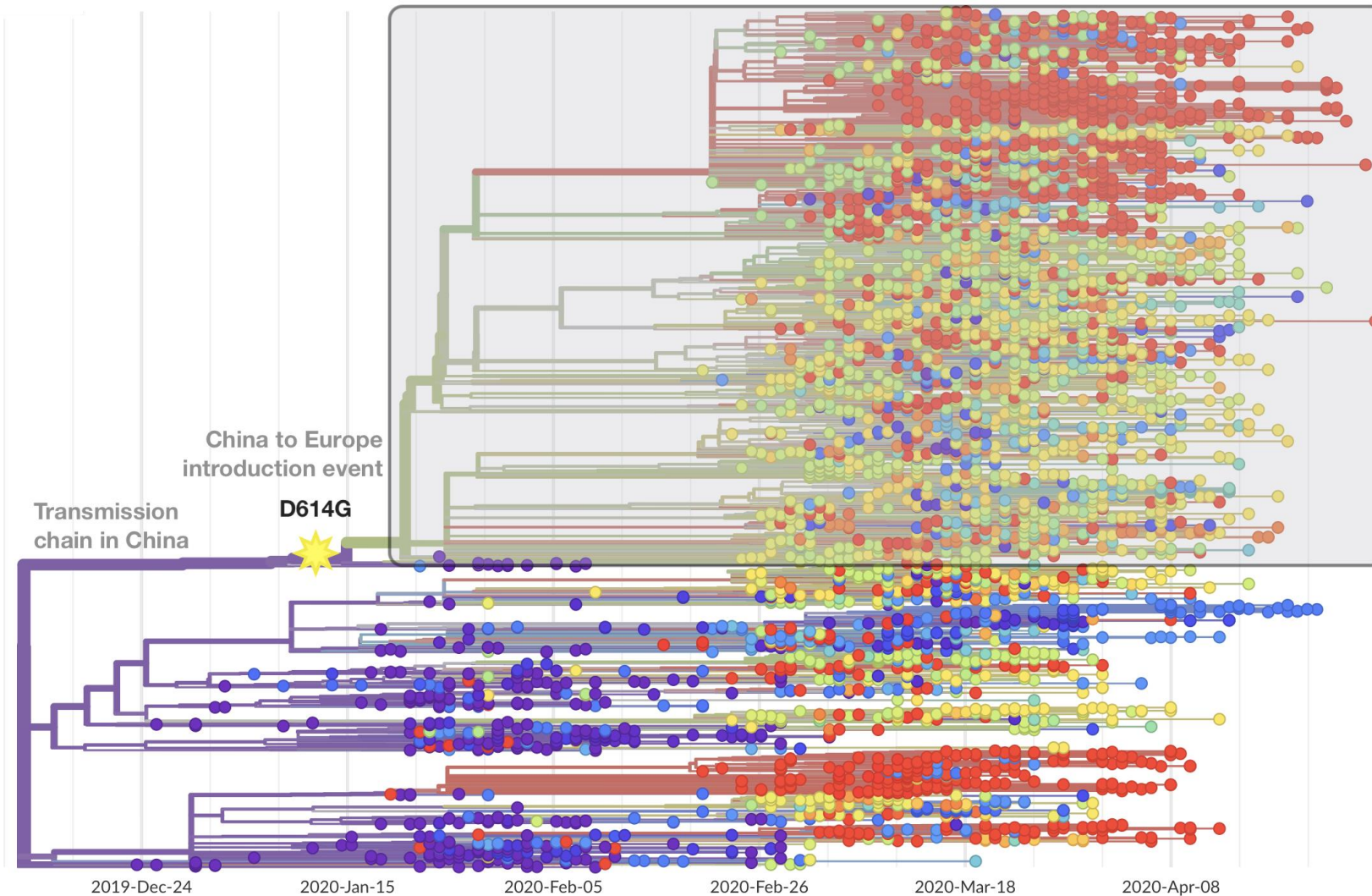
SARS-CoV-2 importation and establishment of UK transmission lineages



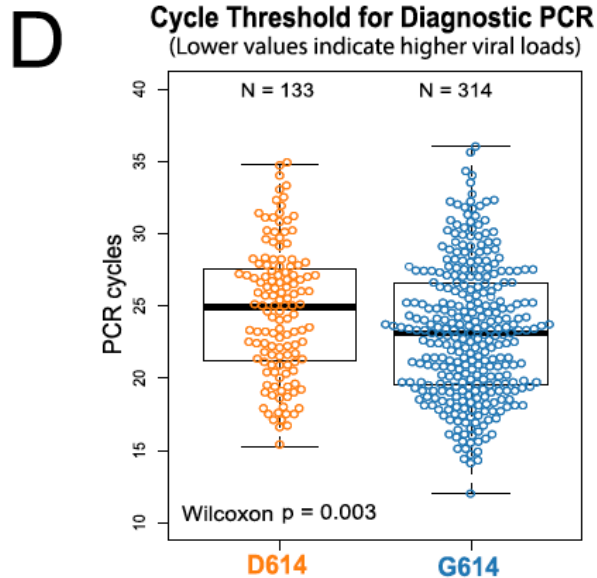
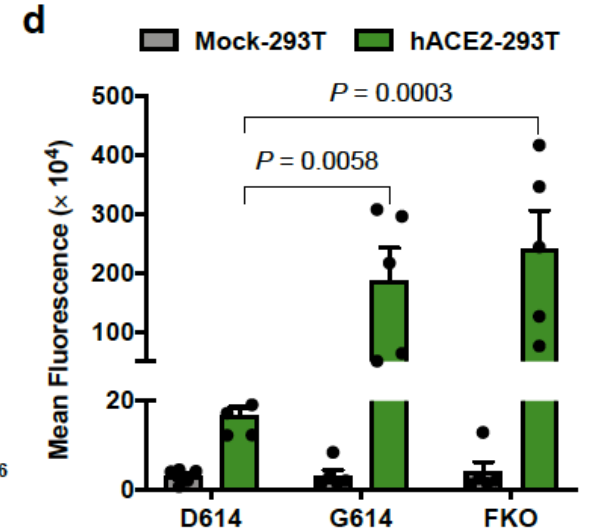
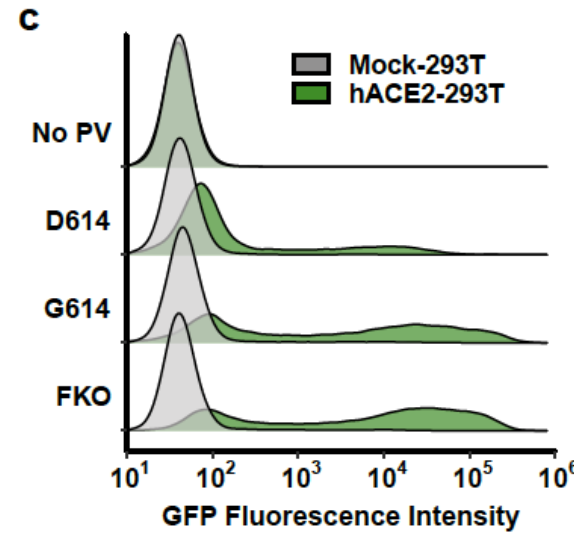
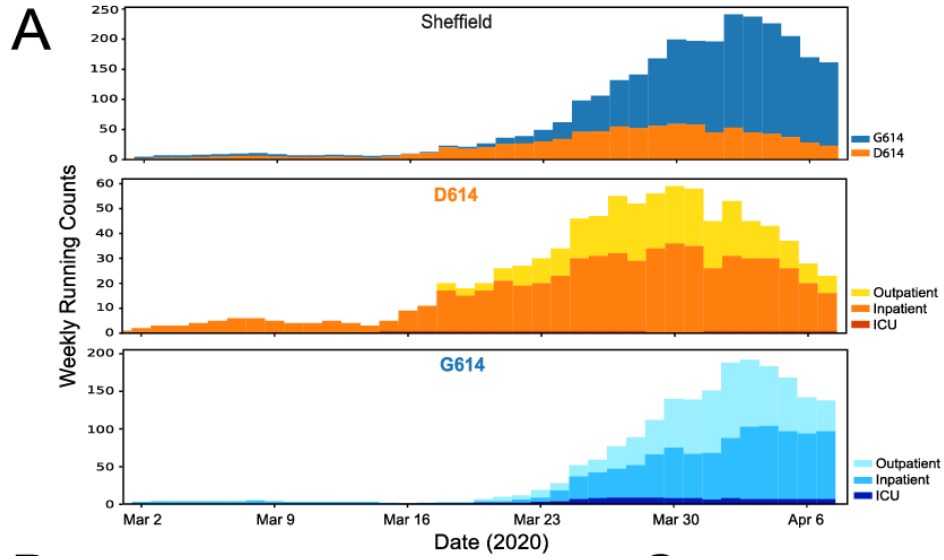
Over 1000 separate introductions into the UK from Europe

