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Published April 1, 2020, 3:12 PM

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The Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) research on virgin coconut oil (VCO) and its effects on COVID-19 patients will have a two-pronged approach: a hospital-based one and a community-based one, according to the agency's top official.

DOST Secretary Fortunato dela Pena in his Facebook page said that the hospital-based study entitled, "Virgin Coconut Oil and Omega-3a Adjunctive Therapy for Hospitalized Patients with COVID 19," will be conducted at the Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) and will be led by Dr. Marissa Alejandria.

"VCO will serve as a supplement to the daily treatment regimen of COVID-19 positive patients. The study aims to assess the possible benefits of VCO if given to patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 in addition to the drugs being assessed in the clinical trials," the DOST Secretary said.

This arm may possibly run for a minimum of one month or until the minimum number of patients have been achieved. This is in cooperation with the DOST and the UP-PGH Clinical COVID-19 Research Group and the Metro Manila Health Research and Development Consortium of the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (DOST PCHRD).

He added that this will run parallel to research for COVID-19 persons under investigation (PUIs), which will be conducted at isolation facilities in communities and hospitals of the National Capital Region and Region IV-A, in collaboration with DOST CALABARZON and the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA).

The Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) will take the lead in the community-based study and will incorporate VCO in food provided to the PUIs. The study aims to assess the possible benefits provided by VCO for patients with COVID-19, as well as contacts and other high-risk groups.

The project team is planning to follow the same procedures with their previous intervention studies. The dietary supplementation may run for at least four weeks. The study will be done in cooperation with the DOST-PCHRD and the Philippine Coconut Authority.

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