



# Cystic Fibrosis Research News

## **Title:**

Incidence of SARS-CoV-2 in people with cystic fibrosis in Europe between February and June 2020

## **Authors:**

Naehrlich Lutz<sup>1</sup> for the European Cystic Fibrosis COVID project group

## **Affiliations:**

<sup>1</sup>Universities of Giessen and Marburg Lung Center, German Center of Lung Research, Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, Giessen, Germany.

## **What was your research question?**

When coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) started spreading in Europe in early 2020, nobody knew how it would impact people with CF.

We wanted to see how many people with CF were infected with coronavirus compared to the general population, and if this caused severe illness.

## **Why is this important?**

People with CF need to know if they are more likely to catch coronavirus, and if it is dangerous for them. This information will help:

- people with CF know if they need to protect themselves from infection by social distancing,
- governments understand whether to prioritise people with CF for vaccination,
- doctors understand more about coronavirus in people with CF.

## **What did you do?**

The European Cystic Fibrosis Society Patient Registry collects information annually about 50,000 people with CF in 38 European countries. We used this registry to collect anonymous information about people with CF who had coronavirus between 01 February and 30 June 2020.

We also downloaded information about people in the general population who had coronavirus from the European Centre for Disease Control.

We looked at how many people caught coronavirus and if they had severe illness involving hospitalization, intensive care or death. We compared these results for people with CF versus people in the general population.

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[cfresearchnews@gmail.com](mailto:cfresearchnews@gmail.com)

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## What did you find?

Similar proportions of people became infected with coronavirus in the CF population and the general population. But when we broke the results down by age group, we saw that people with CF aged under 50 years had more coronavirus infections than people of the same age in the general population. People with CF and lung transplants had even higher rates of coronavirus infection.

People with CF in all age groups under 50 years needed more hospitalisation and some more intensive care than people in the general population.

Five people with CF and coronavirus sadly died; three of them were lung transplanted. Overall, the proportion of people who died was similar in the CF and general populations.

## What does this mean and reasons for caution?

These results suggest that coronavirus infections are more frequent in people with CF, and that these people need more hospital and intensive care compared to people of the same age group.

This means that people with CF should continue to shield and to be prioritised for vaccination. We must remember that these results are for the first months of the pandemic, when everything was new. It is possible that not all cases of people with CF and coronavirus were reported to us. Also, doctors may have admitted people with CF and coronavirus to hospital as a precaution, in case it caused serious illness, explaining the higher rate of hospitalisation.

## What's next?

We continue to collect information about people with CF and coronavirus. Next we will count the cases up to the end of 2020, and try to identify which people with CF are more likely to have severe illness if they catch coronavirus.

## Original manuscript citation in PubMed

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