

Be-cause health conference 2023
Breaking taboos in Global health

‘Vaccine equity’: a step towards decolonization or power imbalances perpetuated?

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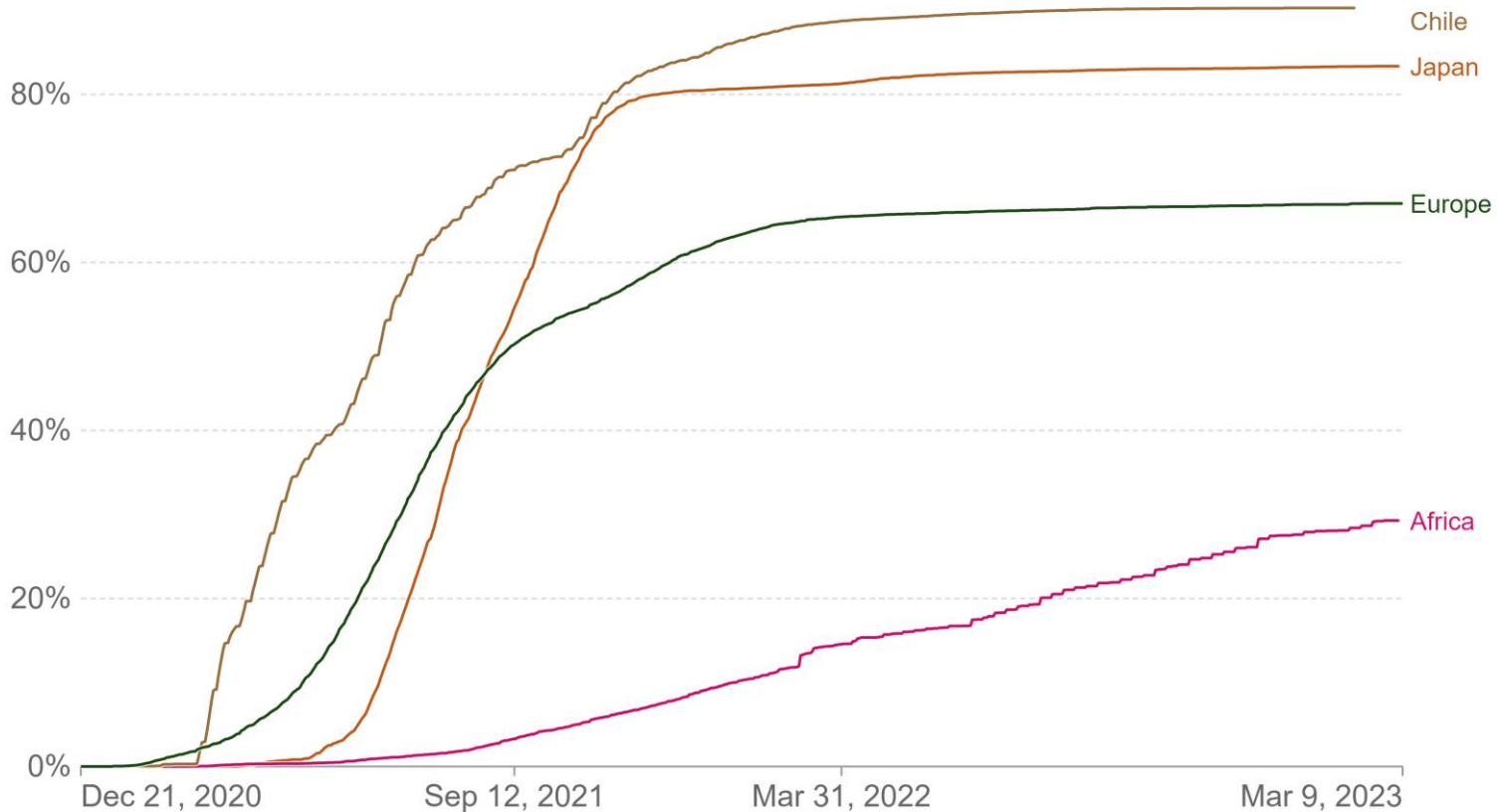


Background

Share of people who completed the initial COVID-19 vaccination protocol

Total number of people who received all doses prescribed by the initial vaccination protocol, divided by the total population of the country.