Pybus et al, 2020

G614 is a founder mutation for European viruses

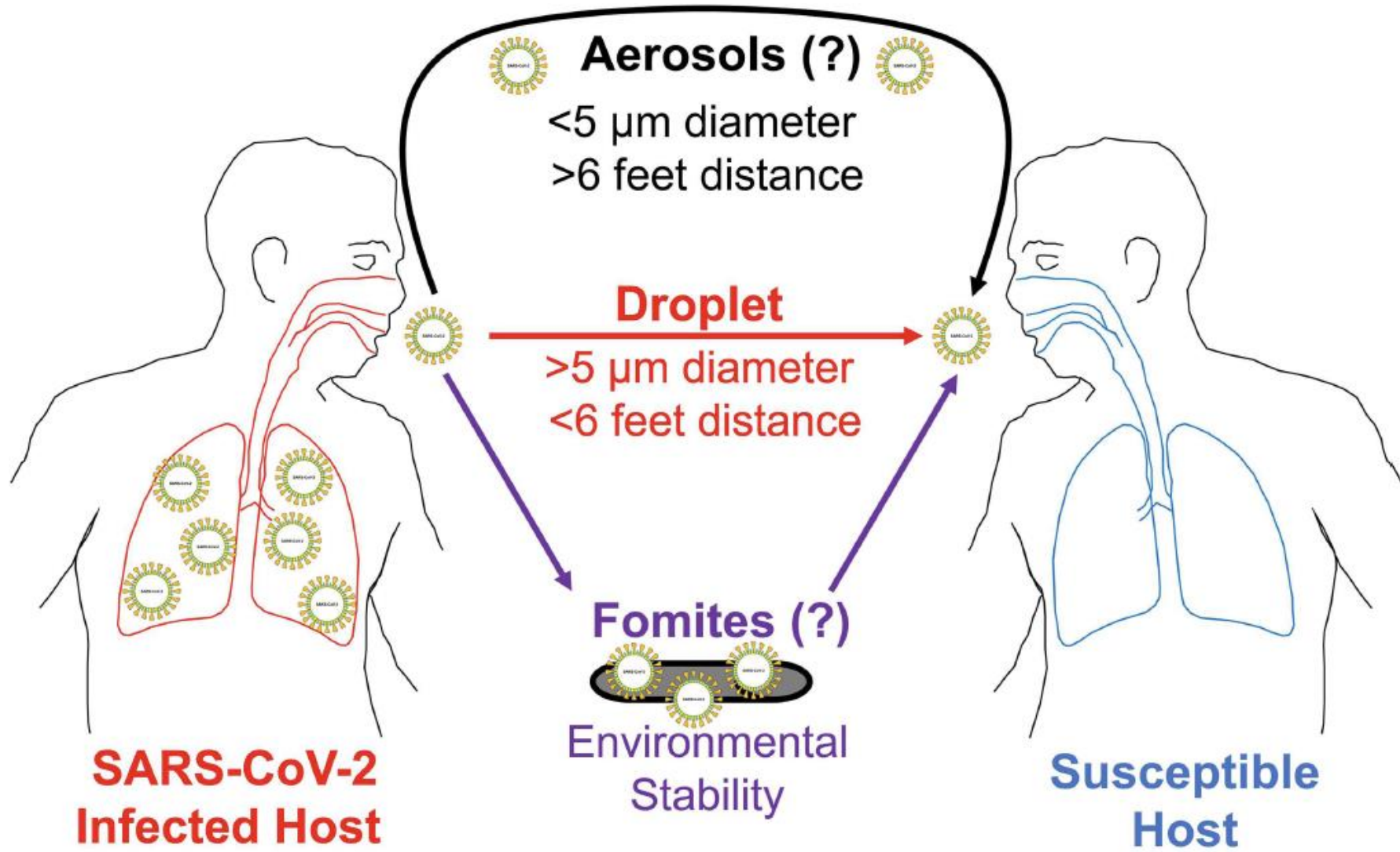


D614 and G614 spike strains have the same pathogenicity but G614 has higher transmissibility



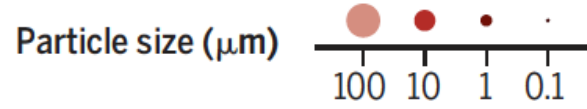
G614 is more stable than D614 – consistent with epidemiological data suggesting that viruses with G614 transmit more efficiently.

Zhang et al., 2020. Preprint



Masks reduce airborne transmission

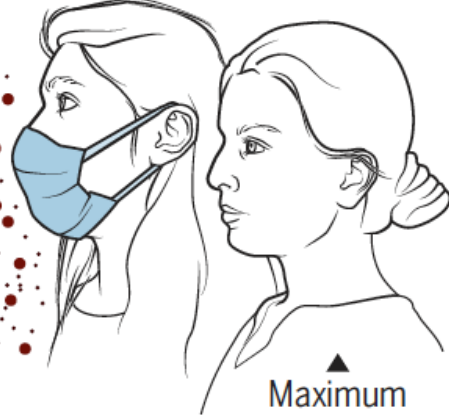
Infectious aerosol particles can be released during breathing and speaking by asymptomatic infected individuals. No masking maximizes exposure, whereas universal masking results in the least exposure.



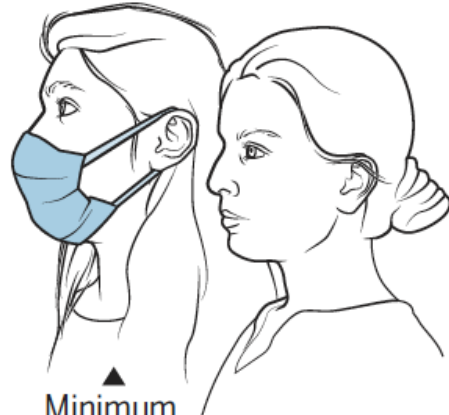
Infected, asymptomatic



Healthy

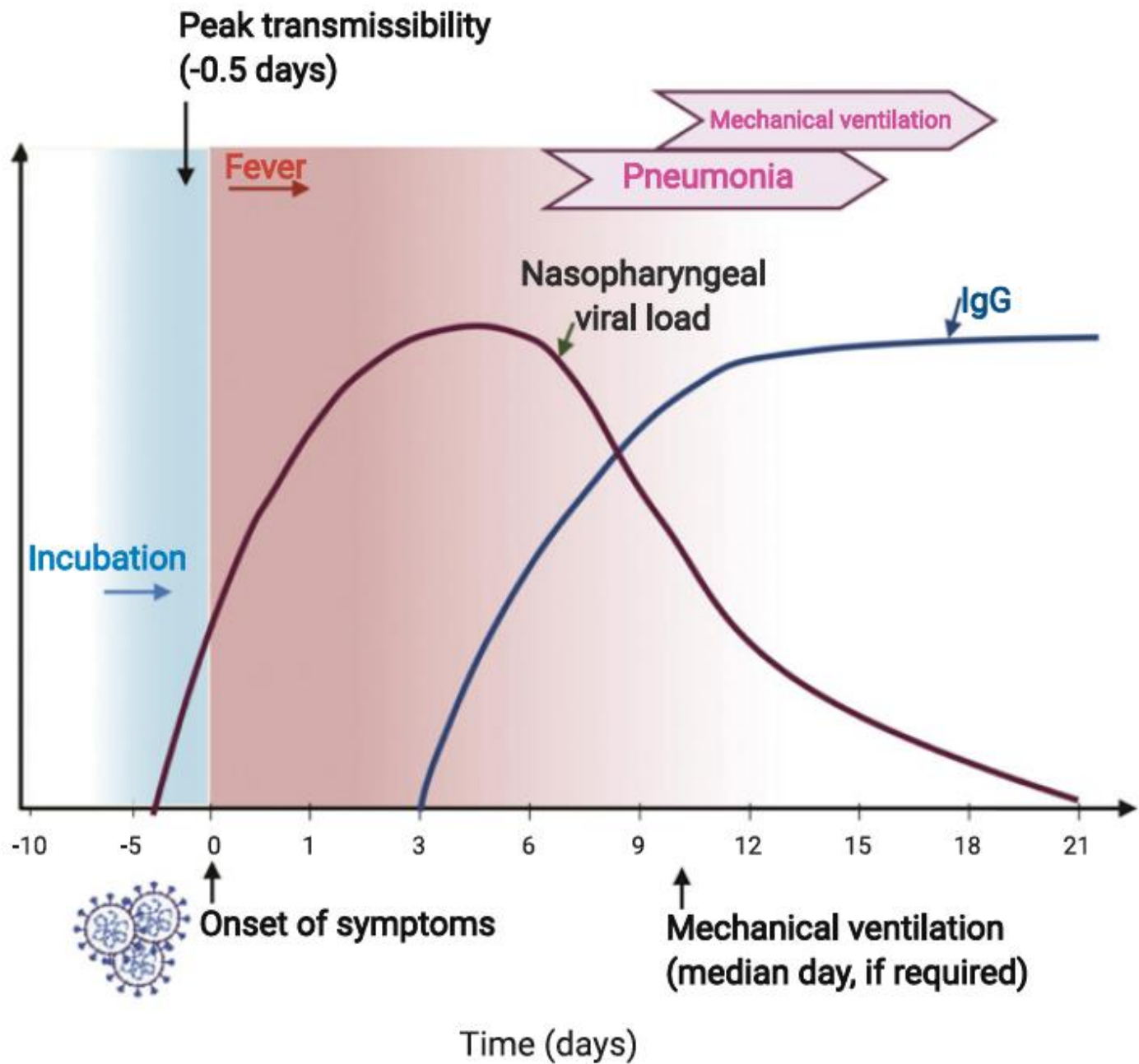


Maximum exposure



Minimum exposure





Virus Virulence: Capacity to Cause Disease

Virulence depends on a combination of viral and host factors:

- Virus factors
 - dose
 - route of infection
 - isolates - genetically determined
- Host factors
 - age, sex, nutritional status
 - co-morbidities
 - immune status
 - genetics

COVID-19 characteristics

- Onset with high fever and sore throat, developing dry cough
 - 4 – 10 days post-infection
- Other symptoms including GI, loss of taste/smell
- Recovery after a few days (? with longer term issues remaining)
- Can progress to lower respiratory tract disease and viral pneumonia
- Low blood and tissue O_2 , increased coagulation, as causes of multiple organ failure, also stroke risk
- Reduction in circulating lymphocytes associated with severe disease

- Can be asymptomatic

A

COVID-19 disease

Typical presentations:

Fever
Dry cough
Exhaustion
Anorexia
Smell and taste disorder
Myalgia
Shortness of breath

Less frequent presentations:

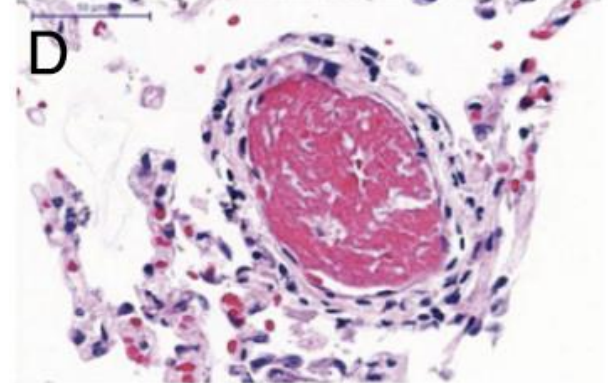
Nausea
Diarrhea
Sore throat
Rhinorrhea
Headache
Cutaneous manifestations

