

Top news:

- The WHO, Heads of State from around the world (although the United States was absent) together with global health leaders from the public and private sector (including IFPMA) joined in supporting the new partnership: **Access to COVID-19 Tools (act) Accelerator**. This collaboration marks an unprecedented commitment to work together to accelerate the development, production and equitable access and distribution of new vaccines, tests and treatments for COVID-19 worldwide. Partners are calling for increased funding beginning with the 4th May pledging event hosted by the EU Commission.
- WIPO advises that policy focus of governments for COVID-19 should therefore be on supporting science and innovation that will produce a vaccine, treatments or cures. (policy paper – attached)
- As Sanofi criticises the EU for lack of coordination on COVID-19 vaccine development, Sanofi and Johnson & Johnson announce plans to significantly scale up vaccine manufacturing capacity respectively
- Controversy re remdesivir: ‘leaked’ inappropriate characterisation of the clinical study. Gilead explained that the study was stopped early because it had too few patients, and as a result it was not possible to come to statistically meaningful conclusions.
- Speaking on the company’s first-quarter conference call, Eli Lilly CEO Dave Ricks said the biopharmaceutical industry has a “once in a generation opportunity to reset” its reputation.
- EU investment bank approves €75 million equity investment in the biotech company CureVac to develop and produce an experimental coronavirus vaccine

ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

- **WHO:** [Global leaders unite to ensure everyone everywhere can access new vaccines, tests and treatments for COVID-19](#). Heads of state and global health leaders (WHO, UN, GAVI, CEPI, UNITAID, Wellcome, Global Fund, Gates Foundation, IFRC, and IFPMA) today announced the new partnership [Access to COVID-19 Tools \(act\) Accelerator](#) marking an unprecedented commitment to work together to accelerate the development and production of new vaccines, tests and treatments for COVID-19 and assure equitable access worldwide. Industry statement delivered by IFPMA’s DG Thomas Cueni [here](#).
- **IFPMA:** [Pharma industry body joins as founding partner a new global collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable access to new COVID-19 tools](#). “This collaboration is aligned with the innovative biopharmaceutical companies’ strong sense of responsibility to act together as well as in partnership with all stakeholders but also their determination to play the greatest possible role in the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The biopharmaceutical industry holds the key to finding lasting and equitable solutions through new therapeutics and vaccines. Industry welcomes today’s acknowledgment of the critical role of the private sector in this fight.”
- **The Guardian:** [US stays away as world leaders agree action on Covid-19 vaccine](#). The United States did not take part in the World Health Organization initiative, in a sign of Donald Trump’s increasing isolation on the global stage.

MANUFACTURING

- **Bloomberg:** [Sanofi Says Coronavirus Vaccine Question Isn’t When, But How Much](#). As others squabble over the timing and details of how to develop a vaccine, Sanofi Chief Executive

Officer Paul Hudson points further ahead to the continent's ability to produce enough to meet demand. "There is less concern about finding a successful vaccine than there is about making the volumes needed. The biggest untold story in Europe right now is the one about the number of doses."

- **EndPoints News:** [Covid-19 roundup: Sanofi promises to bring recombinant vaccine capacity to 1B+ while scaling up mRNA manufacturing](#). Building on a previous promise to supply 100 to 600 million doses of a baculovirus recombinant vaccine, Sanofi has set a goal to go beyond 1 billion doses within a year — echoing similar ambitions by its Big Pharma brethren J&J. On the mRNA front, Sanofi said its partners can scale up to manufacture 90 to 360 million doses by the first quarter of 2021.
- **Reuters:** [J&J strikes deal with Emergent BioSolutions on coronavirus vaccine manufacturing](#). Johnson & Johnson struck a deal with Emergent BioSolutions Inc to use its manufacturing facilities to help in an effort to make more than 1 billion doses of a vaccine it is testing to stop the novel coronavirus.

SUPPLY OF MEDICINES & PPE

- **The New York Times:** [WTO Report Says 80 Countries Limiting Exports of Face Masks, Other Goods](#). Only 13 WTO members had notified the global trade body as required by its regulations. Reuters reported that France had expanded its list of drugs that face export restrictions despite repeated EU calls from to lift curbs.
- **The New York Times:** [Frantic for Coronavirus Gear, Americans in Need Turn to China's Elite](#). An ad hoc network of companies, wealthy individuals, academics and former diplomats are trying to navigate snarled supply chains, connect wary buyers and sellers and help overwhelmed local officials in desperate need of equipment.
- **VICE:** [Coronavirus Is Revealing Gaping Holes in America's Drug Supply Chain](#). There have been signs hospitals are running low on key pharmaceutical such as asthma medication like albuterol, and sedatives like propofol used in ventilators. There is a fear that supplies of paracetamol and antibiotics might run out soon due to the global supply chain rife with bottlenecks.

