VACCINES FOR ALL
The global race between the virus, its variants and the vaccines

Vibha Varshney
vibha@cseindia.org

DownToEarth
DTE reportage on COVID-19

DownToEarth
Pandemic update

Global
• 184,572,371 confirmed cases
• 3,997,640 deaths

Global vaccination: 5.5 billion adult population
• 3.32 billion vaccine doses administered.
• 24.7% of the world population has received at least one dose

Inequity prevails in population vaccinated
• High income countries: 48.3%
• Upper middle income countries: 33.8%
• Lower middle income countries: 13.2%
• Low income countries: 1%
COVID-19 cases per million

Source: Johns Hopkins University

DownToEarth
COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people

Source: Our World in Data, Last update on July 8

DownToEarth
Vaccine shortage despite...

- Speed of development has been exemplary
- Number of vaccines in clinical development: 105
- Vaccines approved for use by regulatory authority of at least one country: 19
- Approved by WHO: 6 (2 from AstraZeneca) Pfizer; AstraZeneca; Sinopharm; Sinovac; Moderna; Janssen
- Systems set for equitable distribution via COVAX
COVAX

• Established in April 2020, coordinated by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; CEPI; WHO and UNICEF
• 180 participating countries. Rich countries pay for the vaccines, the 92 low- and middle-income countries are subsidised
• Deliver 2 billion doses in 2021. Ensure that at least 20% of the population in each country is vaccinated. Serum Institute of India to provide 1 billion

Concerns
• 16.8 billion doses secured across the world but only 4.19 billion of these to be distributed via COVAX. Only 100 million have been actually delivered
• Big pharma calling the shots. Not interested in providing cheap vaccine
• Deals with industry not transparent
• Vaccinating 20% of population is not sufficient for herd immunity
• Distributes vaccines on basis of population and not requirement
• Vaccine delivery after initial 20% not clear. Countries are being bullied by industry when they try to procure directly
TRIPS waiver

• October 2020: India and South Africa floated a proposal to suspend the IPRs on products needed to control the pandemic.
• Supported by 63 countries
• Developed countries blocked the proposal
• May 3, 2021: partial support from the US.
• At TRIPS council meeting in June, member nations agreed to move ahead with text-based negotiations. EU again proposed using existing flexibilities
• Final decision likely to be taken at the WTO Ministerial Conference in November 2021

Concerns
• Developed countries not interested in waiver. Say that existing flexibilities in TRIPS are enough
• Big pharma has not shown any interest in sharing technologies via WHO’s C-TAP
• Developing countries do not have capacity to manufacture
Donations

• Total doses of vaccines donated: 896,753,754
• Top ten donors: USA, UK, Japan, France, Germany, China, Australia, Italy, Canada, India

Concerns
• Donations not going to those who need most
• Are being used to increase political influence

Covax: 701 million
Asia: 59 million
Africa: 21 million
Oceania: 12 million
South and Central America: 10 million
North America: 8 million
International organisation: 1 million
Unknown recipient: 79 million

Source: Duke Global Health Innovation Center, updated July 2
India

India
- 30,742,865 confirmed cases
- 405,523 deaths

One billion adult population to be vaccinated
- 364,847,849 vaccine doses administered
- 22.2% population received at least 1 dose
- 5.2% fully vaccinated
- Vaccination policy unclear
- Supreme Court had to address issue Suo Moto
- Vaccine shortage despite robust pharma industry
- Indigenously developed vaccine licensed to only one manufacturer
- Decision to involve PSUs taken as an afterthought. PSUs being upgraded and still to deliver

DownToEarth
The virus and its variants

- Variants can extend the pandemic: more transmissible, escape the immunity produced by a vaccine

- Four variants of concern: Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta. Many variants of interest are also being monitored constantly

- Delta variant linked to India’s second wave. Has spread to more than 80 countries. Isolated in India in October 2020

- So far, studies suggest that the vaccines are effective against the variants but this could change with just one mutation
What would help?

ENSURE ADEQUATE SUPPLY
a) Free up technologies through TRIPS waiver, C-TAP
b) Increase production facilities
c) Promote collaborations for raw materials

SET A SYSTEM FOR EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION VIA COVAX
a) Restrict hoarding
b) Fund the facility
c) Increase transparency on industry deals

PROTECT PEOPLE
a) Increase transparency in trials
b) Set up a system for monitoring adverse effects
c) Set up a compensation system

IMPROVE DELIVERY
a) Provide the vaccine free of cost
b) Ensure access and increase rate of delivery
c) Manage issues around the digital divide

IMPROVE PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS
a) Monitor variants
b) Provide rational treatment
c) Promote pandemic-appropriate behaviour to control spread
No one is safe, unless everyone is safe

Thank you

DownToEarth