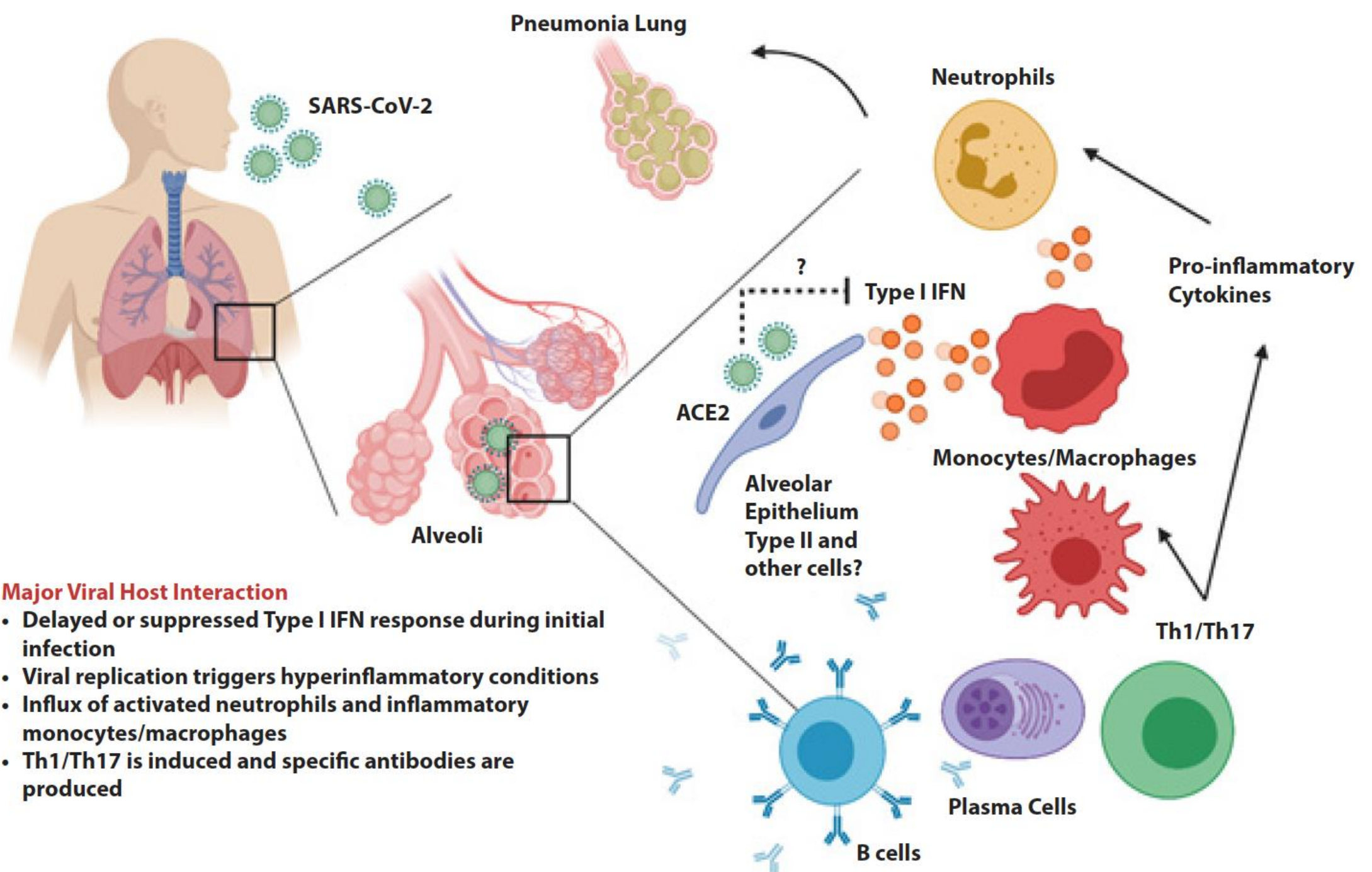
Severe presentations:

Neurological complications
Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)
Multisystem inflammatory disease in children (MIS-C)
Cardiac injury
Acute kidney injury
Liver dysfunction
Thrombotic complications
Shock and multi-organ failure
Bacterial co-infection

Co-morbidities associated with severe presentations:

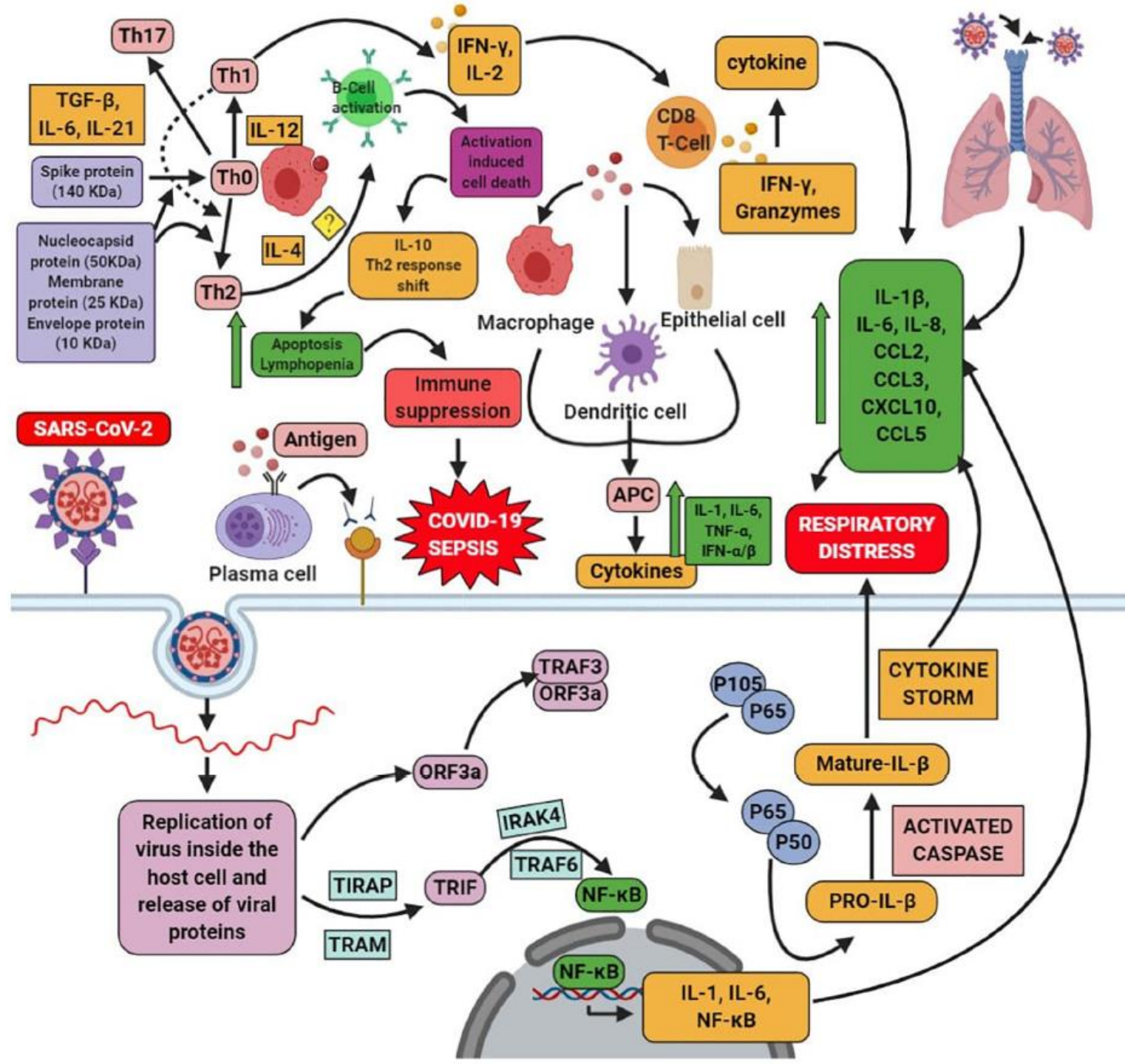
Cardiovascular diseases
Diabetes
Hypertension
Chronic lung illness
Kidney disease





Major Viral Host Interaction

- Delayed or suppressed Type I IFN response during initial infection
- Viral replication triggers hyperinflammatory conditions
- Influx of activated neutrophils and inflammatory monocytes/macrophages
- Th1/Th17 is induced and specific antibodies are produced

