

# The Lancet Retracts Hydroxychloroquine Study

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FROM THE WEBMD ARCHIVES

June 4, 2020 - The online medical journal *The Lancet* has apologized to readers after retracting a study that said the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine did not help to curb COVID-19 and might cause death in patients.

The study was withdrawn because the company that provided data would not provide full access to the information for a third-party peer review, saying to do so would violate client agreements and confidentiality requirements, [The Lancet said in a statement](#).

“Based on this development, we can no longer vouch for the veracity of the primary data sources. Due to this unfortunate development, the authors request that the paper be retracted,” *The Lancet* said in a statement.

The study was published May 22, with researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston using data and analysis provided by Surgisphere Corporation. [The study was massive](#), with information coming from 671 hospitals around the world and the medical records of 96,000 patients.

In the study, researchers concluded the drug didn't help curb COVID-19, caused heart problems, and appeared to increase the risk of death. The study had immediate impact, with the World Health Organization and other groups stopping research into hydroxychloroquine.

But questions about the research methods rose immediately. The Lancet launched a third-party peer review.

“Our independent peer reviewers informed us that Surgisphere would not transfer the full dataset, client contracts, and the full ISO audit report to their servers for analysis as such transfer would violate client agreements and confidentiality requirements,” The Lancet statement said.

The reviewers were unable to conduct “an independent and private peer review” and withdrew from the process, *The Lancet* said. [Surgisphere issued a statement](#)

“We deeply apologise to you, the editors, and the journal readership for any embarrassment or inconvenience that this may have caused,” *The Lancet* said.

saying it provides a “real-time database of over 240 million anonymized patient encounters from over 1,200 health care organizations in 45 countries.”

The company said its data was solid and said the firm “clearly outlined the limitations of an observational study” to researchers.