

Utah State University Antiviral Researchers at Work on Coronavirus with NIH Support

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Researchers at Utah State University's Institute for Antiviral Research are at work testing antiviral compounds and licensed drugs for their effectiveness against the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the cause of the Covid-19 pandemic. The institute specializes in developing animal models for testing antiviral agents and vaccines and is doing the coronavirus work supported by a \$2.5 million research grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Bart Tarbet, a research associate professor in USU's Department of Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences (ADVS), is lead investigator on the project, in collaboration with Brett Hurst, ADVS assistant research professor. The scientists will investigate how the virus affects organs and tissues causing disease—a critical step in developing treatments and vaccines—and how the virus responds to various treatments. Institute for Antiviral Research faculty and technicians have been working with the novel coronavirus in test tubes and cell culture plates since late February, and last week finalized the funding for animal model development to investigate possible treatments.

Because of the urgent need to better understand the virus and treat infection, the research team will experiment with different disease models simultaneously, Tarbet said.

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