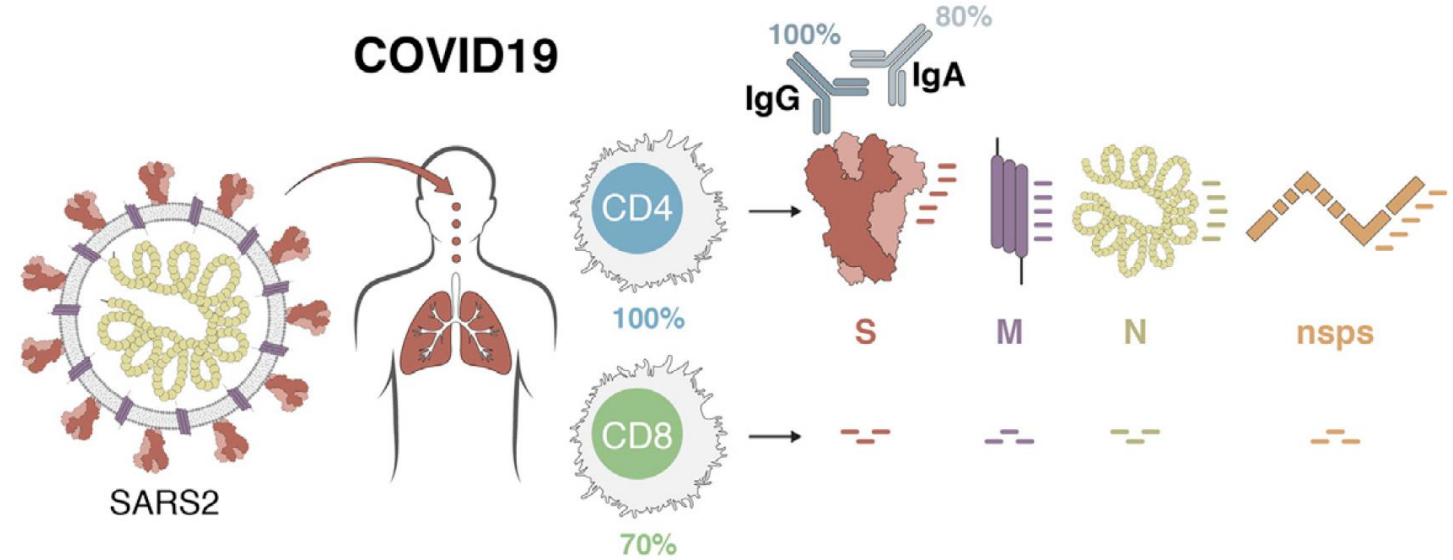
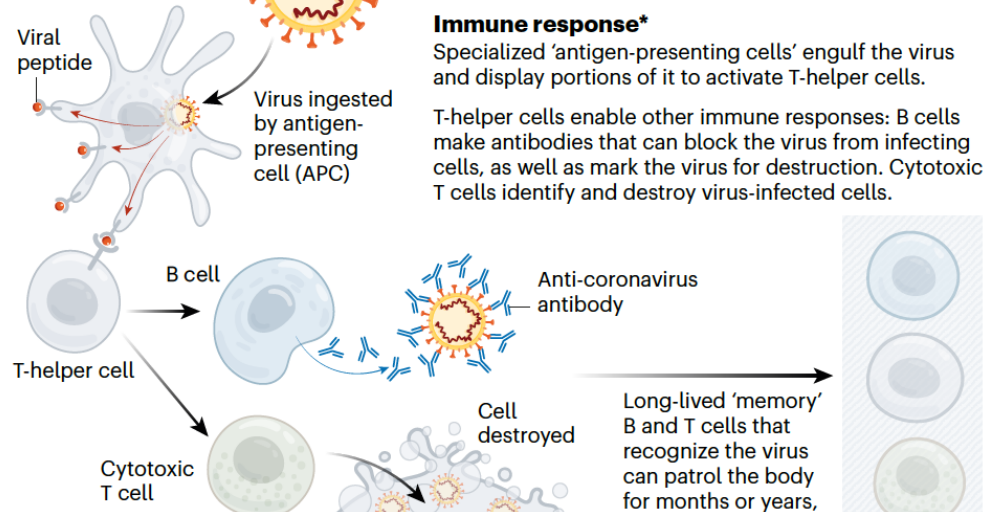
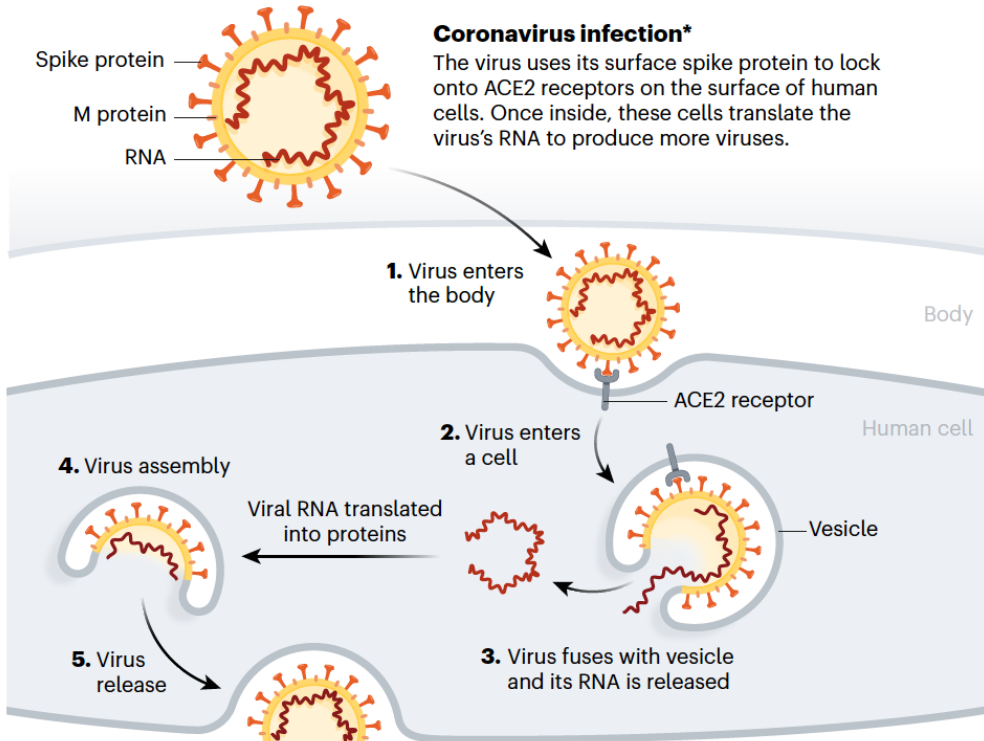


Possible explanations for severe/fatal outcome in certain groups

- Excess risk in some BAME groups after allowing for other risk factors (age, sex, socioeconomic etc)
 - ONS report 7 May into COVID-19 mortality and ethnicity
- Rare severe disease in young people with no known risk factors
- Genomics England mass sequencing study announced 13 May
 - Compare 20,000 infected in/were in ICU with 15,000 mild/mod symptom individuals
- Role of the immune response – innate and adaptive?

VACCINE BASICS: HOW WE DEVELOP IMMUNITY

The body's adaptive immune system can learn to recognize new, invading pathogens, such as the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.



COVID-19 Various treatment options

1. Preventive strategies

Maintaining social distance,,wearing masks and using hand sanitizers

Vaccines: mRNA-1273, BCG, ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 etc.

Immune boosters: Vitamin C, Ocimum, Curcumin etc.

Viral entry inhibitors: Chloroquine, Teicoplanin etc.

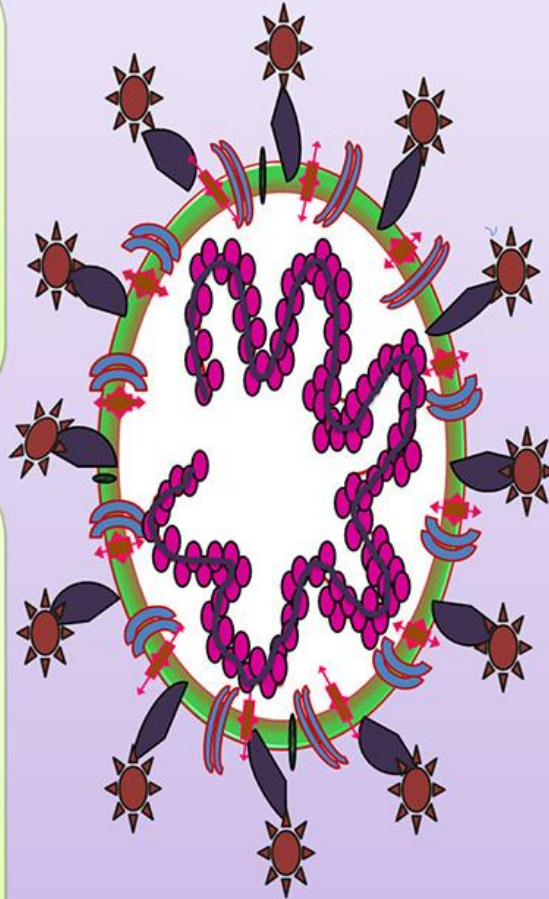
3. Management of ARDS and Cytokine storm

Monoclonal antibodies: Siltuximab, Tocilizumab, Sarilumab etc.

Chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine as immunomodulators

Supportive therapies such as antibacterials, corticosteroids, and NSAIDs: Azithromycin, Dexamethasone, Acetaminophen

Natural products: Curcumin, Resveratrol, Withaferin A, Quercetin etc.



2. Therapeutic options

Repurposing antiviral drugs: Remdesivir, Lopinavir/Ritonavir, Oseltamivir etc.

Novel antiviral drugs: ASC09F

Repurposing antimalarial, anthelmintic and antiparasitic drugs: Chloroquine, niclosamide, Ivermectin etc.

Convalescent plasma

Interferons: Interferon alfacon-1, INF- α and IFN- β

Natural killer cells and cytotoxic T cells

Vaccines: LV-SMENP-DC and Recombinant Novel CoV Vaccine

Mesenchymal stem cells: Wharton's Jelly, Umbilical Cord-Derived, Dental pulp MSCs

ACE inhibitors: Lisinopril and Losartan

Figure. Simplified Representation of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) Viral Lifecycle and Potential Drug Targets

