

COVID-19 TREATMENTS: BEWARE THE HYPE

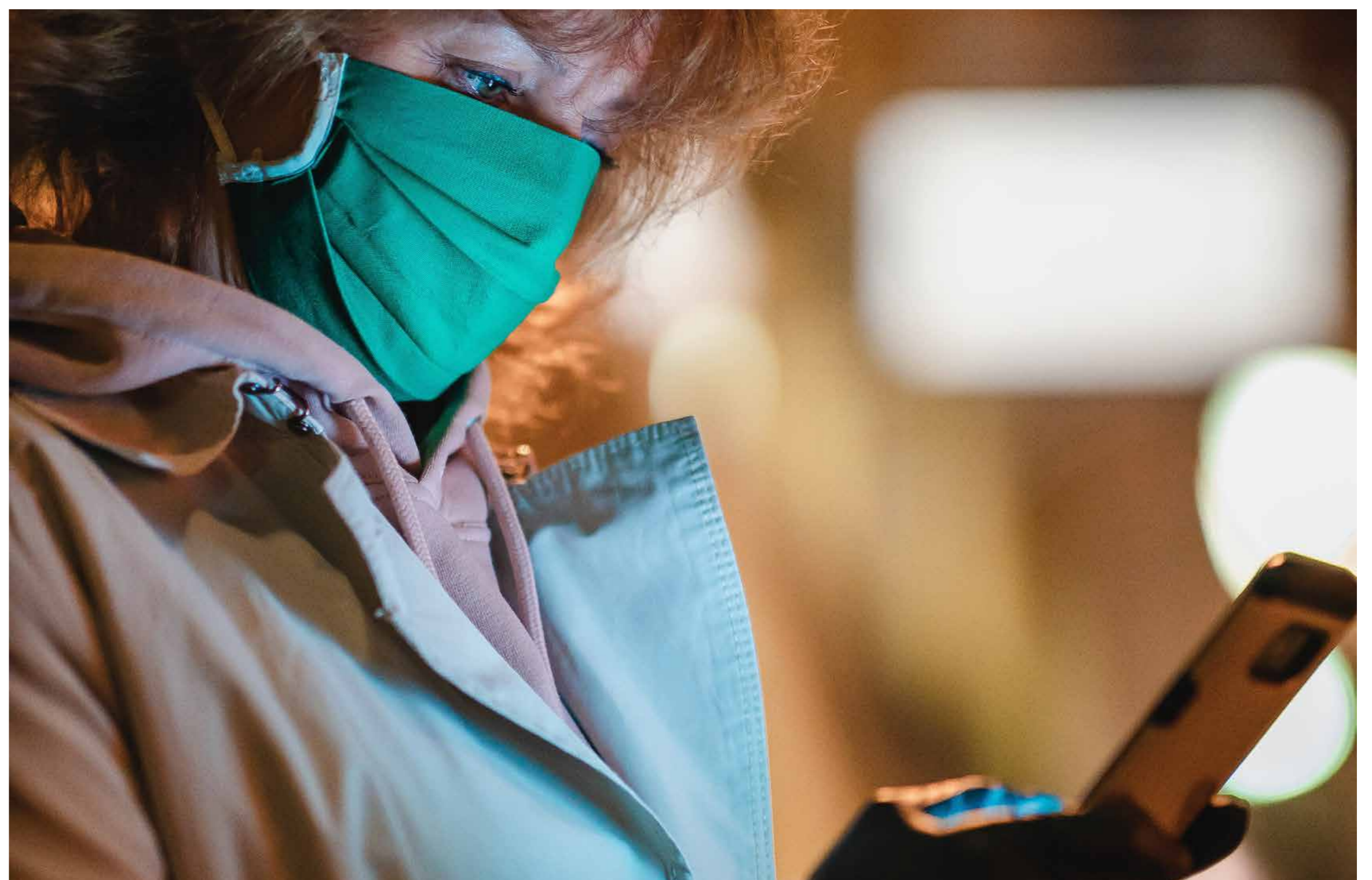
Researchers warn against “miracle cures” promoted through the politicization of the global COVID-19 outbreak.