Our World in Data



Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data

Note: Alternative definitions of a full vaccination, e.g. having been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and having 1 dose of a 2-dose protocol, are ignored to maximize comparability between countries.

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'Vaccine equity'

- A global target



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Context

In 2021, WHO set the target for 70% global vaccination coverage by mid-2022.



Data Futures Platform

Global Dashboard for Vaccine Equity

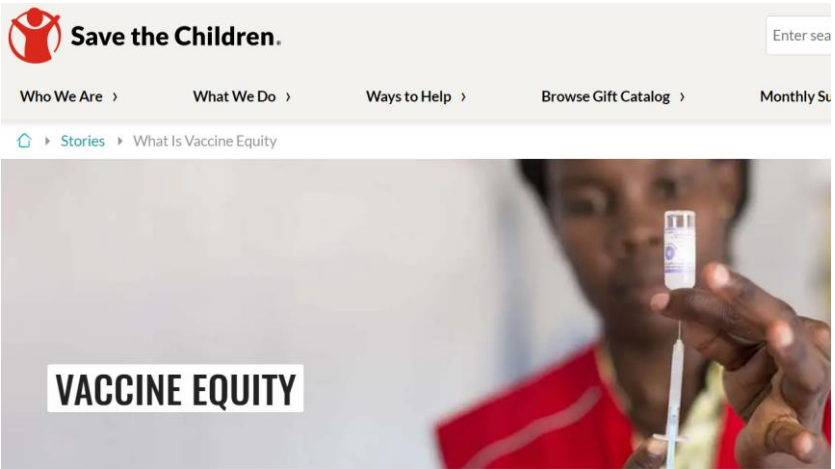


COVAX: ensuring global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines

UNICEF is working to procure and deliver COVID-19 vaccines so the most vulnerable people are protected.

'Vaccine equity'

- Presented as 'fair', a 'right' contributing to equity, globally and nationally



All people deserve the opportunity to receive a vaccine.



A fair and equitable allocation of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines contributes to social and health equity, is an opportunity to reduce long standing social disparities in Europe, and will protect everyone's health.

COVID-19

Home Your Health Vaccines Cases & Data **Specific Settings** Healthcare Workers Health Depts Science More

Specific Settings

Health Equity

'Vaccine equity'

- (But there are other justifications too)

BROOKINGS

COVAX

Working for global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines



No one is safe, until everyone is safe

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Why global vaccine equity is the prescription for a full recovery

Indermit Gill and Michele Ruta · Friday, February 11, 2022



'Vaccine equity'

- Now adopted in common language and hardly questioned by academics

Vaccine equity

🌐 1 language ▾

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Vaccine equity means ensuring that everyone in the world has equal access to [vaccines](#).^{[1][2]} The importance of vaccine equity has been emphasized by researchers and public health experts during the [COVID-19](#) pandemic^[3] but is relevant to other illnesses and vaccines as well. Historically, world-wide

Systematic Review | [Open Access](#) | [Published: 11 June 2022](#)

Vaccine equity in low and middle income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis

[Huda Ahmed Ali](#), [Anna-Maria Hartner](#), [Susy Echeverria-Londono](#), [Jeremy Roth](#), [Xiang Li](#), [Kaja Abbas](#), [Allison Portnoy](#), [Emilia Vynnycky](#), [Kim Woodruff](#), [Neil M Ferguson](#), [Jaspreet Toor](#) & [Katy AM Gaythorpe](#) 

International Journal for Equity in Health **21**, Article number: 82 (2022) | [Cite this article](#)


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Published: May 06, 2022 • DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(22\)00793-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(22)00793-0)  Check for updates

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Analysis

It is not too late to achieve global covid-19 vaccine equity

BMJ 2022 ; 376 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj-2022-070650> (Published 24 March 2022)

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2022;376:e070650

Linked Opinion

Ending the covid-19 pandemic means helping countries to catch-up with vaccination, not giving up

Gavin Yamey, professor of global health and public policy¹, *Patricia Garcia*, professor², *Fatima Hassan*, director³, *Wenhui Mao*, senior research and policy associate¹, *Kaci Kennedy McDade*, policy associate¹, *Madhukar Pai*, professor of epidemiology and global health⁴, *Senjuti Saha*, director and scientist⁵, *Phillip Schellekens*, senior adviser⁶, *Andrea Taylor*, assistant director of programs⁷, *Krishna Udayakumar*, founding director⁷

'Vaccine equity'

- A moral imperative, a step towards decolonization?

