



Testing dexamethasone for hospitalised patients with dengue: A pilot clinical trial — July 2026

FAST FACTS:

- The World Health Organization estimates that dengue causes around 390 million infections each year.
- Around 100 million dengue infections each year result in clinical illness.
- Asia carries 70% of the global dengue burden.

PROJECT CYCLE:

2024 — 2027

PARTNERS:

The George Institute for Global Health, India

SUPPORTERS:

Princess Alexandra Hospital Foundation, Australia

The George Institute for Global Health, Australia

STUDY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Dr Bharath Kumar

BACKGROUND:

- Dengue is a major global health challenge, causing millions of infections each year, with the largest proportion of cases occurring in Asia.
- Dengue can lead to serious illness, including admission to intensive care and, in some cases, death.
- Current treatment is mainly supportive, such as monitoring, fluids and management of complications, with limited proven treatment options available.
- Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid that may help reduce harmful inflammation in dengue, but clinical trial evidence is needed to assess its safety and effectiveness.

AIMS:

- To assess whether it is feasible and safe to conduct a randomised controlled trial of dexamethasone in patients hospitalised with dengue.
- To evaluate whether dexamethasone can improve patient outcomes, including days alive and free from organ support.
- To inform the design of future larger-scale clinical trials of corticosteroids for dengue.

METHOD:

- This is a multicentre randomised controlled trial comparing dexamethasone with usual supportive care in patients hospitalised with dengue.
- Participants will be randomly assigned to one of two groups:
 - Intervention group: 0.1/0.2 mg/kg of Dexamethasone
 - Comparator group: Usual supportive care
- Participants will be followed up to assess survival, need for organ support and quality of life.

IMPACT

- This trial could provide important evidence on the safety and effectiveness of dexamethasone for patients hospitalised with dengue.
- The findings may help inform future dengue treatment strategies and support the design of larger clinical trials.
- If shown to be safe and effective, dexamethasone could offer a low-cost and widely available treatment option for patients with severe dengue.

CONTACT:

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