INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS ISSUES IN VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

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CONTENTS

PREFACE i

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS iii

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND VACCINES 1

Gurpreet Bawa and *Ashish Jain*

INTRODUCTION 1

Applying IP Protection to Vaccines 3

Types of IP Protection 5

Patents 6

Trademark 7

Copyright 9

Plant Breeders' Rights 11

Trade Secret 12

Why Protect Vaccines with IP Rights? 13

IP Considerations for Vaccines 14

When to File a Patent Application and Sound Prediction 15

Vaccine IP and Accessibility in the Developing World 15

TRIPs and LDCs 16

Vaccines and Humanitarian Purposes 17

Protection of Public Health 18

Links between Patent and Drug Legislation 19

CONCLUSION 20

REFERENCES 21

CHAPTER 2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON VACCINES AND IP RIGHTS 24

Sandhya Bagde, Ruchi Shivhare, Ashwini Ingole, Gayatri Tiwaskar and *Sachin Kumar Jain*

INTRODUCTION 25

ANCIENT PRACTICES AND VARIOLATION 26

EARLY HISTORY OF VACCINES 26

Edward Jenner and the Smallpox Vaccine 26

Global Efforts in Smallpox Eradication: 27

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SMALLPOX ERADICATION CAMPAIGN INCLUDED 27

Surveillance 27

Vaccination 27

Containment 28

GLOBAL VACCINE INITIATIVES IN THE 21ST CENTURY 28

VACCINE AND THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY 28

THE ROLE OF IP IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY 29

TYPES OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTIES AND THEIR DESCRIPTION 30

IP RIGHTS INCENTIVE INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT IN VACCINE RESEARCH 30

Challenges in Encouraging Vaccine Production 30

THE TRIPS AGREEMENT'S EFFECT 31

TRIPS IMPACT ON VACCINES 32

Patent Protection and its Access 32

Access to Medicine and Public Health 33

Global Health Crises 33

ACCESS TO VACCINES AND GLOBAL HEALTH 33

VACCINATION'S IMPACT ON GLOBAL HEALTH: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

THE VACCINATIONS OF THE FUTURE GENERATION 34
The Vaccination's long-term Prospects 35
CONTROVERSIES AND CHALLENGES 36
Restricted Accessibility of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) understanding: 36
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS 37
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND VACCINE IP 38
CONCLUSION 39
REFERENCES 40

CHAPTER 3 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND VACCINE INNOVATION 44
Dolly Rani and *Megha Jha*
INTRODUCTION 44
Overview of Vaccine Innovation- 44
Vaccine Innovation 45
Antigen Identification 45
Technological Platforms 46
mRNA 46
Viral Vectors 48
Subunit Vaccines 49
Inactivated Vaccines 50
Adjuvants and Delivery Systems 51
Personalized Vaccines 53
Vaccine Thermostability 54
Reverse Vaccinology and Computational Approaches 56
Global Collaboration and Data Sharing 57
Disease Eradication and Elimination 58
Vaccine Safety Monitoring 58
Next-Generation Vaccines 59
IPR and Vaccine Innovation 60
Technology Transfer and Collaboration 61
Balancing Access and Affordability 62
Global Health Challenges 64
Biopiracy Concerns 64
Incentivizing Research in Neglected Diseases 65
Regulatory Exclusivity 65
Challenges of Monopolies 66
CONCLUSION 66
REFERENCES 66

CHAPTER 4 THE DEBATE ON PATENT PROTECTION FOR VACCINES 72
Nitin G. Dumore and *Manasi M. Choudhari*
INTRODUCTION 72
SIGNIFICANCE OF VACCINES IN PUBLIC HEALTH 73
BRIEF HISTORY OF VACCINE DEVELOPMENT 74
HEALTH BENEFITS OF VACCINATION 76
ECONOMIC BENEFITS 76
SOCIAL BENEFITS 76
OVERVIEW OF THE PATENT SYSTEM FOR PHARMACEUTICAL 76
TERM OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS 77
OBJECTIVE AND ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES 77
WHAT IS A PATENT? 77

CRITERIA FOR PATENTABILITY 78
TYPES OF PATENT APPLICATIONS 78
INVENTIONS NOT PATENTABLE 78
CONTENT OF A PATENT 78
PROCEDURE FOR FILING A PATENT APPLICATION 79
PROCEDURE INVOLVED AT THE PATENT OFFICE 79
HISTORIC CONTEXT 81
The Role of Patents in Encouraging Innovations 81
Past Instances of Patent Disputes in the Pharmaceutical Industry 82
Patent Infringement Allegations 83
Patent Validity Challenges 83
Market Exclusivity 83
Regulatory Approval and Market Entry 83
Technology Transfer and Licensing Disputes 83
Evergreening and Secondary Patents 83
Global Competition 84
Counterclaims and Defensive Litigation 84
Anticompetitive Practices 84
Emergence of Global Health Crisis and Needs for Vaccines 85
ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IN COVID 19 86
THE CURRENT DEBATE 87
Arguments in Favour of Patent Protection 87
Encouraging Research and Development 87
Incentive for Innovation 87
Securing Funding for R&D 87
Technology Transfer and Collaboration 87
Protection of R&D Investments 87
Encouraging Disclosure of Knowledge 87
Providing Incentives for Innovation 88
Protecting Intellectual Property Rights 89
ARGUMENTS AGAINST PATENT PROTECTION 90
Access to Medicine in Low-income Countries 90
Affordability and Accessibility 90
Public Health Impact 90
Intellectual Property Barriers 90
Compulsory Licensing and Flexibilities 91
Ethical Considerations 91
ACCELERATING VACCINE DISTRIBUTION DURING PANDEMIC 91
MORAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 92
IMPACT ON GLOBAL ACCESS TO VACCINES 94
High Prices and Limited Access in Developing Countries 94
Role of Intellectual Property Right in Vaccine Distribution 95
Calls for Waiving Patents Rights During Public Health Emergencies 96
ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL PATENT MODELS 97
Open-source Approaches to Vaccine Development 97
Public-private Partnerships & Collaborations 98
Voluntary Licensing Agreement 99
Implementation of Voluntary License Over Compulsory License 100
RECENT DEVELOPMENT 100
International Efforts to Address Vaccine Inequity 100
Proposals for Patent Waivers and Technology Transfer 102

