



COVID-19, vaccines, patents and justice: who can we trust in future?

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If COVID-23 happens next year, or Ebola, will it be any different?

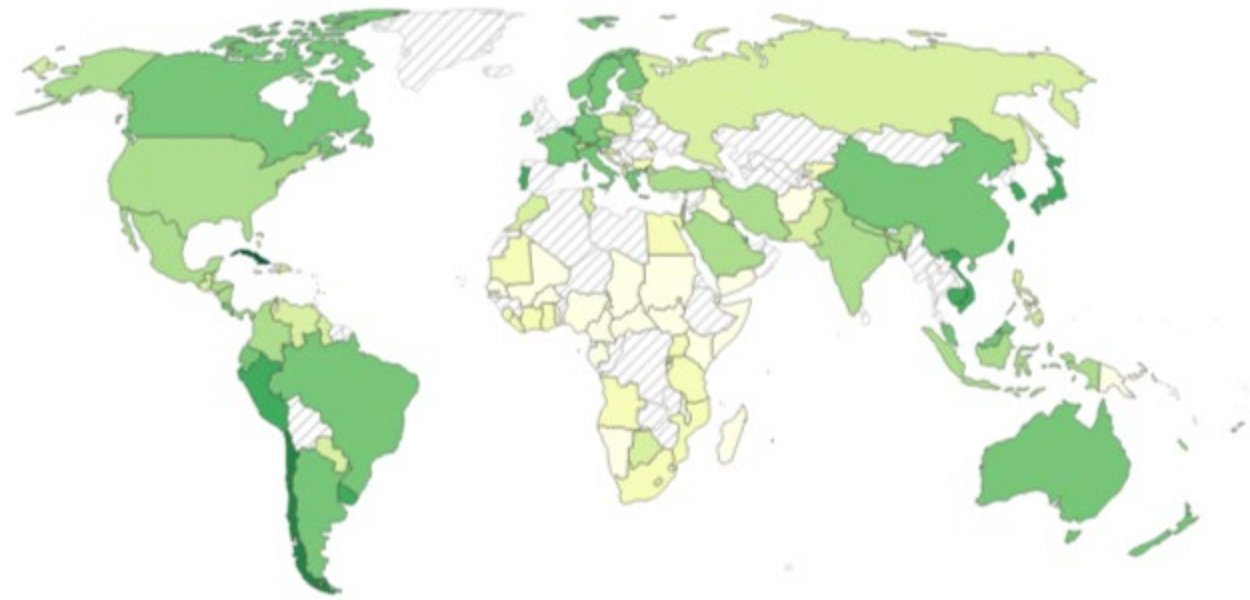
- **Countries and politicians will probably do EXACTLY the same thing – consequences are minimal**
- **What HAS changed the ways patents, drugs, vaccines are prioritized?**
- **Will early warning systems work?**
- **Burnout, health worker issues remain unaddressed**

Total COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people, Dec 8, 2022

Our World
in Data

All doses, including boosters, are counted individually.

World



Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data - Last updated 9 December 2022

Reflection for this talk – beyond the rhetoric



Madhu Pai, MD, PhD 
@paimadhu

How rich nations 'negotiate' [#PandemicTreaty](#):

Don't talk about us hoarding supplies
Never discuss patents or waivers
Nothing about pharma monopolies
Definitely don't bring up equity

Rest we are OK with

Who were the bad players?

Politicians – a list of scoundrels during COVID



Politicians, countries and health systems

- **Countries hoarded vaccines, drugs, resources – and not just rich countries**
- **Arbitrary border restrictions – again, not just rich countries**
- **Political rivals dealt with while eyes of world directed inwards**
- **Terrible and rapid corruption – examples of PPE**
- **Unmasking the lack of health care system prioritisation – again, rich and poor nations**
- **Shed light on poor vaccine programmes in much of the world**

Drug and vaccine manufacturers

- **Immediate prioritization of rich countries**
- **Also immediate patent protection**
- **Secrecy agreements contingent on vaccine delivery**
- **Companies like Moderna – prioritized patent wars over access (despite massive public investment)**

TOP PHARMA COMPANIES 2022: STILL RIDING THE COVID WAVE

Company of the Year **Pfizer** Inc. certainly broke records. **Comirnaty**, the COVID-19 vaccine Pfizer developed with **BioNTech** SE, is now the best-selling drug in the world, having generated 2021 direct sales and alliance revenue of \$36.78 billion for Pfizer. For the first half of 2022, that total was reported by Pfizer at \$22.08 billion. With the company's September 2022 launch of a booster aimed at

th In Pfizer's case, Comirnaty has not been the only weapon in the company's
fu COVID-19 arsenal. After generating \$76 million in U.S. sales in December 2021

Originally developed as a treatment for hepatitis C and later investigated in Ebola and Marburg virus, Gilead's **Veklury** (remdesivir) was another failed antiviral until company researchers realized it might be effective against COVID-19. Two years and more than \$10 billion in sales later, Veklury is one of the world's leading treatments for COVID. It generated \$9.59 billion in sales in 2021, thanks to government-to-government purchase agreements. In 2022, the drug's price rose to a base price of \$5.3

But we also had praise singers....



Seth Berkley  @GaviSeth · Dec 8

December 5th marked 1000 days since @WHO characterized #COVID19 as a pandemic. This crisis is far from over and has been prolonged by vaccine nationalism, supply shortages, export bans, logistical challenges and misinformation. The world must learn from these lessons.

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Seth Berkley 

@GaviSeth

With #COVAX the world now has a blueprint of how to deliver vaccines at scale in an emergency to low-income countries, guided by a fair allocation framework developed with the @WHO to prioritise those most at-risk.

1:00 AM · Dec 8, 2022

If COVID-23 happens next year, or Ebola, will it be any different?

- **We did! It was called mPox – and it happened again – vaccines went to rich countries!
NO plan for Nigeria, other countries who have needed them**

Who behaved well?

- **Clinicians – rapidly shared information**
- **Public health – not flawless, but many pivoted as evidence changed**
- **Activists – especially HIV activists**
- **And let us be honest – the vaccine and drug development system delivered wonders – but not equitably**
- **We need to play to our strengths**

So what to do?

- **Recognise our friends – in climate change, animal rights movements, human rights – because next organism likely to come from a stressed ecosystem**
- **Maintain pressure on rich countries – hypocrisy and historical restitution debt is clear**
- **But need to call out lack of prioritization of health systems in poor countries by leaders**
- **Intelligently assess what a more equitable world needs**
 - It may be way too late for COVID-19 vaccines
 - There may be far greater priorities – water, other vaccines, better primary care
- **Need to critically keep assessing patents and manufacturing capacity**
- **Long game – the best protections from pandemics is a strong health system and strong attention to patient rights, not endless plans,**