8 April 2020

Roche's new COVACTA study, will evaluate the safety and efficacy of intravenous Actemra® (tocilizumab) on top of standard of care in hospitalised adult patients with severe COVID-19 pneumonia compared to placebo on top of standard of care.

At the moment, there are no robust, well-controlled studies showing safety and efficacy of Actemra in clinical treatment of COVID-19 pneumonia, and Actemra is not currently approved for this use.

However, Roche have commissioned the first global study of Actemra in this setting. In addition to the Roche trial, Roche is also carefully following independently-led clinical trials, on multiple medicines including Actemra, that are taking place around the world.

With the announcement of new clinical trials, and a potential increase in demand for Actemra, Roche is working urgently to accelerate manufacturing capacity to maximize production of Actemra wherever possible with the goal of increasing available supply globally.

Despite some of the supply and logistics challenges due to COVID-19, Roche has been able to continue to deliver its most crucial medical products around the world. Currently they are reporting only limited disruption and are continually monitoring the situation.

As we reported in March, Roche was approved to manufacture COVID-19 testing kits (cobas® SARS-CoV-2 Test) and they have ramped up production of these into the millions of units.