The WHO declared the global outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, and “call(ed) on all countries to exchange country experiences and practices in a transparent and timely way” (http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/pages/news/news/2020/03/who-announces-covid-19-outbreak-a-pandemic). To date, many medical societies have announced their intention to collect and analyze data from COVID-19 patients and some large-scale prospective data collections are already running, such as the LEOSS registry (Lean European Open Survey on SARS-CoV-2 Infected Patients) or the CAPACITYCOVID registry (registry of patients with COVID-19 including cardiovascular risk and complications). The necessity to mobilize and harmonize basic and applied research worldwide is of utmost importance (Sansonetti, 2020).

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

The study was supported by the Federal Ministry of Health of Germany (2520COR201). The additional DeRegCOVID authors are as follows: Pauline Tholen, Barbara Nöthel, Jan Wiestroer, Raphael Majeed, and Stefan Uhlig (all RWTH University Hospital Aachen, Germany); Danny Jonigk (Hannover Medical School, Germany); Hans-Ulrich Holterm (Germany Federal Ministry of Health); Karl-Friedrich Bürig (Professional Association of German Pathologists); and Gustavo Barreton (German Society of Pathology). A special thanks go to all colleagues performing COVID-19 autopsies and participating in the registry.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

Ackermann M, Verleden SE, Kuehnel M, Haverich A, Welte T, Laenger F, Vansapel A, Werlein C, Stark 1

1 Institute of Pathology, RWTH Aachen University Hospital, Aachen, Germany
2 Institute of Medical Informatics, RWTH Aachen University Hospital, Aachen, Germany
*Corresponding author: E-mail: covid.pathologie@ukaachen.de
†Additional contributors of DeRegCOVID are listed in Acknowledgements

DOI 10.15252/emmm.202012885 | EMBO Mol Med. (2020) 12: e12885 | Published online 3 July 2020

© 2020 The Authors. Published under the terms of the CC BY 4.0 license
The German Registry for COVID-19 autopsies: DeRegCOVID (A) DeRegCOVID workflow: The main aim of the registry is to centrally gather possibly all autopsy data from Germany. The registry supports centers in all questions related to COVID-19 autopsies, e.g. providing detailed standard operating procedures. The biomaterial remains decentralized with each center. The centers report data to the registry. The registry reports the data to the pathology societies, the health authorities, i.e. German Federal Ministry of Health and Robert Koch Institute, and, jointly with these institutions, to the public. The registry also serves as an honest broker mediating national and international research inquiries to centers with available material.

Launch v.1 15 April 2020 Approval by ethics committee of university hospital (RWTH Aachen) No. EK 092/20
Launch v.2 29 April 2020 Registered at Clinical Trial Center Aachen (CTCA) No. EK 20-096

Figure 1. The German Registry for COVID-19 Autopsies (DeRegCovid).

(A) DeRegCOVID workflow: The main aim of the registry is to centrally gather possibly all autopsy data from Germany. The registry supports centers in all questions related to COVID-19 autopsies, e.g. providing detailed standard operating procedures. The biomaterial remains decentralized with each center. The centers report data to the registry. The registry reports the data to the pathology societies, the health authorities, i.e. German Federal Ministry of Health and Robert Koch Institute, and, jointly with these institutions, to the public. The registry also serves as an honest broker mediating national and international research inquiries to centers with available material. (B) Available material and data. More than 25 different tissues are available, mainly formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded (FFPE), but several centers also have unfixed frozen samples. Gathered data mainly focus on the pathological diagnosis derived from the autopsy. The registry was first launched on April 15, 2020.

(B) Available material and data collected from deceased who had been diagnosed with COVID-19 include:
- demographic data,
- known preexisting conditions,
- course of disease,
- pathological diagnosis and cause of death.