GLOBAL RESPONSE

- **FT:** [Drugmakers urged to collaborate on coronavirus vaccine](#). BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager, Fidelity Investments and sister company Fidelity International, Aviva Investors, Janus Henderson and Amundi, Europe's largest asset manager, all told the Financial Times that they want drug companies to put aside any qualms about collaborating with rivals.
- **FiercePharma:** [One COVID-19 opportunity for pharma? A chance to bolster its reputation, Lilly CEO says](#). Speaking on the company's first-quarter conference call on Thursday, Eli Lilly CEO Dave Ricks said the biopharmaceutical industry has a "once in a generation opportunity to reset" its reputation. Ricks' statements came as Lilly reported first-quarter sales of \$5.86 billion, a 15% increase from the same period last year.
- **UN News:** ['Landmark collaboration' to make COVID-19 testing and treatment available to all](#): The biopharmaceutical industry also stands ready to bring its unique knowledge to the partnership, as well as its expertise and experience - including in building manufacturing and distribution networks. "Today, scientists in the public and private sector hold the keys to our common goal: the swift end of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Thomas B. Cueni, Director-General of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers. "In the

fight against COVID-19, we must ensure that no one is left behind. We will only succeed in this journey together.” (and [Swissinfo](#), [Noticias ONU](#))

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VACCINE/ TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT & DONATIONS

IFPMA members

- **STAT News:** [New data on Gilead’s remdesivir, released by accident, show no benefit for coronavirus patients. Company still sees reason for hope.](#) Gilead spokesperson said the company believes “the post included inappropriate characterization of the study.” Because the study was stopped early because it had too few patients, she said, it cannot “enable statistically meaningful conclusions.” However, she said, “trends in the data suggest a potential benefit for remdesivir, particularly among patients treated early in disease.” The company stated that data will be closely scrutinized but are also likely imperfect. The study was terminated prematurely, which could have affected the results. The context that would be provided by a full manuscript is missing, and the data have not been reviewed as normally occurs before publication.
- **Wall Street Journal:** [FDA Warns Against Use of Chloroquine Outside of Clinical Trials.](#) The FDA is warning patients and doctors that two malaria drugs are linked to cardiac dangers and should only be used in hospitalized patients or as part of clinical trials for the virus.

Others

- **Yale:** [Yale launches clinical trial for drug to treat severe COVID-19 patients.](#) The drug — which has been approved for years in Japan and Korea for the treatment of asthma — has shown promising results for reducing inflammation associated with ARDS in mouse models. The researchers have partnered with the California company MediciNova to launch the trial.
- **CNBC:** [The FDA just approved Columbia’s Covid-19 plasma therapy study, backed by Amazon.](#) Throughout the course of the trial, 450 people -- severely ill patients, close contacts of those patients and health care workers -- will receive either convalescent plasma or a placebo.
- **Bloomberg:** [France to Test Nicotine Substitutes as Treatment for Covid-19.](#) Doctors at the Pitie-Salpetriere hospital in Paris observed that few Covid-19 patients hospitalized were smokers. They also speculated that the new virus may involve receptors in the body that respond to nicotine. To investigate whether nicotine might have some protective mechanism, they will conduct clinical tests using patches, including one on health-care workers.
- **New York Post:** [COVID-19 vaccine tests in China protect monkeys from virus, researchers say.](#) Scientists at Sinovac Biotech, a private Beijing based company, dosed out two versions of its vaccine to eight rhesus macaque monkeys. Three weeks later when the monkeys were exposed to the deadly pathogen, none developed a full-blown infection.

Ethics

- **FT:** [Maker of drug touted as coronavirus cure accuses China of gouging.](#) One of the world’s biggest makers of hydroxychloroquine has accused Chinese factories of price gouging it on important ingredients for an antimalarial drug promoted by US president Donald Trump as a potential coronavirus cure.

DIAGNOSTICS

Others

- **Business Today:** [MyLab partners with Biocon's research arm Syngene to produce coronavirus testing kits](#). "India has led by example in its response to the COVID-19. To further India's self-reliance in testing, Mylab Solutions collaborates with Syngene International for Make in India raw materials," the company took to Twitter to announce today.

EARNINGS & COVID-19

- **RFI:** [Coronavirus boosts sales for French pharma giant Sanofi](#). Sanofi said its net income grew by 15.9 percent over the first three months of 2020, with "roughly half of this growth due to COVID-19 impact." Sales surged in part due to stockpiling of the painkiller Doliprane which shot up by more than 20%, helping boost the firm's net sales by 6.9 percent to nearly nine billion euros.

WHO – Daily COVID-19 update, 24 April

No media briefing by Dr Tedros today specifically on COVID-19 but dedicated live [launch event](#) (full video) of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (act) Accelerator.

Launch event - resources

- One page summary about the new partnership [here](#)
 - Grounded in a vision of a planet protected from human suffering and the devastating social and economic consequences of COVID-19, we, an initial group of global health actors (BMGF, CEPI, Gavi, Global Fund, UNITAID, Wellcome Trust, The World Bank, WHO) and private sector partners and other stakeholders, are launching a landmark, global and time-limited collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable global access to new COVID-19 essential health technologies.
 - **Aim:** We ask the global community and political leaders to support this landmark collaboration, and for donors to provide the necessary resources to accelerate achievement of the objectives of this global collaboration, capitalizing on the opportunity provided by the rolling pledging campaign that will start on 4 May 2020.
 - Sir Andrew Witty and Dr Ngozi Okonjo- act as Special Envoys for the ACT Accelerator.
- Dr Tedros' opening speech at the launch event [here](#)
- Participants list [here](#), which included heads of states from France Germany, Spain, Italy, South Africa, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Rwanda, Norway, First secretary of State UK, minister of finance of Saudi Arabia, EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, Gates Foundation, UN Secretary General, GAVI, Global Fund, CEPI, Wellcome Trust, UNITAID, IFPMA, IFRC, and others