

IFPMA Covid-19 Update - 2 June

Top news:

- US President Trump announced the withdrawal of the US from the WHO; the EU is urging him to reconsider; no explicit statement on the US's withdrawal by the WHO yet
- Medicines Patent Pool stands ready to offer its expertise in licensing and patent pooling to address the current COVID-19 crisis.
- WHO reports that there are currently 10 candidate vaccine in clinical evaluation and 123 candidate vaccines in preclinical evaluation.
- Eli Lilly announces the start of the first human trial of a potential antibody treatment for Covid-19 & Gilead releases positive topline results of remdesivir from the Phase 3 SIMPLE trial.
- WHO survey found that essential health services for NCDs were severely disrupted during the pandemic & countries reveal disturbing rates of AMR which will most likely increase due to COVID-19.

IP, PRICING & ACCESS

- **Politico:** [Phil Hogan: Compulsory licensing for corona vaccine possible](#). EU trade chief Phil Hogan said in a [letter to Bernd Lange](#), chair of the European Parliament's trade committee, that the EU can resort to compulsory licensing if necessary to push for worldwide access to a coronavirus vaccine. Commissioner Hogan also mentions the [WHA resolution](#), adopted in mid-May, adding that the resolution '*represents a strong commitment....in ensuring access to COVID-19 treatments and vaccines*'.
- **Medicines Patent Pool:** [The Medicines Patent Pool prepared to offer expertise in licensing and patent pooling to address the current COVID-19 crisis](#). Following the WHO's Solidarity Call to Action and launch of the C-TAP, Charles Gore, MPP's Executive Director, offered the organization's experience and knowledge in negotiating and managing diverse and complex licenses to support access to potential new Covid-19 treatments.
- **European Commission:** [Pharmaceutical Strategy - Timely patient access to affordable medicines](#). In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has launched a public consultation on its proposed pharmaceutical strategy, which aims to ensure Europe's supply of safe and affordable medicines to meet patients' needs and support the European pharmaceutical industry's innovation efforts. Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic around preparedness and supply chains will also be addressed. The feedback period runs from 2 June until 7 July 2020 (midnight Brussels time).

VIEW ON PHARMA

- **The Economist:** [Big pharma is having a good crisis, Drug innovation is back in fashion](#). The pandemic has reminded the world of the industry's strengths - its capacity to innovate and provide drugs on a vast scale. But this article argues a global agreement is needed to govern the manufacture and distribution of a potential vaccine - global co-operation will mean that the vaccine is deployed first where it brings most benefit. Second, the patent system should be preserved because, correctly designed, it incentivises investment in new treatments.

GEOPOLITICS

- **Politico:** [Trump announces U.S. withdrawal from the World Health Organization](#). Trump has criticized the WHO for failing to quickly sound the alarm when the novel virus emerged and accused it of helping China cover up the threat it posed. He added that the WHO has failed to make the [requested reforms](#) and will be redirecting

future donor funds to other worldwide global public health needs. Experts claim this would set back global efforts to track and defeat the virus.

- **Politico:** [EU asks US to rethink World Health Organization withdrawal](#). “In the face of this global threat, now is the time for enhanced cooperation and common solutions. Actions that weaken international results must be avoided. In this context, we urge the US to reconsider its announced decision,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the EU’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a [joint statement](#).
- **The Guardian:** [China withheld data on coronavirus from WHO, recordings reveal](#). The recordings, obtained by the [Associated Press](#), show officials complaining in meetings during the week of 6 January that China was not sharing data needed to evaluate the risk of the virus to the rest of the world. The WHO has also been criticised for consistently lauding China.

POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY

- **Wall Street Journal (Paywall):** [Low-Income Nations Likely to Remain Deeply Damaged Five Years After Pandemic, World Bank Says](#). Severity of economic fallout suggests poor countries will suffer permanent loss of growth potential. Weakened productivity, depressed investment, lost human capital, and shortened global supply chains will likely be among the lasting consequences of the pandemic. The full World Bank study will be [issued](#) on June 8, which will include the Bank Group’s latest forecasts for the global economy.
- **Wall Street Journal (Paywall):** [U.S. Economy Faces Long Recovery From Coronavirus Effects, Experts Say](#). Surveys of purchasing managers in U.S., Asia and Europe offer some hope that decline in factory activity is starting to bottom out.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **The Guardian:** [Gordon Brown urges G20 countries to back \\$2.5tn coronavirus plan](#). Failure by the G20 group to organise a global Covid-19 recovery plan is a potential death sentence for the world’s poor, the former UK prime minister Gordon Brown has said. The G20 promised a swift response using all available policy tools, but Brown said promises had not been met. “With new Covid-19 cases around the world running above 100,000 a day, and still to peak, the vacuum left by G20 inactivity means that allocations from the IMF and the World Bank to poorer countries will remain a fraction of what they have said is required.
- **World Bank Blogs:** [How Will COVID-19 Impact Africa’s Trade and Market Opportunities?](#) Blog by Douglas Zhihua Zeng, Senior Economist. African countries can build more resilient and sustainable economies if they can do things right following the pandemic. The author outlines four policy options which should be considered: (1) Diversification of African economies; (2) Increase uptake of digital technologies; (3) Strengthening intra-regional trade; (4) more international trade agreements.