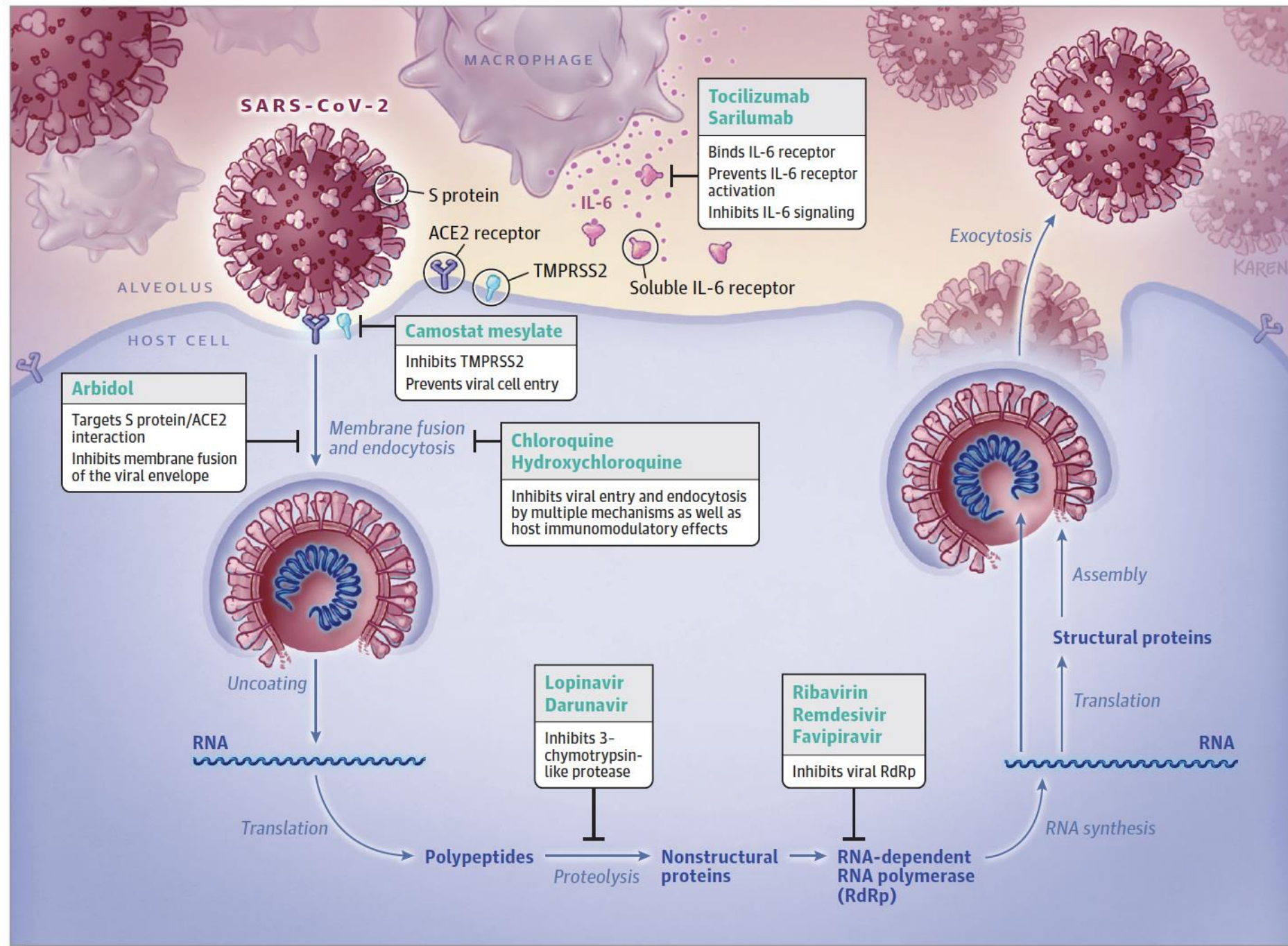


Table 1. Common and potent antiviral drugs.

Drugs	Therapy Strategy Categories	Mechanisms of Therapy	Status
Chloroquine phosphate/ hydroxychloroquine	Anti-malaria anti-viral anti-inflammatory	Increasing endosomal pH, interfering with the glycosylation of cellular receptors of SARS-CoV-2, immunomodulator	FDA approved to be used in an emergency situation, implemented in many treatment protocols
Remdesivir	Antiviral drug (Nucleoside analogue)	Interfering with the viral replication	Investigational antiviral, clinical trials are in progress
Baricitinib	Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) drug, AP2-associated protein kinase 1 (AAK1) inhibitor	Interfering with viral entry by inhibiting one of the endocytosis regulators	FDA approved
lopinavir/ritonavir	HIV protease inhibitor	Could act by inhibiting SARS-CoV-2 protease for proteins cleavage, interfering with virus replication	FDA approved
Darunavir	HIV protease inhibitor	Could act by inhibiting SARS-CoV-2 protease for proteins cleavage, interfering with virus replication	FDA approved
Camostat Mesylate	Transmembrane protease, serine 2 (TMPRSS2) inhibitor	Interfering with viral entry	Japan approved
Favipiravir	Nucleoside analog	Binds to the viral RdRp and reduce its reproduction	Investigational
Cepharanthie, Selamectin, and mefloquine hydrochloride	Anti-viral Anti-inflammatory activities	Significantly reduced cytopathic effects of SARS-CoV-2, and decrease the viral load	Investigational
Ivermectin	Anti-parasite	Inhibits SARS-CoV-2 replication in vitro	FDA approved

Remdesivir for the Treatment of Covid-19 — Preliminary Report

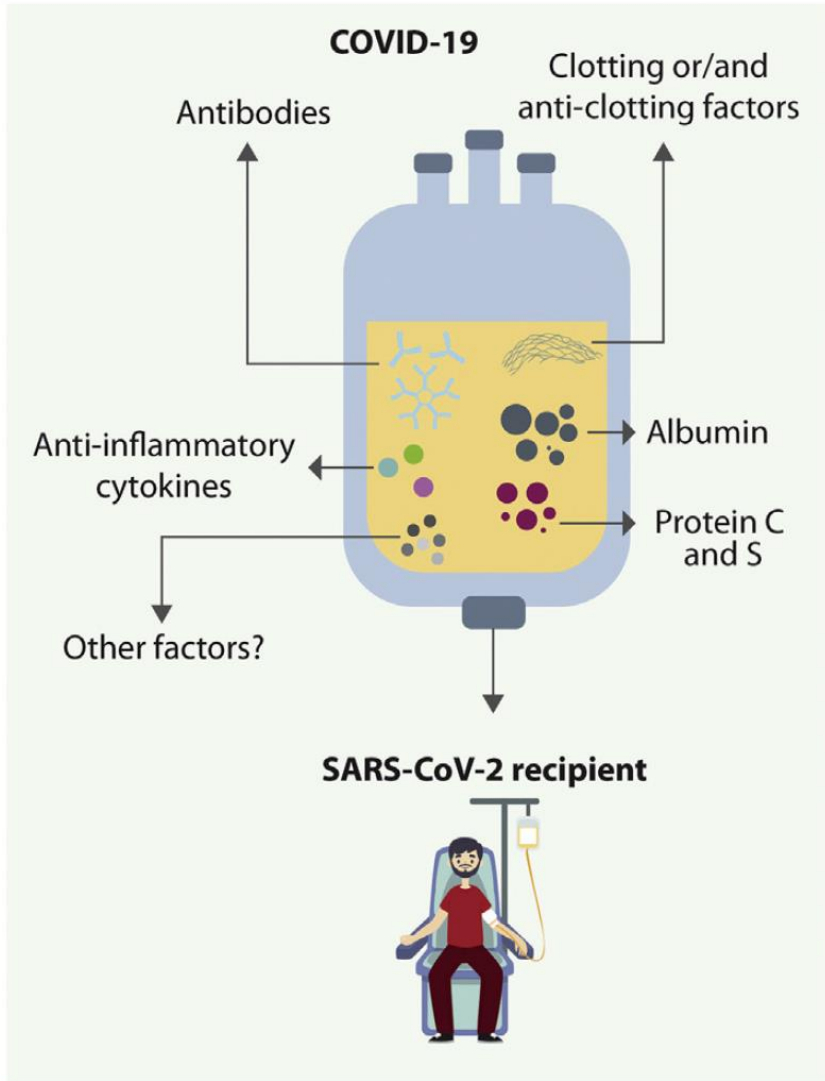
RESULTS

A total of 1063 patients underwent randomization. The data and safety monitoring board recommended early unblinding of the results on the basis of findings from an analysis that showed shortened time to recovery in the remdesivir group. Preliminary results from the 1059 patients (538 assigned to remdesivir and 521 to placebo) with data available after randomization indicated that those who received remdesivir had a median recovery time of 11 days (95% confidence interval [CI], 9 to 12), as compared with 15 days (95% CI, 13 to 19) in those who received placebo (rate ratio for recovery, 1.32; 95% CI, 1.12 to 1.55; $P < 0.001$). The Kaplan-Meier estimates of mortality by 14 days were 7.1% with remdesivir and 11.9% with placebo (hazard ratio for death, 0.70; 95% CI, 0.47 to 1.04). Serious adverse events were reported for 114 of the 541 patients in the remdesivir group who underwent randomization (21.1%) and 141 of the 522 patients in the placebo group who underwent randomization (27.0%).

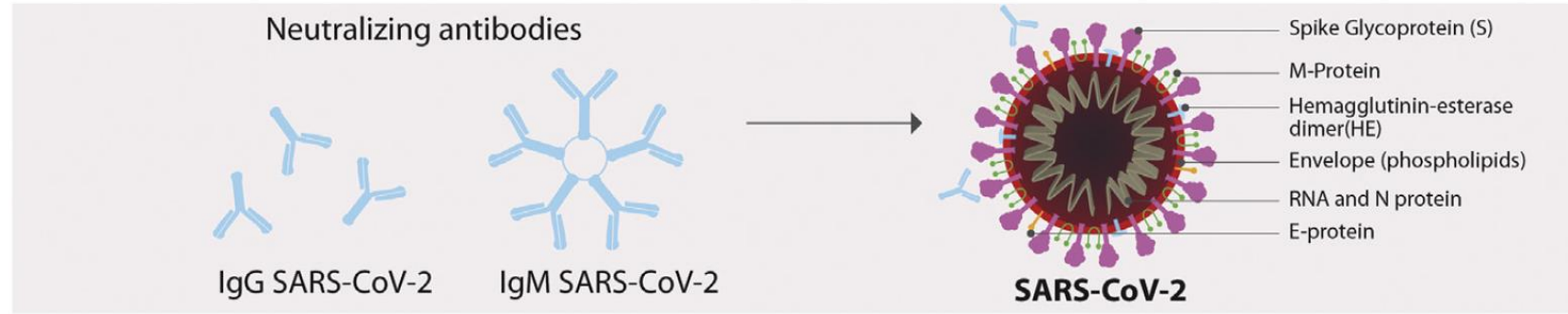
CONCLUSIONS

Remdesivir was superior to placebo in shortening the time to recovery in adults hospitalized with Covid-19 and evidence of lower respiratory tract infection. (Funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and others; ACCT-1 ClinicalTrials.gov number, NCT04280705.)

