

Australia invests in new study on COVID-19 vaccines with future variants emerging

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There is a significant research gap on the impact of COVID-19 infection and vaccination for vulnerable groups



The Australian government is investing in a new study on COVID-19 vaccines and infection to ultimately improve the care and outcomes for children and people with chronic diseases, particularly as future variants emerge.

The new PROPHECY research project, led by researchers at Monash University, will evaluate the immune response in children and high-risk populations, including adults with chronic conditions, to COVID-19.

The PROPHECY project will examine the immune responses to both vaccination and previous COVID-19 infections to gauge the antibody and cellular immune response in healthy and vulnerable people. The study will also inform long-term analysis after a COVID-19 infection or vaccination, including breakthrough or re-infection.

The project will advance understanding of the impact on vulnerable populations so appropriate care can be delivered, including tailored treatments and vaccination schedules appropriate to children and high-risk groups.

The study will include adults with chronic conditions, such as chronic kidney and lung disease, Inflammatory Bowel Disease, rheumatic diseases, people living with HIV and organ transplant recipients, among others. The results will inform treatment and care for sufferers of other chronic diseases.

The research, led by Monash University and Professor Menno van Zelm, will receive \$6.3 million in the latest round of funding towards COVID-19 treatment access and public health activity research. Research will be conducted at Monash University, Alfred Health, Monash Health, Burnet Institute, and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Through this round of funding, more than \$31.5 million from the Australian Government's \$20 billion Medical Research Future Fund will focus on COVID-19 research.

