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## King's College London's response to Covid-19

This weekly briefing note provides a snapshot of recent examples where the King's community are #ContinuingToServe and responding to Covid-19.

### A. Research and development

#### > Skin rash should be considered fourth key symptom of COVID

A new pre-print study led by King's College London has found that **characteristic skin rashes and 'COVID fingers and toes'** can occur in the absence of any other symptoms and therefore should be considered as key diagnostic signs of the virus.

Using data from the **COVID Symptom Study app** from around 336,000 regular UK users, researchers discovered that 8.8% of people reporting a positive coronavirus swab test had experienced a skin rash as part of their symptoms, compared with 5.4% of people with a negative test result. Similar results were seen in a further 8.2% of users with a rash who did not have a coronavirus test, but still reported classic COVID-19 symptoms, such as cough, fever or anosmia (loss of smell).

To investigate further, the team set up a separate online survey, gathering images and information from nearly 12,000 people with skin rashes and suspected or confirmed COVID-19. The team particularly sought images from people of colour, who are currently underrepresented in dermatology resources. The full story can be read [here](#).

#### > Covid-19 antibodies can decline over time, research suggests

**Antibody responses to SARS-CoV-2 can peak three weeks post onset of symptoms but begin to decline after as little as 2-3 months**, according to research by King's. The study, led by Dr Katie Doores from the School of Immunology & Microbial Sciences and published recently on [Medrxiv](#), examined the antibody levels of more than 90 patients and health workers at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS foundation trust between March and June. It is the first study to monitor patients for this length of time.

The study monitored 64 patients and six healthcare workers who tested positive for the virus, and an additional 31 members of staff who volunteered to have regular antibody



tests. The study measured binding of antibodies to the viral proteins and also measured the ability of the antibodies to stop SARS-CoV-2 infection of target cells. **The findings show that levels of antibodies that can fight the virus peaked three weeks after the onset of symptoms and then decline.** The levels of antibodies were higher in patients who had more severe disease, however it is not clear why. Some individuals who developed antibodies were asymptomatic. The full story is available [here](#).

## B. King's Community

- > **Alumna Dr Elizabeth Khadija Tissingh and King's are #ContinuingToServe by supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.**

As part of the [King's Global Health Partnerships \(KGHP\)](#), King's works with the Ministry of Health in the Kongo Central province in the DRC. Lead by alumna and NHS surgeon Elizabeth Khadija Tissingh, King's Kongo Central Partnership (KKCP) was initially set up to improve health outcomes in trauma. Liz normally combines working for the NHS in orthopaedics with the Congolese partnership. With this crisis emerging and elective surgery cancelled, she is now urgently working with Congolese colleagues, including the government, hospitals and the World Health Organisation, to support the response to the pandemic in the Kongo Central province and help save lives

Liz graduated from King's in 2008 and says: 'My time at King's – my fellow students, teachers, patient encounters, **the city of London** - all helped me make sense of my diverse background, gave me a sense of belonging and crystallized what sort of person and what sort of clinician I wanted to be.'

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