SUPPLY & MANUFACTURING

- **FiercePharma:** [Emergent BioSolutions, BARDA reach \\$628M deal to manufacture COVID-19 vaccine hopefuls](#). The contract is part of the US government’s “Operation Warp Speed” development initiative to speed promising COVID-19 vaccines through clinical trials and into mass production before the end of 2020.
- **STAT News:** [COVID-19 has exposed cracks in the global medicines supply chain. We need to fix them](#). Strengthening the supply chain to ensure an uninterrupted supply of essential medicines that are safe, meet standards for quality, and are beneficial to health should be seen as a public health priority. The pandemic also exposed vulnerabilities in the global medicine supply chain, leading to uncertainty, drug shortages, quality issues, and price volatility.

VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

Other

- **Bloomberg:** [Chinese Covid-19 Vaccine Expected to Begin Mass Output This Year](#). The vaccine, jointly developed by the Beijing Institute of Biological Products and China National Biotec Group Co., has completed phase II testing and may be ready for the market at the end of this year or early next year.
- **The Moscow Times:** [Russian Army to Test Coronavirus Vaccine on Troops](#). Bioweapons researchers are working with health officials on developing a coronavirus vaccine, one of 47 that Russian officials say are in various stages of development.

TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT & REPURPOSED DRUGS

IFPMA members

- **CNN:** [First human trial of potential antibody treatment for Covid-19 begins](#) said Eli Lilly on Monday. The first phase of the trial in New York, Los Angeles and Atlanta will test whether the therapy is safe and well-tolerated; those results are expected in late June.
- **Gilead:** [Gilead Announces Results From Phase 3 Trial of Remdesivir in Patients With Moderate COVID-19](#). Top-line results from the Phase 3 SIMPLE trial demonstrate that a 5-day treatment course of remdesivir resulted in significantly greater clinical improvement versus treatment with standard of care alone.

Focus on Hydroxychloroquine

- **EMA:** [Reminder of the risks of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine](#). The agency is reminding healthcare professionals to closely monitor patients receiving the treatments, given the potential serious side effects that can result from the medicines.

Other

- **Wall Street Journal (Paywall):** [Heart Drugs Show Promise With Covid-19 Complications](#). Widely prescribed cardiovascular drugs, some recently suspected in high death rates of infected patients, now are being studied for potential protection.

GLOBAL HEALTH & SOCIAL IMPACT

- **WHO:** [COVID-19 significantly impacts health services for noncommunicable diseases](#). These are the results from a WHO survey released today, completed by 155 countries during a 3-week period in May. It confirmed the global impact, but sees low-income countries being the most affected.
- **WHO:** [Record number of countries contribute data revealing disturbing rates of antimicrobial resistance](#). WHO is concerned that the trend will further be fueled by the inappropriate use of antibiotics during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **The Brussels Times:** [Coronavirus: flu vaccination extra important this year](#). Belgium's Superior Health Council (HGR/CCS) has called on people in risk groups and health care workers to get vaccinated against the seasonal flu this year, in the context of the coronavirus crisis.
- **France 24:** [As doctors go virtual, pandemic turbocharges telemedicine](#). In a matter of weeks, the coronavirus pandemic sparked a technological revolution in healthcare systems across the world that might otherwise have taken years. Many health practitioners are replacing the face-to-face meetings that have always underpinned general practice, with patient consultations by telephone and online video apps.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

- **Elemental:** [Coronavirus May Be a Blood Vessel Disease, Which Explains Everything](#). Months into the pandemic, there is now a growing body of evidence to support the theory that the novel coronavirus can infect blood vessels, which could explain not only the high prevalence of blood clots, strokes, and heart attacks, but also provide an answer for the diverse set of head-to-toe symptoms that have emerged.

- **The New York Times:** [U.S. and Chinese Scientists Trace Evolution of Coronaviruses in Bats](#). In their [report](#), they point to the great variety of viruses in southern and southwestern China and urge closer monitoring of bat viruses in the area and greater efforts to change human behavior as ways of decreasing the chances of future pandemics.

WHO - COVID-19 UPDATE, 2 June

No media briefing by Dr Tedros/ WHO HQ today.

Yesterday's statement by Dr Tedros, including remarks regarding the US withdrawal from the WHO [here](#):

- He said that the world has long benefited from the strong, collaborative engagement with the government and the people of the US.
- He thanked the US and its people for their contribution and generosity towards global health for many decades.
- He stated that it's the WHO's wish for their collaboration to continue.

NEW WHO RESOURCES

- **WHO:** [Updated draft landscape of COVID-19 candidate vaccines – 2 June](#). Currently there are 10 candidate vaccine in clinical evaluation and 123 candidate vaccines in preclinical evaluation