



Llama antibodies can soon be playing a role in the global fight against COVID-19 if clinical trials live up to their early promise. The trials are being conducted by a Belgian **biomedical** start-up.

Researchers from the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology and Ghent University Center for Medical Biotechnology are saying that antibodies from a llama named Winter have **blunted** the coronavirus infections in lab testing. The technology wouldn't be used to replace vaccines but rather to add to them, helping to protect people with weaker immune systems and those hospitalized by the virus.

Llamas have a particular kind of antibody called heavy chain antibody, and they're much simpler than the ones that humans have. Due to this, scientists can easily take a little **snippet** of the protein and glue it to other proteins. Early studies showed effectiveness against several variants of the disease, including the highly infectious delta variant.

Difficult words: **biomedical** (relating to both biology and medicine), **blunt** (to weaken), **snippet** (a small part or piece).

Discussion Questions**Topic Talk**

1. Define the following words: *biomedical*, *blunt* and *snippet*
2. What can people expect from Llama antibodies soon?
3. What have researchers found out about the antibodies from llama in a lab testing?
4. Would the new technology replace the use of vaccines?
5. Why have scientists used llama antibodies in their research instead of human antibodies?

Express Your Thoughts

1. What do you think about this new research that is being conducted by a Belgian biomedical?
2. Do you believe there could possibly be other animals that can be used in making COVID-19 treatment?
3. Do you think the use of this technology is better than vaccines?