



Social Science Working Group

Wednesday, 26 Aug 2020

12:00 pm BST / 1:00 pm CET

Action Items

1. Action Item: Revise Political Economy priority and RQs based on this discussion.
2. Action Item: Update Priority 2 based on discussion. Discuss issues of availability of vaccines and social justice questions around deployment of vaccines.
3. Action Item: Update priority to be broader, e.g. Borders. Add questions about movement across borders, nationalism related to vaccines or public health response.
4. Action Item: Update Priority 4 to include these questions and priorities.
5. Action Item: Coordinator, co-chairs to start webinar planning, starting with the vaccine webinar

Notes

New member introductions

Review previous meeting discussion: Working group priorities and research questions (Megan, Shelley, David)

1. **Priority 1: Political Economy**

1. **Second question** could be more active in terms of – COVID-19 isn't doing the shaping, the question is more how are political stakeholders using COVID-19 to leverage political agendas? It's the power brokers using COVID as a political tool.
2. Public trust question is good/important.
3. Action Item: Revise Political Economy priority and RQs based on this discussion

2. **Priority 2: Vaccine Trials, Acceptability, and Uptake**

1. Luisa and Shelley have published a paper on past vaccine trials
2. We can revise this to focus on how governments can improve public trust and uptake of a COVID vaccine
3. Question: what are other working groups doing around this?
 1. Other groups are focusing on immunology, virology of the vaccine. Immune response, re-infection.
 2. Steering Committee is discussing how to provide feedback on priorities and research questions. What are the next steps the WG wants to take in terms of outputs?
 3. This does likely intersect with the work of the Ethics working group?
 1. Ethics has not worked on the research questions yet. May advocate for the creation of regional ethical bodies to pre-review clinical studies. This is more the focus of their work, rather than priority research questions.
4. Other Feedback: Therapeutic nationalism going on, where countries are competing. The RQs are about the state and its citizens, but we don't get at is the kind of social justice

question – how might we overcome this nationalist competition or access issues? What about countries in the Global South that might not have the infrastructure or ability to produce vaccines? How is social justice ensured, from the R&D phase through to production and purchasing?

1. This is primarily a disease of the West, so why are we experimenting on African bodies?
5. Question: there's a study on public awareness and misconceptions about vaccines – would this go under here?
 1. Rumors, misinformation, miscommunication
 2. Is this broadly, or only related to vaccines?
 3. Does this fit under P2Q2?
6. Question: How is the public perceiving these ideas? Pre-existing trust in vaccines and government will have a huge impact on the vaccine development process?
 1. In countries with high vaccine coverage, we're seeing that they're really looking forward to a COVID vaccine. Others show hesitancy, especially in places where so far COVID hasn't had a huge impact.
 2. Is it necessary to introduce medical intervention in Viet Nam or Taiwan where COVID hasn't had a huge impact on the general population? How do we justify that and ask countries to take it up when the case count is low?
7. Action Item: Update Priority 2 based on discussion. Discuss issues of availability of vaccines and social justice questions around deployment of vaccines.

3. Priority 3: Borderlands

1. Question: Could this be made broader into borders?
 1. Ask related questions about migration more broadly?
 2. Maybe something specific about regional collaboration?
2. Definitely scope about thinking about these issues – people living on or across borders, stateless people are hugely important.
3. Nationality and the intensification of nationality – need for collaboration still?
4. Suggest that the priority is named Borders
 1. Then, add a question about how is the pandemic driving the intensification of nationalism, demands, and international collaboration to find scientific solutions?
5. Action Item: Update priority to be broader, e.g. Borders. Add questions about movement across borders, nationalism related to vaccines or public health response.

4. Priority 4: Health-seeking behavior

1. Feedback: Can we include questions about the response to public health measures?
2. How do people understand risk, and how does this drive health seeking?
3. Can we also consider including the issue of social stigma and health seeking behavior?
 1. This influences how and when people seek care.
4. Can the two questions be merged into one?

1. Individuals are not necessarily deciding how and when to seek health care. It's not much of a choice.
2. What about secondary health impacts? Are cases of diabetes, heart disease increasing?
3. How is COVID affecting health care seeking behavior?
 1. Reduced services for stigmatized populations
 2. Hiding bodies
 3. Not going to the hospital because you want to protect yourselves
 4. Health services have been verticalized. What is available now?
 5. This is much more of a structural issue rather than personal choice
5. Action Item: Update Priority 4 to include these questions and priorities.

Identifying potential working group outputs

1. The idea is to start a series of webinars on vaccines. One idea is to talk about vaccine uptake. With this second research question – how can vaccine trials be improved from the beginning?
 1. This could be an important **webinar** organized by the Social Science WG.
 1. Perhaps we could use Luisa and Shelley's article as a way to frame what is going on now.
 2. 1 hour – 1.5 hours.
 3. We could start off with something specifically around vaccine trials?
 1. Salla – work on HIV trials and mistrust. Public pushback against medical researchers.
 2. Webinar not as a one-off thing, we could think about a social science stream of webinars.
 2. Political economy as well – this could be an important webinar.
 1. There is nothing that has been done under this. Could this be addressed as well in a **webinar**?
 3. **We could do webinars around these four priority areas?**
 1. Vaccine trials – infectious disease prevention trials
 2. Discuss a timeline over email. How do we want to promote this?
 4. Action Item: Coordinator, co-chairs to start webinar planning, starting with the vaccine webinar
2. Question: is this an internal document, or can we write it up in a Global Health Journal?
 1. Medical write up – put everything together in one big piece, the areas of research prioritized by the coalition?
 2. Continue this discussion in the next session

All other business, August calendar and next meeting

1. Next meeting in two weeks
2. Reminder to fill out DNDi profile