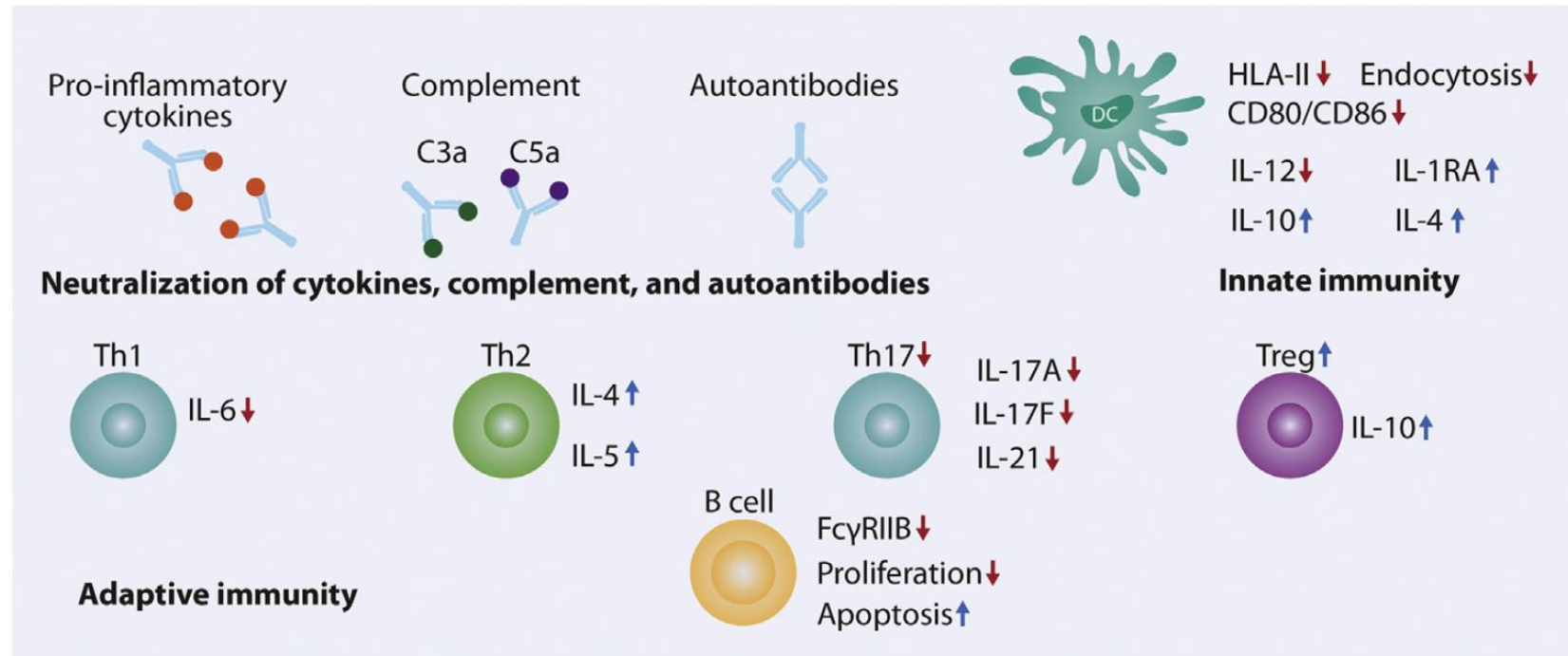
A. CONVALESCENT PLASMA



B. ANTIVIRAL EFFECTS



C. IMMUNOMODULATORY EFFECTS





Vir Biotechnology

Platform: Patient-derived mAb tech from Humabs BioMed

Target: SARS-CoV-2 spike protein



Program 1: mAbs from patients recovered from SARS, other coronaviruses



Program 2 (Pending): mAbs from recovered COVID-19 patients

**Abcellera Biologics/
DARPA/NIH**

Platform: single cell mAb discovery tech (Pandemic Prevention Platform) deployed on patient samples

Target: SARS-CoV-2 spike protein



Program 1: mAbs from recovered SARS patients



Program 2 (Pending): mAbs from recovered COVID-19 patients



**Regeneron
Pharmaceuticals/BARDA**

Platform: Mice engineered to generate human antibody repertoires (VelocImmune)

Target: SARS-CoV-2 spike protein



Program 1: mAbs generated against SARS-CoV-2 spike on pseudovirus



Program 2: mAbs generated against MERS



**Flanders Institute
for Biotechnology
(VIB)/ Ghent University**

Platform: Llama-derived single domain antibodies (VHHs)

Target: SARS-CoV-2 spike protein



Program 1: VHH generated against spike protein domain conserved across SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2



Program 2 (Pending): VHH generated against SARS-CoV-2



Ligand Pharmaceuticals

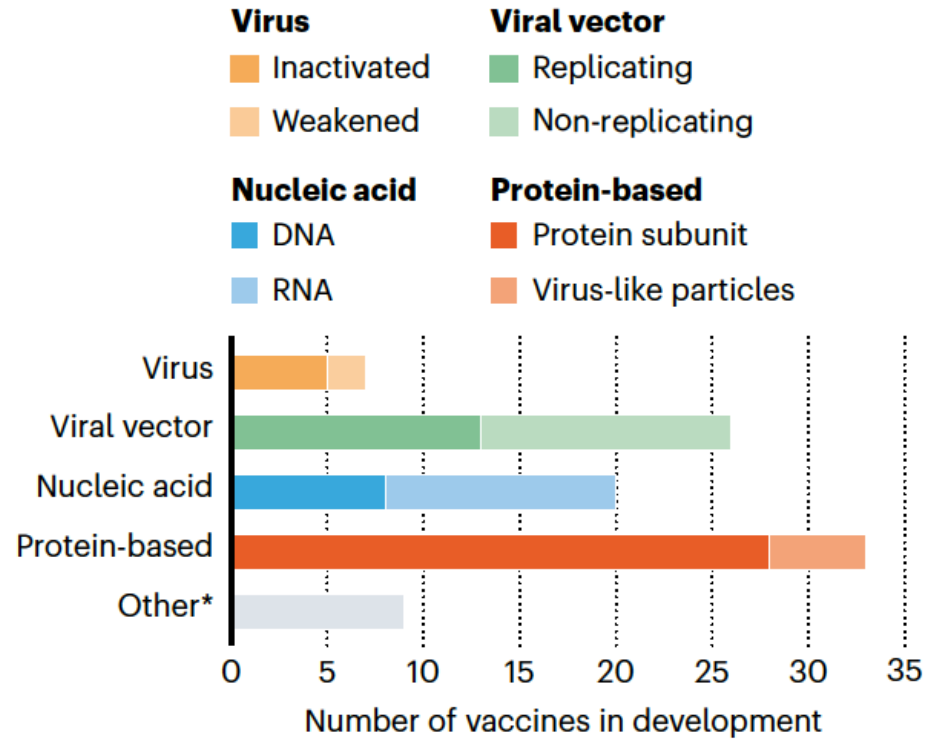
Platform: Chickens engineered to generate human antibody repertoires (OmniChicken)

Target: Not disclosed

Programs: Not disclosed

AN ARRAY OF VACCINES

All vaccines aim to expose the body to an antigen that won't cause disease, but will provoke an immune response that can block or kill the virus if a person becomes infected. There are at least eight types being tried against the coronavirus, and they rely on different viruses or viral parts.



* Other efforts include testing whether existing vaccines against poliovirus or tuberculosis could help to fight SARS-CoV-2 by eliciting a general immune response (rather than specific adaptive immunity), or whether certain immune cells could be genetically modified to target the virus.

VIRUS VACCINES

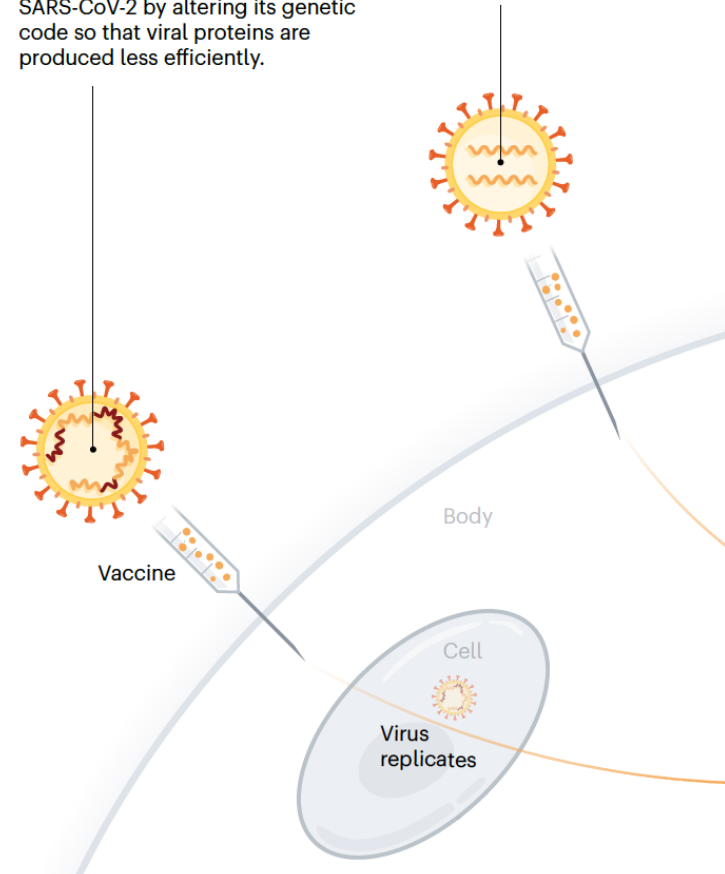
At least seven teams are developing vaccines using the virus itself, in a weakened or inactivated form. Many existing vaccines are made in this way, such as those against measles and polio, but they require extensive safety testing. Sinovac Biotech in Beijing has started to test an inactivated version of SARS-CoV-2 in humans.

Weakened virus

A virus is conventionally weakened for a vaccine by being passed through animal or human cells until it picks up mutations that make it less able to cause disease. Codagenix in Farmingdale, New York, is working with the Serum Institute of India, a vaccine manufacturer in Pune, to weaken SARS-CoV-2 by altering its genetic code so that viral proteins are produced less efficiently.

Inactivated virus

In these vaccines, the virus is rendered uninfected using chemicals, such as formaldehyde, or heat. Making them, however, requires starting with large quantities of infectious virus.

