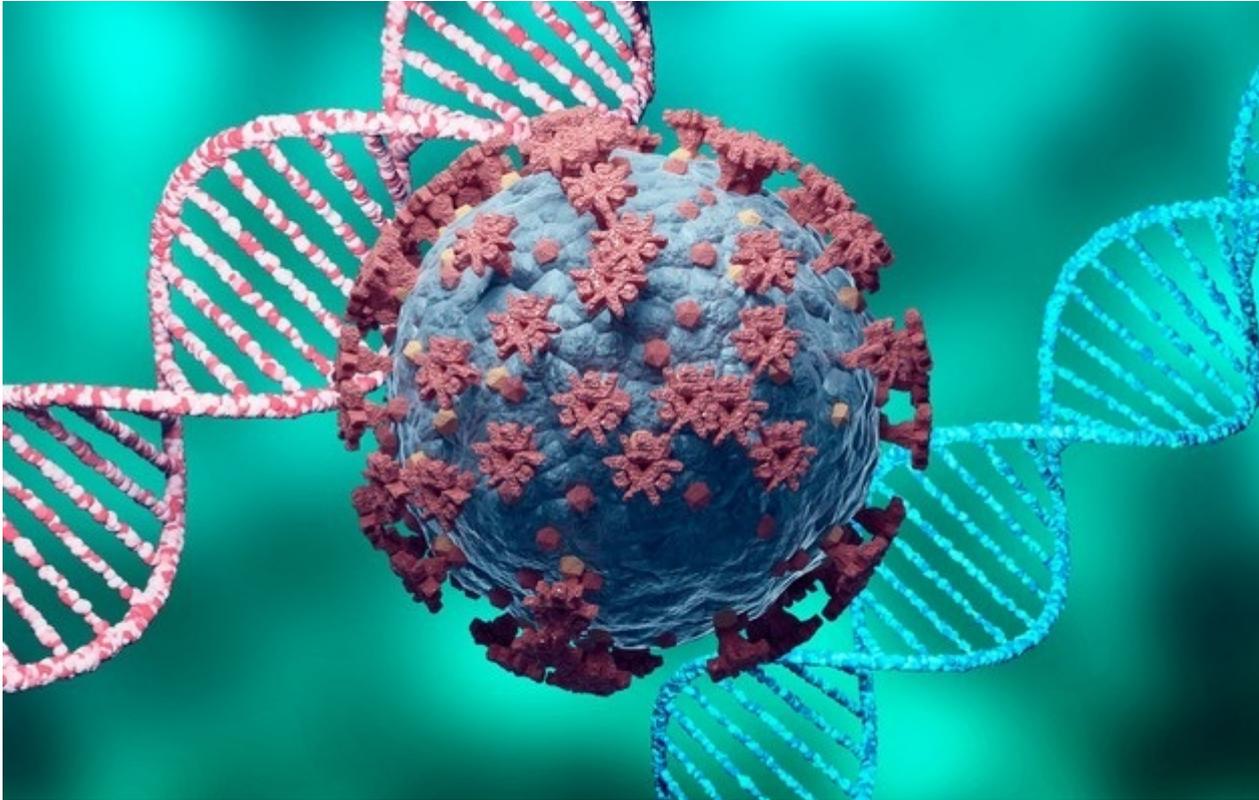


Fighting Against Coronavirus Mutations

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COVID-19 tsunami in India has caught the world's attention following the country's surge of daily cases. Hospitals are running out of beds, oxygen supplies, and even crematoriums and burial grounds are struggling to provide more spaces. The country recently announced that they had discovered a new triple mutant coronavirus variant identified scientifically as B.1.618. It emerged from a previously occurring strain called B.1.617 or referred to also as the double mutant variant.

Head of Genetics Working Group from the UGM Faculty of Medicine, dr. Gunadi, Sp.BA., Ph.D., said that the virus mutations would continue as it was the nature of viruses to mutate. According to GISAID data, Indian variants have not yet been detected in Indonesia, but their emergence is, for sure, likely. The fact people are still highly mobile and don't entirely comply with health and safety protocols, the risk of transmission is indeed high. Thus, Gunadi asked people to consider each other's well-being by adhering to the health protocols, even after receiving their vaccine jabs.

"Viruses will keep mutating. We have to be aware of these new variants but don't be excessively worried. Complying with health protocols is one of the keys to preventing a similar situation happen here. Even if you have been vaccinated, you can still be infected," he explained, Tuesday (27/4).



He said, currently, there had been no studies or research on triple mutations. However, it is worth noting that B.1.618 variant contains three mutations in the receptor-binding domain (RBD) of the spike (S) protein bound directly to human host cells, namely E484Q, L452R, and V382L. The E484Q is located similarly to the E484K of the South African and Brazilian variants. Thus, it may have identical properties like the E484K for the capability of evading the human immune system.

“Currently, there is no research evidence that shows B.1.617 and B.1.618 affect the speed of transmission, the severity of the disease, and the effectiveness of the vaccine,” he explained.

Author: Ika

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