The success of vaccines in preventing infectious diseases has given us hope that COVID-19 could be controlled or even eliminated. Despite scientists working around the clock, there is still no safe and effective vaccine, nor is it expected that there will be one soon.

With cases in South Africa on the rise, fear has led to widespread misinformation. One example is the use of the malaria drugs, chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine. Following the approval for use of these drugs in COVID-19 treatment by the US Food and Drugs Administration, they have been championed by US President Donald Trump.

Researchers from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, together with international collaborators, recently published an expert opinion piece in the *Drug Information Journal*, warning of the danger of using these medicines without the proper guidance from healthcare professionals.

“The researchers confirm that the way forward is to intensify public campaigns against the routine use of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine for the prevention of



Health professionals should advocate preventative measures such as face masks, rather than self-medication, to prevent COVID-19 infection.

COVID-19, due to the potential toxicities of these medicines,” says Dr Varsha Bangalee.

The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority has requested pharmacists to improve the management of products containing chloroquine to prevent stockpiling and to ensure availability for patients who really need it, such as COVID-19-positive

patients and people suffering from severe rheumatoid arthritis.

“Health professionals should adhere strictly to this recommendation, and educate patients on methods of preventing the spread of the disease rather than self-medicating with chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine in a bid to prevent the disease.”

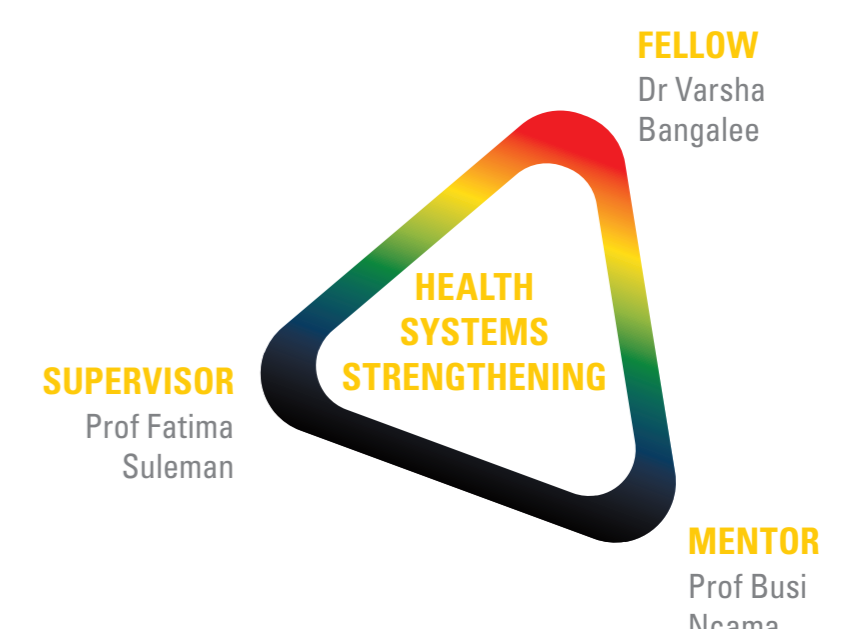


Towards Research Leadership

Dr Varsha Bangalee is a researcher in medicine access and safety at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

 @BangaleeVarsha

Developing Research Innovation, Localisation and Leadership (DRILL) is a health sciences training programme producing research excellence in South Africa. DRILL creates a triad of support for emerging researchers.



Yamoah P, Alalbila TM, Bangalee V & Oosthuizen F. (2020). “Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spread and pharmacovigilance implications: Expert opinion.” *Drug Information Journal*, 1.



Research poster developed in collaboration with Jive Media Africa, research communication specialists.
www.jivemedia.co.za