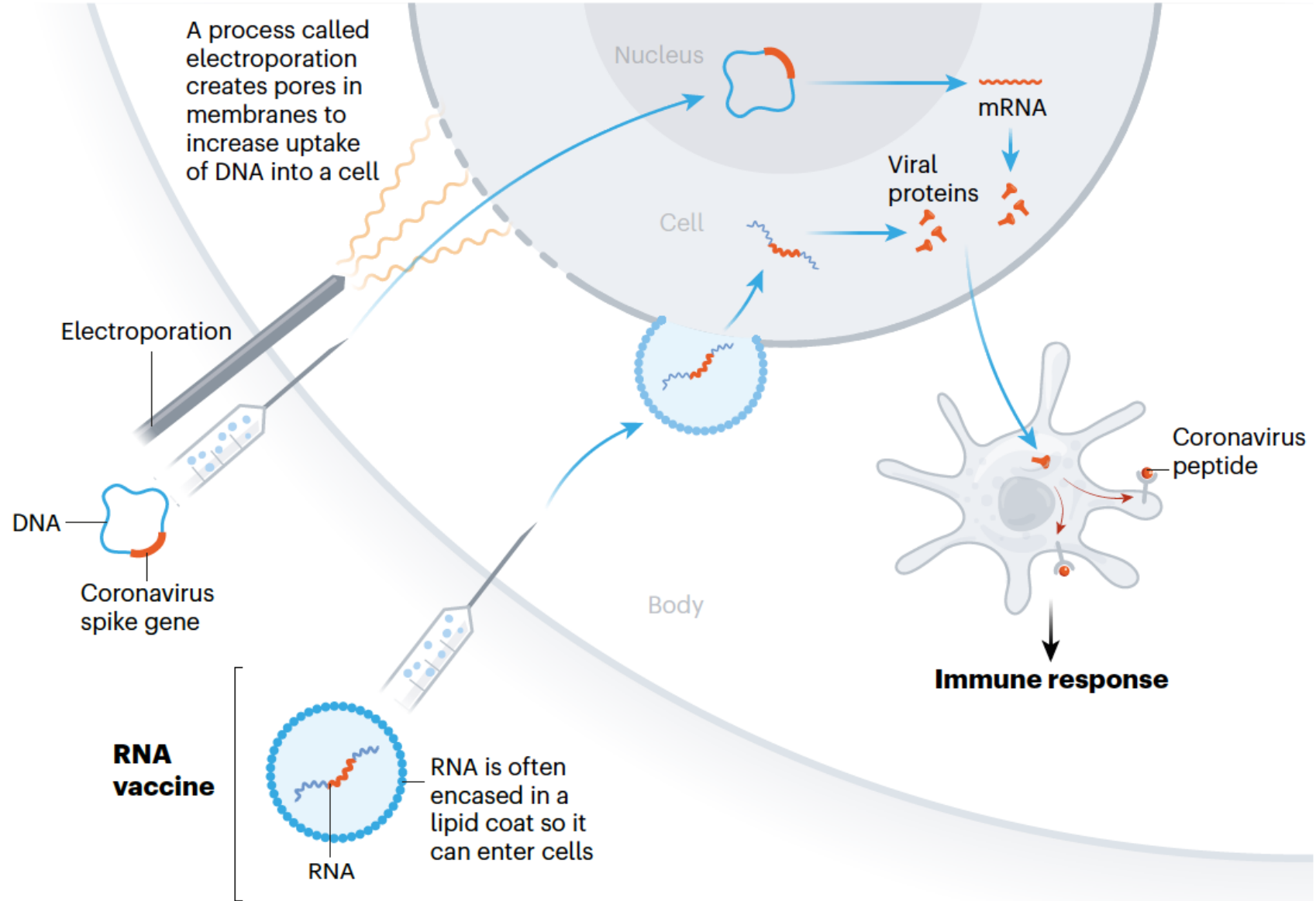


NUCLEIC-ACID VACCINES

At least 20 teams are aiming to use genetic instructions (in the form of DNA or RNA) for a coronavirus protein that prompts an immune response. The nucleic acid is inserted into human cells, which then churn out copies of the virus protein; most of these vaccines encode the virus's spike protein.

RNA- and DNA-based vaccines are safe and easy to develop: to produce them involves making genetic material only, not the virus. But they are unproven: no licensed vaccines use this technology.

DNA vaccine



VIRAL-VECTOR VACCINES

Around 25 groups say they are working on viral-vector vaccines. A virus such as measles or adenovirus is genetically engineered so that it can produce coronavirus proteins in the body. These viruses are weakened so they cannot cause disease. There are two types: those that can still replicate within cells and those that cannot because key genes have been disabled.

Replicating viral vector (such as weakened measles)

The newly approved Ebola vaccine is an example of a viral-vector vaccine that replicates within cells. Such vaccines tend to be safe and provoke a strong immune response. Existing immunity to the vector could blunt the vaccine's effectiveness, however.

Non-replicating viral vector (such as adenovirus)

No licensed vaccines use this method, but they have a long history in gene therapy. Booster shots can be needed to induce long-lasting immunity. US-based drug giant Johnson & Johnson is working on this approach.

PROTEIN-BASED VACCINES

Many researchers want to inject coronavirus proteins directly into the body. Fragments of proteins or protein shells that mimic the coronavirus's outer coat can also be used.

Protein subunits

Twenty-eight teams are working on vaccines with viral protein subunits — most of them are focusing on the virus's spike protein or a key part of it called the receptor binding domain. Similar vaccines against the SARS virus protected monkeys against infection but haven't been tested in people. To work, these vaccines might require adjuvants — immune-stimulating molecules delivered alongside the vaccine — as well as multiple doses.

Virus-like particles

Empty virus shells mimic the coronavirus structure, but aren't infectious because they lack genetic material. Five teams are working on 'virus-like particle' (VLP) vaccines, which can trigger a strong immune response, but can be difficult to manufacture.

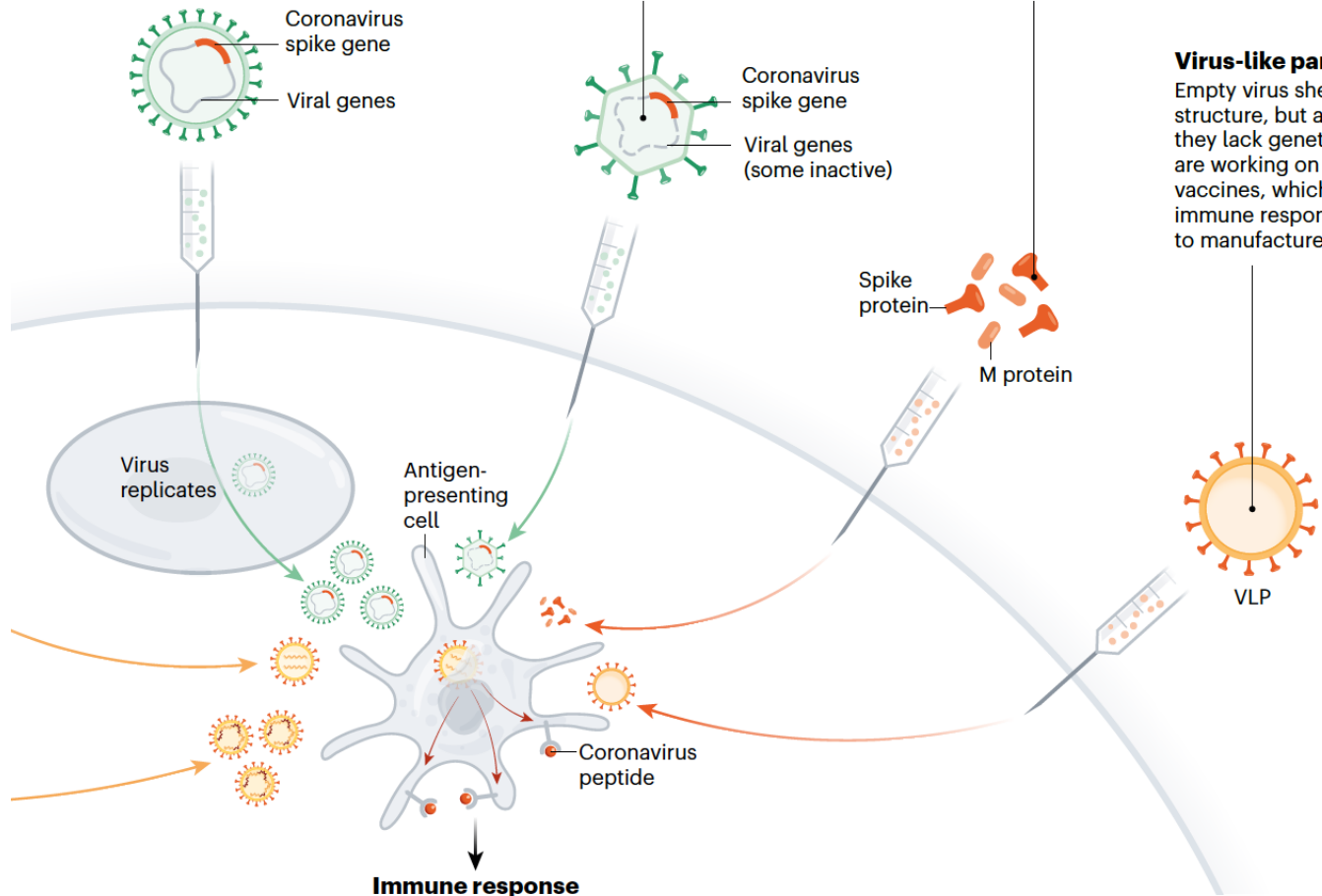
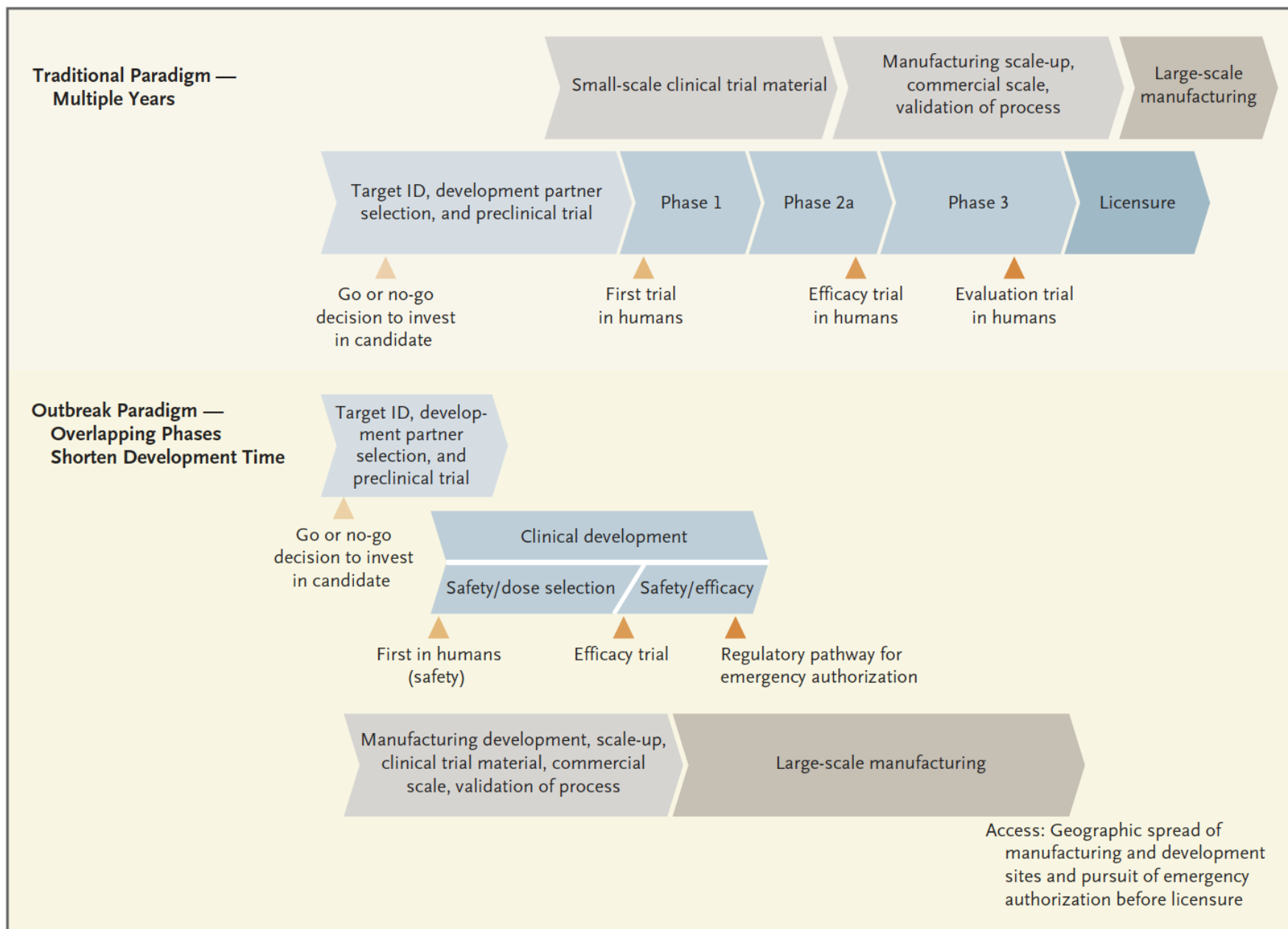


