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WHO launches CoViNet: a global network for coronaviruses

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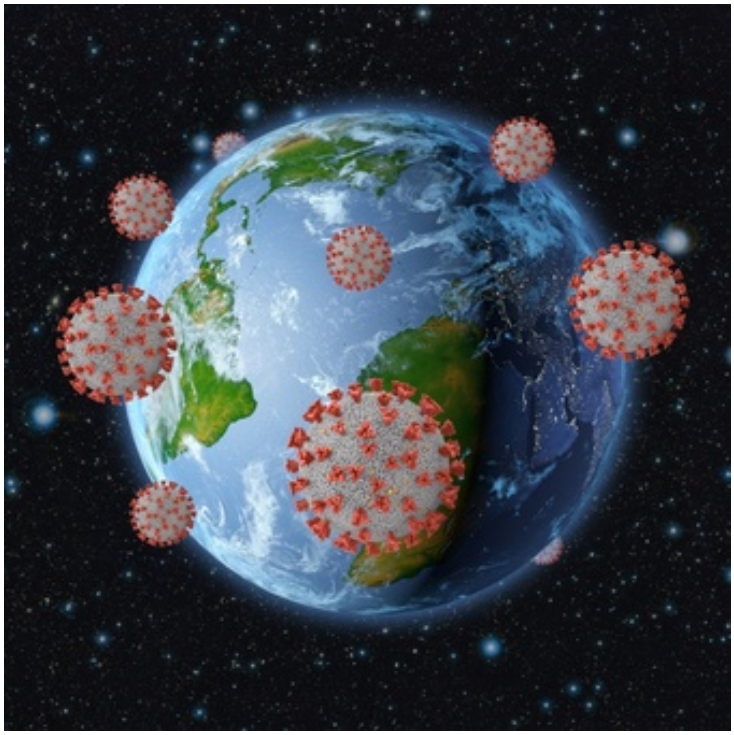
New global network for coronaviruses will ensure timely detection, monitoring and assessment of SARS-CoV-2, MERS-CoV and novel coronaviruses of public health importance



WHO has launched a new network for coronaviruses, CoViNet, to facilitate and coordinate global expertise and capacities for early and accurate detection, monitoring and assessment of SARS-CoV-2, MERS-CoV and novel coronaviruses of public health importance.

CoViNet expands on the WHO COVID-19 reference laboratory network established during the early days of the pandemic. Initially, the lab network was focused on SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, but will now address a broader range of coronaviruses, including MERS-CoV and potential new coronaviruses. CoViNet is a network of global laboratories with expertise in human, animal and environmental coronavirus surveillance.

The network currently includes 36 laboratories from 21 countries in all 6 WHO regions.

Representatives of the laboratories met in Geneva on 26 – 27 March to finalize an action plan for 2024-2025 so that WHO Member States are better equipped for early detection, risk assessment, and response to coronavirus-related health challenges.

The CoViNet meeting brings together global experts in human, animal, and environmental health, embracing a comprehensive One Health approach to monitor and assess coronavirus evolution and spread. The collaboration

underscores the importance of enhanced surveillance, laboratory capacity, sequencing, and data integration to inform WHO policies and support decision-making.

Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, acting Director of WHO’s Department of Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness and Prevention. “This new global network for coronaviruses will ensure timely detection, monitoring and assessment of coronaviruses of public health importance.”

Data generated through CoViNet's efforts will guide the work of WHO's Technical Advisory Groups on Viral Evolution (TAG-VE) and Vaccine Composition (TAG-CO-VAC) and others, ensuring global health policies and tools are based on the latest scientific information