

IFPMA Covid-19 Update - 7 April

Top news:

- WIPO discussions under way to enable wider access to some patented drugs and medical supplies during the coronavirus pandemic.
- NGOs and academics ask 37 WTO Members to declare themselves eligible to import medicines manufactured under compulsory license in another country.
- A group of 165 global leaders has called on the G20 for immediate and coordinated international action to tackle the health and economic emergencies caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly across Africa and Latin America.
- As Trump threatens World Health Organization funding, Global Health Centre calls for WHO to improve its financing, global health governance and increased independence from member states.
- The Wellcome Trust launched “Covid-zero” to convince large corporations to donate \$8bn to fund R&D efforts into vaccine, treatments and testing for coronavirus.
- Takeda and CSL set up a new global partnership bringing together world-leading plasma companies to focus on developing and delivering a hyperimmune immunoglobulin in the global fight against COVID-19 & first patients enrol in clinical trials for Roche’s Actemra
- Africa’s economy could suffer tremendously in 2020 with a possible loss of between \$90 billion and \$200 billion.
- Exit strategy to lockdowns increasingly discussed – while WHO provides advice on the use of masks.

VACCINE/ TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT

IFPMA members

- **Takeda & CSL:** [Global Plasma Leaders Collaborate to Accelerate Development of Potential COVID-19 Hyperimmune Therapy](#). Biotest, BPL, LFB, and Octapharma have joined an alliance formed by CSL Behring and Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited to develop a potential plasma-derived therapy for treating COVID-19.
- **STAT News:** [Data for Gilead’s potential coronavirus therapy are coming soon. Here’s what you need to know](#). This month, the world should get the first results from a clinical trial testing the drug remdesivir against Covid-19. They will get a lot of attention.
- **Business Insider:** [The first patients just enrolled in a trial testing the arthritis drug Actemra against the coronavirus. Results are expected in early summer](#). The study will ultimately enrol 330 people globally and produce initial results in early summer. Participants have to have severe cases of COVID-19, marked by pneumonia and requiring hospitalization.
- **The Guardian:** [Controversial drug hydroxychloroquine to be given to coronavirus patients in Australia](#). Hydroxychloroquine will be given to Australian Covid-19 patients in hospitals outside of clinical trials, the federal government confirmed, after the therapeutic goods registration requirements for two drugs were waived to allow them to be imported to and stockpiled in Australia.

Others

- **Financial Times:** [Wellcome seeks \\$8bn from business to fight coronavirus](#). The Wellcome Trust is calling on businesses to donate \$8bn for the scientific fight against coronavirus, saying it is the “world’s best exit strategy” from the lockdowns that have shaken global economies. The global medical research foundation on Tuesday launched “Covid-zero”, a campaign to convince large corporations that it is in their best interest to fund the hunt for a vaccine, treatments and testing for coronavirus.
- **The Guardian:** [Plasma from coronavirus survivors found to help severely ill patients](#). Doctors in two separate hospitals in China have found tentative evidence that seriously ill coronavirus patients can benefit from infusions of blood plasma collected from people who have recovered from the disease.
- **EurekAlert:** [A new antiviral drug heading into clinical trials offers hope for COVID-19 treatment](#). Scientists are hopeful that a new drug -- called EIDD-2801 -- could change the way doctors treat COVID-19. The drug shows promise in reducing lung damage, has finished testing in mice and will soon move to human clinical trials.
- **Bloomberg:** [Everything Must Go Right for Big Pharma’s Bet on a Fast Vaccine](#). The mere hope of a vaccine has generated so much excitement that shares in drug giants such as Pfizer and J&J have shot up in recent weeks - rare moves for large companies that normally aren’t prone to big swings. Moderna is up more than 75% year-to-date. This could easily be a vaccine bubble. The time frame of 12 to 18 months has drawn scepticism from many vaccine experts. “You would have to have everything go perfectly to get there,” says Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi.
- **STAT News:** [A \\$30 billion gamble: Pandemic expert calls for making Covid-19 vaccines before we know they work](#). *Interview with Richard Hatchett, CEO of CEPI.* A core part of our strategy to really improve global access to the vaccines. Because you’re going to face the same pressures in India, in China, in Belgium. Everywhere the vaccine is manufactured, political leaders are going to feel the same pressure. It’s going to be a real challenge.
- **Jerusalem Post:** [Coronavirus vaccine entering human trials after receiving FDA approval](#). Inovio Pharmaceuticals vaccine, funded the Gates Foundation, has entered into human trials. The first trial phase will determine safety and immunogenicity of the vaccine; the second phase will test its effectiveness in treating COVID-19.

DIAGNOSTICS

- **GCR:** [Dutch enforcer secures access to coronavirus testing formula](#). Roche Diagnostics has agreed to supply the Dutch government and third parties with its Covid-19 testing formula.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & ACCESS

- **Reuters:** [U.N. agency says coronavirus emergency could trump some patent rights](#). Discussions are under way on enabling wider access to some patented drugs and medical supplies during the coronavirus pandemic, Francis Gurry, head of WIPO, said on Tuesday. A “non-legislative mechanism” would be a “great way forward”, Gurry said, adding: “Let’s look at the practical measures that can make a difference here. And of course we are involved discussions with various parties to see what might be done in this regard.”