"The world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure – and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world's poorest countries."

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, 18 January 2021

In January 2021, WHO issued a call to all countries to work together in solidarity – and in each of their best interests – to ensure that within the first 100 days of the year, vaccination of health workers and older people was underway in all countries.

This call to action is at the heart of WHO's campaign for **#VaccinEquity**, which aims to overcome the pandemic and the inequalities that lie at the root of so many global health challenges, as well as drive a global recovery.

What is it all about?



- Health equity

- Addresses the causes of health inequalities or disparities that are avoidable, unnecessary, and unjust (Whitehead 1992)

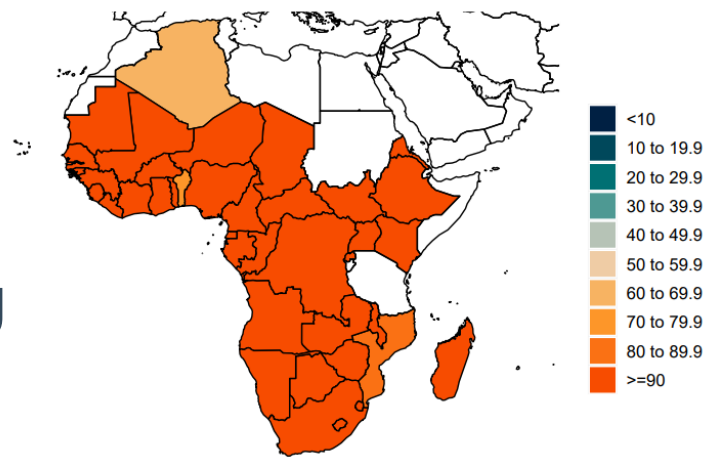
- = equal access (to a health intervention) *for equal need*

- ≠ equal access to a specific health technology

What is wrong with the 'vaccine equity' mantra?

- Expected benefits from Covid vaccines?
 - Priorities in terms of burden of disease?
 - SSA: 50% population < 19 years (UN 2022) ⇔ Median IFR: 0.0003% (Pezzulo et al. 2023)
 - Naturally acquired immunity
 - SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence in SSA: 65% in Sept. 2021 (Lewis et al. 2022); > 90% in 2022 (IHME)
 - Protection against severe disease: 89-90% at 40 weeks (Stein et al. 2023)
 - Vaccine-induced immunity waning
 - Efficacy against Omicron?

Figure 6.1: Estimated percent of the population infected with COVID-19 on December 12, 2022



What is wrong with the 'vaccine equity' mantra?

- Expected costs?
 - Monetary costs
 - US\$ 16 billion already committed to COVAX (WHO 2023)
 - Estimated cost of universal vaccination with 3 doses mRNA in LMICs: US\$61 billion (Savinkina et al. 2022)
 - Opportunity costs / diversion of resources from other health priorities (SHRH, malaria, TB, NCDs, ...)
 - Health system (disruption) costs (HRH, supply chain...)
 - Adverse event costs:
 - Per COVID-19 hospitalisation prevented among YP: at least 18.5 serious adverse events from mRNA vaccines are anticipated (Bardosh et al. 2022)
 - Weighing post-vaccination myo/pericarditis against COVID-19 hospitalization during delta: risk-benefit analysis not favourable for 12–17-year-olds, except for nonimmune girls with a comorbidity (Krug et al. 2022)

Conclusion



Imposing a global target on Covid vaccine has nothing to do with equity or decolonization – on the contrary, it risks to foster health inequity and it perpetuates power imbalances



It is high time African countries can choose their own health priorities (through evidence-based deliberative processes) instead of being imposed what interventions they can get, and what results they must achieve to meet global targets



But this is still a taboo in global health... What say you?

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