

COVID-19 Daily Briefing: July 14th

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1. Summary

GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY

- **LANCET COMMISSION**: This comment article discusses the establishment of [The Lancet COVID-19 Commission](#) which will include leaders of health science, business, politics, and finance from across the world. The commission aims to speed up the awareness and adoption of successful strategies for tackling COVID-19 and ensure equitable access to any vaccine or other key technology across the world. Four key challenges identified for worldwide cooperative effort are to: suppress the pandemic quickly and decisively, meet the needs of vulnerable groups, prevent the public health emergency becoming an economic catastrophe, build the world back with greater resilience, and sustainable and inclusive development.
- **HEALTHCARE INEQUALITY**: In this comment article, authors highlight a crisis of accountability in women's, children's, and adolescents' health. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, global progress towards the 2030 Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) health targets was already lagging by around 20%. Sexual health, contraceptive, immunisation, and maternal health access has been restricted in many nations due to lockdowns and deaths among pregnant women and young children could increase by 8-45% compared to non-pandemic expectation. Authors stress that to protect these groups not only during the pandemic, but to 2030 and beyond, the key is accountability as set out by the UN [Independent Accountability Panel](#).
- **INFECTIOUS DISEASE**: Modelling undertaken in this peer reviewed article shows that disruption in some low/middle income countries from any prolonged COVID-19 suppression interventions could lead to increases in deaths from HIV, TB and malaria over the next 5 years that of the same order of magnitude as the direct impact of COVID-19 in these countries. These conclusions are discussed in a [comment article](#) which states that hard-won gains against these infectious diseases could be lost due to the pandemic. These gains must be protected through decisive action, and by redirecting resources to the highest risk nations.

IMMUNOLOGY

- **IMMUNOPHENOTYPE**: In this peer reviewed study, by analysing inflammatory molecules released into the blood by immune cells in response to SARS-CoV-2 infection, authors report that type 1 interferons (IFNs) were significantly reduced, while inflammatory molecules such as tumor necrosis factor (TNF)- α and interleukin (IL)-6 were increased in the blood of patients with severe COVID-19 symptoms. Authors stress that while low IFN- α plasma levels precede clinical deterioration, it will be important to determine how levels of these inflammatory molecules change during the process of infection through to the resolution of infection. Authors conclude that anti-inflammatory therapies targeting IL-6 or TNF- α are worth cautious testing.
- **ANTIBODY CRYSTAL STRUCTURE**: In this peer reviewed study, authors analysed 294 SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, and identified 'IGHV3-53' as the most frequent antibody type associated with protection. These antibodies have distinct properties (low affinity maturation and high potency) which are promising for vaccine design.
- **ANTIBODY-DEPENDENT ENHANCEMENT**: This peer reviewed perspective article highlights the need for caution in vaccination or antibody treatment for COVID-19, due to the possibility that

antibodies present at the time of infection may increase disease severity in a process known as antibody dependent enhancement. Authors state that observations relevant to the risks of such enhancement of disease require careful review, and that in the interim it will be necessary to directly test safety and determine measurable signs of immunity in human clinical trials.

- **PLASMA THERAPY:** This preprint shows that antibodies from convalescent serum of recovered COVID-19 patients cause cultured immune cells to produce a hyper-inflammatory response. Many COVID-19 patients show worsening of symptoms 1-2 weeks after onset, which coincides with the activation of adaptive immunity. In this study, such hyper-inflammation could be abrogated *in vitro* by using *fostamatinib*. Authors state that fostamatinib might be a useful therapeutic, and that it would be wise to omit the relevant antibodies from convalescent serum for therapeutic use.

3. Quick Summaries

[Tackling cervical cancer in Europe amidst the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

- **CANCER:** *Correspondence* about how cervical cancer prevention activities have been curtailed across Europe due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Authors highlight that the pandemic may also generate opportunities for more efficient cervical cancer prevention by promoting more cost-effective, evidence-based protocols, focusing on women who are at high-risk, extending HPV testing on self-collected samples, and discouraging inefficient policies such as screening with two tests.

[Community health workers reveal COVID-19 disaster in Brazil](#)

- **BRAZIL:** *Comment article* about the unfolding COVID-19 disaster in Brazil. Community healthcare workers in Brazil have not been given clear guidance about their role in the COVID-19 response, and only 9% have received infection control training. Government guidance to healthcare workers is sporadic and often self-contradictory, such as being told to use PPE without any being provided. Many community healthcare workers have faced resistance from President Bolsonaro's supporters, while low salaries and precarious working conditions of reflect a lack of political commitment to health as a public good in Brazil.

4. Longer Reading

[Critical insights from patients during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

- **PATIENT CONCERNS:** *Peer-reviewed journal article*. A survey of attitude of 1,300 patients in Tennessee, USA, identified that the greatest fear of patients seeking routine medical help is the risk of getting sick from other patients. Under the appropriate circumstances and with key safety measures in place, patients expressed a guarded willingness to reengage with the health care system and resume routine care.