Industry Response and Adaptation 103
VFUTURE IMPLICATIONS 105
Potential Changes in Patent Policies for Pharmaceuticals 105
Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic 106
CONCLUSION 106
REFERENCES 107

CHAPTER 5 ACCESS TO VACCINES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY 111
Aarti K. Thakre, Nitin G. Dumore and *Monali N. Dumore*
INTRODUCTION 111
Effect of Technology Transfer on Access to Vaccines 112
Source: MS/SVS/COVER 113
The Functions of Patent 113
The World Trade Organisation (WTO) (TRIPS) Agreement 114
Patent 115
International Patent 115
Intellectual Property and Development in WIPO 116
Validity of Patent 117
Minimum Standards of Patent Protection 117
Patent Protection Strategies 119
Patent and Access to Essential Medicines in Africa 120
Impact of Waiver of Intellectual Property Rights on the Pharmaceutical Industry 121
Public health, the Doha Declaration, and TRIPS 121
TRIPS Flexibilities 124
Criteria of Patentability 125
Compulsory Licences 126
Government Laws 126
Examples of Government Use 127
Principles of Patent Law 127
Indian Principles Law 127
Novelty 128
Non-obviousness 128
Utility 128
Limitations to Patent Rights 129
Different Limitations of Patent Rights 129
TRIPS Agreement 129
CONCLUSION 129
REFERENCES 130

CHAPTER 6 INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND VACCINE IP 134
Vikas K. Jain, Himanshu Vishwakarma, Khushi Jain and *Sachin Kumar Jain*
INTRODUCTION 135
TREATY PERSUASION 136
Bilateral Treaties 136
Multilateral Treaties 136
Regional Treaties 136
Trade Agreements 136
World Trade Organization (WTO) 136
Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) 137
REGULATORY APPROVAL FOR VACCINES 137
Preclinical Development 137
Clinical Development 139

Phase 0 139
Phase 1 139
Phase 2 139
Phase 3 139
Phase 4 140
Biologics License Application 140
CFR Part 600 – 680 140
Marketing Authorization Application 141
Mutual Recognition Procedure 141
Nationalized Procedure 141
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON VACCINES 141
Before COVID-19 Pandemic 141
Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization 142
World Health Organization 142
International Coordinating Group on Vaccine Provision for Epidemic Meningitis Control 142
Introduction of Rotavirus Vaccine in GAVI-Eligible Countries 142
Measles and Rubella Initiative 142
After COVID-19 Pandemic 142
COVAX Facility 143
Advance Purchase Agreements (APAs) 143
Global Vaccination Supply Chain 143
Vaccine Multilateralism 143
World Trade Organization Waiver 143
Bilateral Agreements and Donations 143
IPR CONFLICT REGARDING VACCINE 144
COVID-19 Immunizations 144
Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine 144
Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) 144
Influenza Vaccine 145
GLOBAL SCENARIO OF VACCINES DEVELOPMENT 145
The Cervical Cancer 145
The Cholera 146
The Malaria 146
The Rabies 146
The Tuberculosis 147
The COVID-19 147
The Dengue 147
NEW AGENDA OF WHO FOR IMMUNIZATION 149
VACCINE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIAN SCENARIO 149
The Plague 150
The Polio 150
The Rabies Virus 150
The Hepatitis B 150
The Pig Influenza 150
The Meningitis 151
The Cholera 151
The Japan Encephalitis 151
CONCLUDING REMARK 151
REFERENCES 152

CHAPTER 7 COVID-19 AND THE ROLE OF IP RIGHTS IN VACCINE DEVELOPMENT 155
Shikha Jaiswal, Sudha Vengurlekar, Sachin Kumar Jain and *Umesh K. Patil*
INTRODUCTION 155
What is Coronavirus? 155
What is the Incubation Period for COVID-19? 156
The Incubation Period for the New Coronavirus 157
What are the Symptoms of Coronavirus? 157
Respiratory Symptoms 157
Fever 158
Fatigue 158
Muscle or Body Aches 158
Headache 158
Loss of Taste or Smell 158
Gastrointestinal Symptoms 158
Where do Coronaviruses Come From? 159
How Severe is COVID-19 Infection? 159
What is IP in Vaccines? 160
Why is IP Rights Important? 160
What are IP Rights as Basic Human Rights? 161
What are the Advantages of Intellectual Property Rights? 162
What is the Role of IP Rights in Vaccine Develtopment? 164
Incentivizing Innovation 164
Protecting Investments 164
Encouraging Collaboration and Licensing 165
Attracting Investment 165
Ensuring Quality and Safety 165
Summary 165
Rapid Vaccine Development 165
Vaccine Innovation and Protection 166
Licensing and Collaboration 166
Global Access Challenges 166
Calls for IP Waivers 166
Differing Perspectives 166
Voluntary Licensing and Technology Transfer 166
CONCLUSION 167
REFERENCES 167

CHAPTER 8 THE FUTURE OF VACCINE IP RIGHT 171
Vaishali Raghuwanshi, