

## ITM becomes test centre in vaccine study

The Institute will be a test center for the candidate vaccine of Johnson & Johnson. The researchers are looking for chronic patients to participate in the study.

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Dit is de omschrijving

**From the beginning of January, the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp will lead a phase 3 clinical trial to assess a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Johnson & Johnson. ITM is one of six Belgian test centres recruiting participants for this study. In this final phase, the researchers want to evaluate the level of protection offered by the vaccine. A vaccine is an important tool to help stop a pandemic. ITM has extensive scientific expertise in vaccines and the prevention of infectious diseases and makes full use of this knowledge in the current pandemic.**

ITM and Johnson & Johnson researchers want to assess the candidate vaccine in various cohorts, including people with chronic diseases. "Every citizen has the right to protection against Covid-19. An accessible vaccine that works well for people living with a chronic disease is desperately needed. However, a vaccine may trigger a different immune response in healthy people compared to those suffering a chronic illness. We want to carry out various tests to ensure that everyone gets the appropriate level of protection. We work very closely with our various target groups and therefore are a suitable partner in this study," says Dr Patrick Soentjens, the Principal Investigator of the study. Soentjens and his team also developed a shorter vaccination schedule against rabies a few years ago.

Vaccines are a priority for ITM. Its expertise covers the different aspects of the vaccination process, from inoculations in the travel clinic to clinical studies and scientific research into microbiological, immunological and anthropological issues.

Phase 3 of this clinical trial will concentrate on testing the efficacy of the vaccine. ITM researchers will evaluate whether it provides adequate protection and to what extent. This is the final trial stage before the product is launched commercially. The vaccine's safety and tolerance were the subject of an in-depth study in phase 1 and 2 of the clinical trials. The vaccine successfully passed these stages and is considered safe. The participants are closely monitored by the researchers for a year.

The vaccine candidate consists of a single dose and can be stored at normal temperatures. ITM is particularly interested in supporting research that benefits low- and middle-income countries. This vaccine can be kept at fridge temperature for three months and only has to be administered once, which makes it an attractive option for countries with limited resources," says ITM director, Dr Marc-Alain Widdowson.

### Would you like to participate?

- [Register as a candidate for the phase 3 vaccination study.](#)