

## University of Oxford-Led Covid-19 Vaccine Trials Coming to Brazil

*Brazil becomes first country to test Oxford vaccine outside the UK,  
with funding from the Lemann Foundation*

Brazil, the current epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, will in June become the first country outside of Great Britain to test the University of Oxford-developed vaccine for the deadly virus. South America's largest country, which is on track to reach 1 million cases in just a few weeks, is working with the University of Oxford to test the effectiveness of the vaccine.

Carried out with the support of the Ministry of Health 2,000 Brazilians will participate in the first round of trials, half of which were funded by Brazil's Lemann Foundation and will take place in São Paulo. All of the volunteers will come from the ranks of health care workers and others on the front lines in the fight against COVID-19 since they are more likely to be exposed to the virus. Those chosen for the study must be seronegative, meaning they have not contracted the disease before. As part of the trial's design, participants will receive the vaccine and then continue being exposed to the virus normally in their day-to-day work as they had been before.

The project to bring the trials to Brazil was led by Professor Sue Ann Costa Clemens, director of the Institute for Global Health at the University of Siena in Italy, and a Brazilian researcher specializing in infectious diseases and vaccine prevention. Italy was one of the earliest and hardest-hit countries by COVID.

Brazil, one of the world's most populous countries, is a key part of the global development plan to test the Oxford vaccine because of its current position on the COVID curve. "The most important thing is to carry out this stage of the study now when the epidemiological curve is still rising and the results may be more decisive," said Dr. Lily Yin Weckx, principal investigator of the study and coordinator of the program in Brazil.

The trials were approved by the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (Anvisa) on June 2. The study will take place in São Paulo, Brazil's most populous city, and be conducted by the Reference Center for Special Immunobiologicals (CRIE) at the Federal University of São Paulo (Unifesp). The Lemann Foundation will cover the costs of all the necessary medical infrastructure and equipment.

Denis Mizne, executive director of the Lemann Foundation, which is providing the funding to carry out the São Paulo trials, called his country's involvement in the study "an important milestone for us Brazilians."

Mizne added, "I believe we will be able to accelerate solutions that bring good and quick results. For the Lemann Foundation, this is another important opportunity to contribute to initiatives with a great impact on our country and its people. "

Additional countries are currently under review to test the vaccine. The results of these international trials will decide whether the vaccine can ultimately be registered in the UK, scheduled for later this year.

### **About Unifesp**

The Federal University of São Paulo, known in Portuguese as the Universidade Federal De São Paulo or Unifesp, is a leading public university in Brazil. Traditionally specialized in health sciences, the prestigious institution is responsible for the development of scientific research in health. Led by highly qualified faculty, research at Unifesp is linked to the professional practice, which ranges from primary care to the use of the latest technology in diagnosis and disease treatment. The University's São Paulo Hospital is Brazil's largest teaching hospital.

### **About the Lemann Foundation**

Since its birth in 2002, the Lemann Foundation has been working to advance Brazil's development with equity by unlocking the potential of its children and future leaders. Founded by self-made Brazilian entrepreneur and "business-class hero," Jorge Paulo Lemann, the family foundation reverses inequality in Brazil at scale on two fronts: education and leadership. Lemann's mission is to guarantee all children a high-quality public education no matter what their background and to support future leaders committed to making Brazil a more just and equal place.

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