Table 1. Overview of Vaccine Production Platforms and Technologies for SARS-CoV-2

Platform	Target	Existing, Licensed Human Vaccines Using the Same Platform	Advantages	Disadvantages
RNA vaccines	S protein	No	No infectious virus needs to be handled, vaccines are typically immunogenic, rapid production possible.	Safety issues with reactogenicity have been reported.
DNA vaccines	S protein	No	No infectious virus needs to be handled, easy scale up, low production costs, high heat stability, tested in humans for SARS-CoV-1, rapid production possible.	Vaccine needs specific delivery devices to reach good immunogenicity.
Recombinant protein vaccines	S protein	Yes for baculovirus (influenza, HPV) and yeast expression (HBV, HPV)	No infectious virus needs to be handled, adjuvants can be used to increase immunogenicity.	Global production capacity might be limited. Antigen and/or epitope integrity needs to be confirmed. Yields need to be high enough.
Viral vector-based vaccines	S protein	Yes for VSV (Ervebo), but not for other viral vectored vaccines	No infectious virus needs to be handled, excellent preclinical and clinical data for many emerging viruses, including MERS-CoV.	Vector immunity might negatively affect vaccine effectiveness (depending on the vector chosen).
Live attenuated vaccines	Whole virion	Yes	Straightforward process used for several licensed human vaccines, existing infrastructure can be used.	Creating infectious clones for attenuated coronavirus vaccine seeds takes time because of large genome size. Safety testing will need to be extensive.
Inactivated vaccines	Whole virion	Yes	Straightforward process used for several licensed human vaccines, existing infrastructure can be used, has been tested in humans for SARS-CoV-1, adjuvants can be used to increase immunogenicity.	Large amounts of infectious virus need to be handled (could be mitigated by using an attenuated seed virus). Antigen and/or epitope integrity needs to be confirmed.

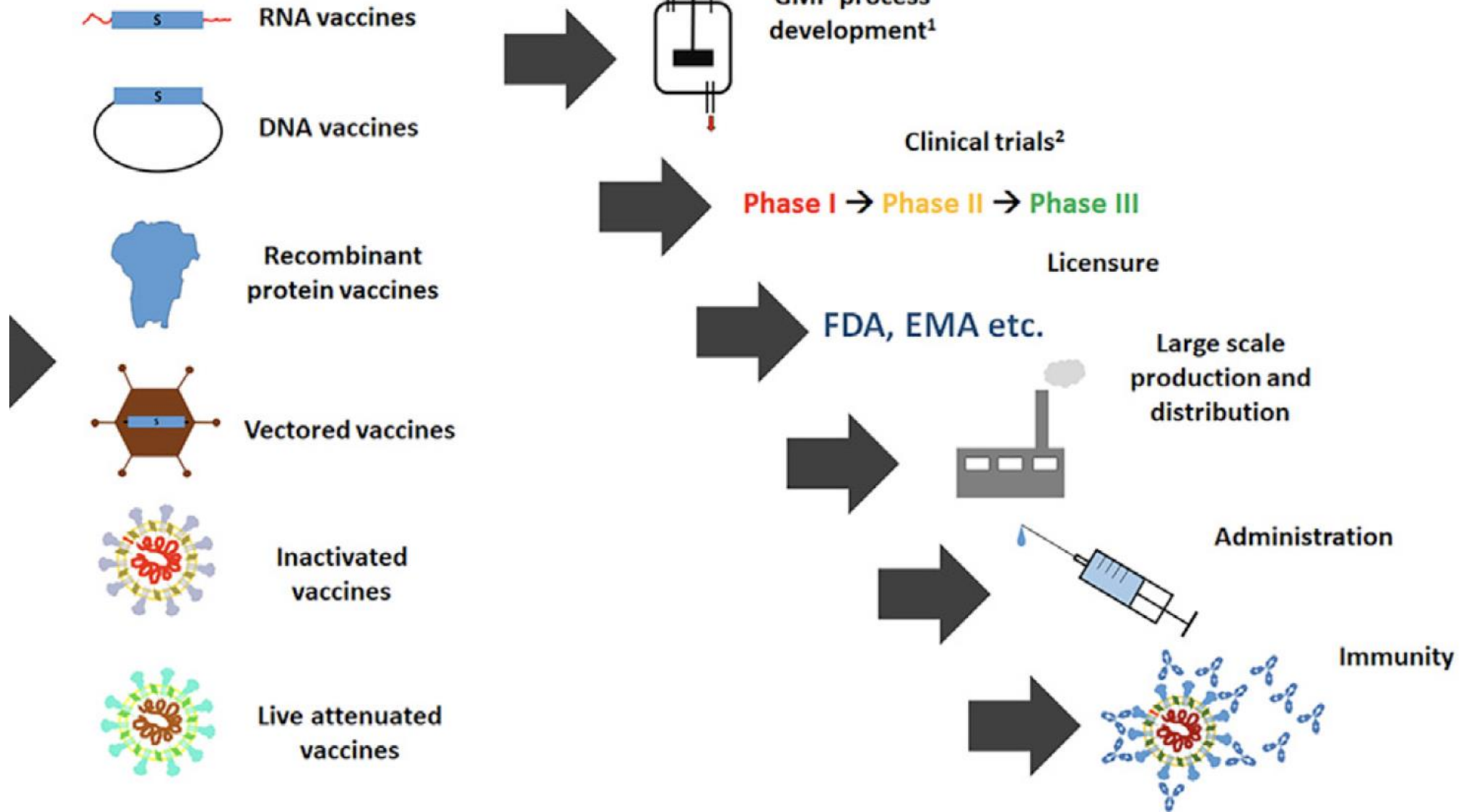


Difference between Traditional Vaccine Development and Development Using a Pandemic Paradigm.

The pandemic paradigm requires multiple activities to be conducted at financial risk to developers and manufacturers and without knowing whether the vaccine candidate will be safe and effective, including very early manufacturing scale-up to commercial scale before establishment of clinical proof of concept. ID denotes identification.

Current stage: Development of vaccine candidates and pre-clinical testing

Time frame unclear. 6-18 months. Maybe longer. ?



Summary

The logo for Warwick University, featuring a stylized purple zigzag line above the word "WARWICK" in a purple, sans-serif font.

- Unprecedented pace of science – 6 months!
- SARS-CoV-2 is highly transmissible – UK epidemic from imported European strains
- A viral genotype that emerged in late Jan 2020 now dominates the pandemic
 - It may have better transmission than earlier genotypes
 - Its disease profile appears to be unchanged
- Human genotypic variation may play a part in disease severity but still to be demonstrated
- Host immune response being defined - what does a protective immune response look like?
- Repurposing old anti-viral drugs – what about new ones?
- 136 vaccines in development – 10 candidates in clinical evaluation, many using unproven technology platforms.

VIROLOGY – lack of investment in research over 20 years, no large pharma working on antivirals in UK