

Money Should Not Factor in Vaccine Distribution

While many Canadians refuse to get their second dose of vaccine because of the lack of Pfizer in storage, some countries cannot even get their first dose of vaccine. Wealth seems to be more important than saving lives and being morally ethic, regarding to the vaccines, as the People's Vaccine Alliance accuse wealthy countries of hoarding vaccines that poorer countries can only vaccinate one in ten people (BBC, December 9, 2020, "Rich Countries Hoarding Covid Vaccines, says People's Vaccine Alliance"). Nevertheless, disregarding whether the accusation is true or not, the other nine people are evident of the poorer countries' sufferings. Vaccines should be distributed equally around the world, regardless of a country's wealth, but wealthier countries have a duty to support poorer countries to ensure they are vaccinated as well; poorer people have a higher chance of spreading the pandemic, and lives should be prioritized over politics and finances, nonetheless, there will be a political benefit.

The poor have a higher chance of spreading the covid-19 than the wealthy. They may not be able to afford masks, especially the more impoverished, such as the homeless. Businesses that produce masks are profiting during these times which may influence them to raise prices, causing masks to be more unattainable for the poor. For example, on Amazon, masks that were listed as \$15 were raised to \$199.95 at the beginning of the pandemic (Borgen Magazine, December 1, 2020, "Mask Poverty: A Barrier to Health During Covid-19"). The minimum wage is \$14.25 and by having masks' cost just above the minimum wage, the poor are unable to pay that price (Retail Council of Canada, June 1, 2021, "Minimum Wage by Province"). Even if masks' prices were to decrease or remain at their current price, masks' expense causes people to

constantly buy new ones. As a result, money is continuously spent to remain safe, straining the money the poverty-stricken already struggle to have; and the price will still be unaffordable as this is an extra expense that households will have to add to their tight budget. Therefore, there are more people who cannot wear masks, increasing the chance of spreading the virus. In addition, regardless if masks were handed out for free, masks are not fully safe-proof; they are 67% effective in preventing the spread of covid (Borgen Magazine, December 1, 2020, "Mask Poverty: A Barrier to Health During Covid-19"). Moreover, poorer countries have a larger population with higher poverty. Cities are more condensed, have the highest numbers of homeless people, and generally a larger number of poverty, both who require to move around to obtain food and money to survive, leading there to be a potential greater spread of the virus. To add on, poorer countries are more likely to not be able to afford to take covid tests, causing its civilians to walk around unaware if they are spreading the virus. Hence, the impoverished are more likely to spread covid.

Furthermore, not only are the destitute increasing the number of cases, but lives are at stake. The statistics of covid-19 are more than numbers as actual people are getting impacted by the pandemic. Lives should be prioritized over politics and finances. It is morally right to save humans; vaccines are created to save lives. By not helping other countries who are not able to afford vaccines, its purpose is deviated from. Wealthy countries are faster in distributing vaccines than poorer countries as they have more efficient equipment and higher technology. When the willing citizens get the vaccine, wealthier countries can simultaneously help poor countries get access to vaccines and distribute them while trying to persuade non-vaxxers. It was recorded that one in four Americans refuse to get the vaccine, thus, the vaccines for all the non-

vaxxers in wealthy countries can be donated to poor countries (Brumfiel, April 7, 2021, “Vaccine Refusal May Put Herd Immunity At Risk, Researchers Warn”). During the limbo of the already-vaccinated citizens and distribution slowing down, a couple of vaccines can be donated. Through this process, both countries are saving their citizens and lives in general. In addition, lives are not replaceable like money and political relationships. The cost of vaccines depends on the country’s contribution to creating the vaccine, such as 1.5 million doses of the Oxford and AstraZeneca vaccine being twice as expensive for South Africa than the European Union (Dyer, January 29, 2021, “Covid-19: Countries are learning what others paid for vaccines”). The European Union will recover faster and with the reopening businesses, money would be earned back from the cost of vaccines. Thus, money can be replaced whereas people’s lives cannot; a child cannot get their mother back if the mother were to pass away, a widow can remarry, but can never replace their deceased spouse, and one cannot rekindle or apologize to a deceased friend. This applies to political relationships as well. Negotiations, agreements, debts, and after several years, a political relationship between two countries can be mended. Lives cannot, they should be prioritized.

In regards to politics, by countries aiding one another, many political benefits are sprouted. Relationships between countries will become favourable, allowing many opportunities to come. For instance, negotiations become easier. In negotiations, forming a good relationship with each other is essential. A relationship is a connection and for political leaders to be successful, they must be able to foster such relationships as their leadership depends on it since it is a reflection of their skills (Salacuse, April 27, 2021, “The Importance of a Relationship in Negotiation”). Thus, when a country helps a poorer country be vaccinated as well, they are

establishing a relationship. Relationships between countries are also vital as it announces a country's status. For example, many people love to travel. Travelling and tourism factors into a country's economy as well as integrate the country into society. In America, 45% of the population travelled despite the pandemic and a third of that had planned a trip for this year (Stieg, February 3, 2021, "Travel ups Covid risk - here's how many people have been traveling during the pandemic anyway"). For that many people to travel despite covid when travel is not on lock-down, there is a high chance for them to either visit an unvaccinated country or encounter a person that has covid. They may then catch covid and spread the virus, or potentially bring a new variant to their country if the unvaccinated country has poor safety-precaution, all endangering civilians. Any of these is detrimental to relationships between countries since it concerns both civilians. The country's leader's reputation is another consequence from such actions to consider; it can tarnish their reputation, leading to a weaker political hold. To add on, trust is also formed from the benefit the poorer country receives and in the future, they are more inclined to agree with that wealthier country. People view the actions or proposals from the people they trust in as less risky in the case of negotiations, therefore, they are more willing to accept (Salacuse, April 27, 2021, "The Importance of a Relationship in Negotiation"). Overall, it is a mutual benefit; the poorer country gets vaccinated and the wealthier country creates a stronger relationship they can use when negotiating. However, if the relationship is not that strong yet, the wealthier country still benefits from it since a debt is made. Through the favour reciprocation, the psychological concept that humans are conditioned to reciprocate any gift or favour, the poorer country will want to return the kind gesture of helping them get vaccinated (Atkinson, LLB, Jamieson, "Persuasion Psychology: Favour Reciprocation"). In addition, a political leader, such as a country's prime minister, would want to get rid of a debt quicker since

they must think of their country's well-being and future; a debt may endanger that as it will tie them down to terms that may restrict movement or prevent prosperity. Hence, the wealthier country gains this political advantage that they can use to their own benefit. Moreover, while lives matter and should be prioritized over politics as it's just human decency, many people are at risk and the pandemic involves more than one country.

Regardless, the poor have a higher chance in spreading covid, lives should take precedence, and a political benefit can be reaped; thus, vaccines should be administered equally whether or not a country can afford them. Be that as it may, wealthier countries are obliged to help poorer countries be vaccinated. If there is a chance to save all ten people (as mentioned) in which there is, that path should be taken. Canadians are privileged enough to be able to choose between Pfizer and Moderna or not take the vaccine at all unlike some countries full of many people and families. Vaccines are a type of medicine; everyone should have the equal chance to get them.

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