

Canadian researchers said Monday they are investigating a popular superfood -- the acai berry -- as a treatment to prevent Covid-19's most severe symptoms, [The Jakarta Post](#) reports.

Past studies have shown the berry's extract may act as an inflammation inhibitor, which doctors believe could help prohibit the severe inflammatory response caused by the coronavirus.

University of Toronto scientists Michael Farkouh and Ana Andreazza, who have studied the berry's effect on inflammation responses for nearly five years, are researching how it can be used to fight COVID-19.

"It's a long shot," Farkouh told AFP. "But acai berries are cheap and easily accessible for everyone, as well as safe, so it was worth trying."

The pair enrolled some 580 patients who have tested positive for coronavirus in Canada and Brazil, where the berry is grown.

Half took doses of the extract while the rest received placebos.

The hope is that early intervention with acai could help prevent some of the disease's worst symptoms, which can lead to hospitalization and death, Farkouh said.

He explained that the extract specifically targets the same NLRP3 pathway as the coronavirus, which when activated triggers the body's response to fight off infection and stress.

Results of the 30-day study are expected to be released at the end of 2020.