

Dr Soumya Swaminathan
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cc:

Dr. Michael Ryan, Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme, World Health Organization

Dr Mariângela Batista Galvão Simão, Assistant Director-General for Access to Medicines and Health Products, World Health Organization

Dr Bernhard Schwartländer, Chef de Cabinet, World Health Organization

28 August 2020

Dear Dr Soumya Swaminthan,

We are writing to formally request that the WHO Global Observatory on Health R&D play a more useful and relevant role in the COVID-19 response, especially in its support for other WHO initiatives, such as the COVID-19 Technology Pool. Specifically, we are asking that the Observatory create its own databases of R&D activity related to COVID-19.

At present, the Observatory is functioning largely as a web page that links to data from other organizations, with a few data visualizations that may or may not address the needs of policy makers and researchers for the evidence to guide and evaluate policies and practices.

With regard to the COVID-19 crisis, we ask the Observatory maintain its own databases containing the following information:

I. Clinical trials on drugs, vaccines and other interventions.

Including, but not limited to, the following information for each trial:

1. The sponsor or sponsors of the trial.
2. The proposed and actual enrollment.
3. The funder or funders of the trial, as well as:
 - a. The amount of money and the percentage of total costs provided by governments.
 - b. The amount of money and the percentage of total costs provided by industry.
 - c. The amount of money and the percentage of total costs provided by other sources, including foundations and charities.

4. The outcomes of the trial.

We note that the President of Costa Rica and the Minister of Health in Costa Rica made a similar request of the Observatory in their letter to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on March 23, 2020:

We also ask that the Global Observatory on Health R&D create a database of R&D activity related to COVID-19, including estimates of the costs of clinical trials, and the subsidies provided by governments and charities.

II. Contracts

We ask that the Observatory maintain a database of all funding contracts for R&D relating to COVID-19 technologies, as well as all advance purchase contracts that purport to induce or de-risk R&D investments.

III. Licenses to patents, data, know-how and other intellectual property rights

We ask that the Observatory maintain a database of license rights in patents, data, know-how and other intellectual property rights, for COVID-19 technologies. This database can include information on the specific patents included in such license, the geographic scope of the license and status of the patents, the primary patent term and the term of exclusivity, the initial fees, milestone and royalty payments, and clauses, if any, relating to the pricing or affordability, and addressing access in developing countries, as well as other terms and conditions, and the revenues received from such licenses; such data would be instrumental for pooling IP and know-how of COVID-19 responses through C-TAP.

To make this happen, we suggest the WHO Global Observatory on Health Research and Development send separate requests to each of its member states that are funding R&D for COVID-19, asking that they share such information in the Observatory's public databases.

Sincerely,

Corporación Innovarte
Health Action International
Knowledge Ecology International
Medicines Law & Policy
Pharmaceutical Accountability Foundation
Wemos