

Study shows overwhelming public support for donating vaccines to low-income countries

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A survey led by the University of Oxford has found that most people in high-income countries support donating some of their country's COVID-19 vaccine supplies to low-income nations who would otherwise struggle to gain access. The findings are published today in *Nature Medicine*.

Researchers conducted an anonymous online survey which had over 8,000 respondents across seven [high-income countries](#) (Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Spain, UK and the U.S.). The survey was carried out between 24 November and 28 December 2020, when an effective vaccine was expected to soon be available.

The study's main findings were:

- For each country assessed, the number of people who supported donating vaccines was at least double those who did not. Support for donating vaccines ranged from 48–56%, whilst 15–26% did not support donating vaccines and 22–28% were undecided.

- Of those who supported vaccine donations, most (73–81%) favored an amount greater than or equal to 10% of their country's doses.
- When asked how much they agreed with three prioritization principles for global vaccine distribution, the highest-ranking principle for each country was need, with average agreement ranging from 70–80 (where 0 means very much disagree and 100 means very much agree). This was followed by prioritizing countries which could not afford to buy vaccines otherwise (62–70 average agreement), and finally whether the country itself had developed the vaccine (28–58 average agreement).

The COVAX collaboration aims to ensure that all countries have [equal access](#) to COVID-19 vaccines, and competes with high-income countries to acquire doses. Nevertheless, some low-income countries may need to wait until at least next year before even the most vulnerable 20% of their populations are vaccinated. This is due in part to some high-income countries pre-purchasing vaccine supplies that exceed their [population size](#). For instance, the U.S. has reserved more than 1.2 billion doses, but has a [population](#) of around 331 million.

The results of this study indicate that individuals in high-income countries would generally support donating COVID-19 vaccines to low-income countries. This has been done for previous pandemics, including the 2009 Swine Flu outbreak.

Lead researcher Professor Philip Clarke, from the University of Oxford's Nuffield Department of Population Health, said: "Redistributing [vaccine supplies](#) from high-income countries would have global benefits. It would reduce the risk of the

emergence and spread of new variants and benefit the economy, both globally and in donor countries. In contrast, the economic cost of [vaccine nationalism](#) is potentially high. The world's economy is highly interconnected and as long as the virus is not under control everywhere, there will be a huge cost to the global economy—up to \$1.2 trillion per year according to some estimates."

More information: Philip M. Clarke et al. Public opinion on global rollout of COVID-19 vaccines, *Nature Medicine* (2021). [DOI: 10.1038/s41591-021-01322-9](#)

Provided by University of Oxford

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