- **KEI:** [Open letter asking 37 WTO Members to declare themselves eligible to import medicines manufactured under compulsory license in another country, under 31bis of TRIPS Agreement](#). The ability of countries to import and export these technologies may prove critically important during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as under future health emergencies. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is obvious that it is not in any WTO member's interest that any member opts-out as an importer. It's totally irrational for any country, even a rich country, to keep its own hands tied to meet the COVID-19 needs of its population by voluntarily shutting itself off from patented ingredients, components, and essential medical products and supplies.

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

- **The Guardian:** [Global leaders urge G20 to tackle twin health and economic crises](#). A group of 165 global leaders has called for immediate and coordinated international action to tackle the twin health and economic emergencies caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Past and present politicians joined academics and civil society representatives to warn the G20 that the virus will return unless urgent action is taken to bolster health systems in poor countries of Africa and Latin America.

MANUFACTURING & SUPPLY OF MEDICINES AND DIAGNOSTICS

- **New York Times:** [India Lifts Restrictions on 24 Drug Exports Amid Coronavirus](#). India has lifted restrictions on the export of 24 pharmaceutical ingredients and medicines made from them. It was not clear what prompted India to lift the restrictions, but Indian government sources had said the bans had prompted intense pressure from the United States. India also [released hydroxychloroquine stocks](#).
- **RFI:** [Medicine shortage looms over coronavirus-hit Europe](#). The European Medicines Agency said that the "continued availability of medicines, in particular those used for patients with COVID-19, is of critical concern. Some EU Member States have indicated that they are starting to see shortages of certain medicines used for patients with COVID-19 or are expecting such shortages to occur very soon."
- **New York Times:** [Delays and Shortages Exacerbate Coronavirus Testing Gaps in the U.S.](#) Even as new and faster tests become available, lengthy delays to obtain results continue and test materials are running low, compounding the crises hospitals are facing.

GLOBAL TRADE & ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **The New Times:** [COVID-19: Africa to lose up to \\$200bn in 2020](#). A preliminary [analysis](#) of the economic impact attributed to COVID-19 has estimated that Africa's GDP growth in 2020 could be cut by 3 to 8 percentage points, equalling a loss of between \$90 billion and \$200 billion.

IMPACT ON PHARMA

- **CNBC:** [Eli Lilly lowers insulin costs as coronavirus crisis deepens](#). Eli Lilly has capped the out-of-pocket cost for insulin to \$35 per month to help diabetes patients across the US, many of whom are facing financial difficulties due to the coronavirus

outbreak. Major insulin makers Lilly, Sanofi, and Novo Nordisk have already lowered the costs of their diabetes drugs after heavy criticism from lawmakers and patients.

GLOBAL RESPONSE

- **NEPAD:** [AUDA-NEPAD Response to COVID-19 & other Epidemics](#). The African Union Development Agency published its short and medium-term response to counter the COVID-19 epidemic. In the short term, the organization will support the Member States to intensify and accelerate its mitigation strategies to slow down the epidemic, followed by suppression of cases through clinical interventions. The long-term strategy involves strengthening health systems, skill development and national planning and data systems among others.
- **Reuters:** [EU ministers likely to agree half a trillion-euro coronavirus rescue](#). Euro zone finance ministers hope to agree on Tuesday on half a trillion euros worth of economic aid to finance recovery from the coronavirus epidemic, a discussion that has sown divisions as the bloc struggles with the outbreak.
- **Africa News:** [Merck Foundation joins hands with First Ladies of Africa to raise awareness about Coronavirus and how to stay safe and healthy](#). Merck Foundation together with African First Ladies of Ghana, Nigeria, DRC, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Guinea Conakry, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Gambia, Liberia and Congo Brazzaville, announced the call for applications for their 'Stay at Home' Media Recognition Awards for African countries.

PANDEMIC DEVELOPMENTS

- **The Guardian:** [China reports zero daily deaths from coronavirus for the first time since January](#). China has reported zero new Covid-19 deaths for the first time since January, despite struggles with ongoing outbreaks including in Wuhan where dozens of residential blocks have been locked down just one day before travel restrictions were set to be lifted.
- **Bloomberg:** [When, and How, Does the Coronavirus Pandemic End?](#). The emerging question is: "When will this all end?" The answer depends in large part on uncertainties about the novel coronavirus that causes the disease, including whether you can get it more than once and how quickly the world's scientists might produce a vaccine. The cost and benefits of a prolonged shutdown and what different countries can afford, from both an economic and political standpoint, are factors, too.

WHO – Daily COVID-19 update, 7 April

No media briefing today by Dr Tedros/ WHO

WHO: [Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19](#). This document provides advice on the use of masks in communities, during home care, and in health care settings in areas that have reported cases of COVID-19. It is intended for individuals in the community, public health and infection prevention and control (IPC) professionals, health care managers, health care workers (HCWs), and community health workers. This updated version includes a section on Advice to decision makers on the use of masks for healthy people in community settings.

WHO EURO: [New WHO/Europe tool for behavioural insights: critical to inform COVID-19 response.](#)

WHO/Europe has released a new behavioural insights tool for national and local authorities developing and coordinating interventions, policies and messages for the COVID-19 response. The new tool is available in English and Russian, and the accompanying survey can be conducted in any language and tailored to country contexts. It was developed in collaboration with the University of Erfurt, Germany, which is currently collecting data every week and sharing results with German authorities coordinating the pandemic response.