

EasyCOV: French Ministry of Health and Solidarity approves social security reimbursement for the saliva-based Covid-19 test

Large-scale commercialisation of the test gains pace in France and internationally

On January 5th 2021, the French Ministry of Health and Solidarity approved reimbursement via the social security system of the EasyCOV saliva-based test for Covid-19, with publication in the Official Journal of the ruling of December 28th 2020. This decision followed the opinion issued by France's National Authority for Health (Haute Autorité de Santé, HAS) on November 28th 2020.

The ruling recommends use and reimbursement of the EasyCOV test in symptomatic patients for whom a nose and throat swab would be impossible or difficult. EasyCOV is therefore fully recognised as a lab test at the heart of diagnostic and detection strategies for Covid-19. The consortium developing and marketing the device – made up of the biotechnology company SkillCell (Alcen group), Sys2DiaG laboratory (CNRS/Alcen) and the company Vogo – has therefore reached a new stage in the roll-out of EasyCOV. The decision by the Ministry of Health and Solidarity will thereby help speed up its commercial deployment in France and internationally.

Simple, rapid and effective: key strengths to support large-scale diagnostic and detection strategies for Covid-19

Given the current health crisis, the EasyCOV test has key, recognised strengths in terms of simplicity, speed and effectiveness.

As a reminder, EasyCOV is a viral RNA detection tool that is easier and faster (40 min) than RT-PCR testing. The RT-LAMP technique on which EasyCOV is based can amplify viral RNA, and then reveal whether it is present in a saliva sample after two heating periods of 10 minutes at 80°C then 29 minutes at 65°C, respectively. Results are accessed via a digital application, using colour coding.

The saliva sample should be taken by a health professional. The test analysis stage can be done by a medical laboratory (at the lab or any venue that can ensure adequate health safety and quality) or by a doctor (GP practice, health centre or care home). A positive result should be confirmed by a saliva RT PCR test.

Ready to take off in France and internationally

After the positive assessment by the HAS and decision by the Ministry of Health and Solidarity, SkillCell and Vogo have a new drive to speed up marketing of EasyCOV, after a very promising start to order-taking in the second half of 2020.

In France, renewed sales efforts will focus on markets where EasyCOV's strengths make the greatest difference. From this perspective, the following will be targeted in particular:

- Elderly or disabled people in residential or care homes (EHPADS)
- Young children who often find nasopharyngeal samples difficult
- Athletes whose activity requires frequent repeated testing and issues with nasopharyngeal samples

More widely and internationally, recognition of EasyCOV by the French authorities will also help speed up sales in various markets such as transport (airports, rail stations), hospitals, events, companies, and tourism.

As a reminder, the EasyCOV test is produced and marketed by SkillCell, a subsidiary of the Alcen group. Since the second half of 2020, Vogo has received royalties, calculated based on the number of tests sold and completed in France and internationally, for its contribution to the consortium (developing the automatic results analysis solution and digital portal that works with all Health information systems).

The EasyCov program is also supported by la Direction Générale de l'Armement (DGA) and l'Agence de l'Innovation de Défense (AID), and by la Region Occitanie and l'Agence régionale de développement économique (AD'OCC) through financial backing in the form of subsidies.

About SKILLCELL

An ALCEN group subsidiary. SkillCell develops in-field diagnostic tests using its simplicity-centred approach: tests that must be able to be used by anybody, anywhere and at any time. Founded in Guadeloupe in 2017, the company has offices in Jarry (Guadeloupe), Paris and Montpellier. The SkillCell team brings together scientific experts and seasoned manufacturers to find solutions to medical and societal diagnostic testing issues by providing relevant, high-quality information that allows users to make well-informed choices with full transparency.

More information at: www.skillcell-alcen.com

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About CNRS

The French National Center for Scientific Research is one of the most recognized and renowned public research institutions in the world. For more than 80 years, it has continued to attract talent at the highest level and to nurture multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research projects at the national, European and international levels. Geared towards the public interest, it contributes to the scientific, economic, social and cultural progress of France. The CNRS is above all 32,000 women and men, more than 1,000 laboratories in partnership with universities and other higher education institutions bringing together more than 120,000 employees and 200 professions that advance knowledge by exploring the living world, matter, the Universe, and the functioning of human societies. The CNRS ensures that this mission is carried out in compliance with ethical rules and with a commitment to professional equality. The close relationship it establishes between its research missions and the transfer of acquired knowledge to the public makes it today a key player in innovation in France and around the world. Partnerships with companies are at the heart of its technology transfer policy, and the start-ups that have emerged from CNRS laboratories bear witness to the economic potential of its research. The CNRS provides also access to research findings and data, and this sharing of knowledge targets many audiences: scientific communities, the media, decision-makers, economic players, and the general public.

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About VOGO

VOGO develops, markets and distributes live & replay, audio and video solutions for spectators and professionals in sports arenas. VOGO's disruptive solution for spectators transforms the stadium experience by providing multi-camera content on demand for viewing on tablets and smartphones, irrespective of the number of people connected. In the professional sphere, VOGO's video solution provides analytical and decision-making tools (referee assistance, medical diagnostics, coaching, etc.). The acquisition of Vokkero® in October 2019 enriched this range of video solutions, with the integration of a line of audio communications systems that has drawn international recognition not just in the sporting sphere (more than 20 disciplines) but also in industry, services and healthcare. All of the Group's technologies have patent protection. VOGO is present in France (Montpellier, Paris and Crolles) and in North America, with an office in New York. The Group has been listed on the Euronext Growth stock market since November 2018 (ISIN code: FR0011532225 – ALVGO).

For more information: www.vogo-group.com

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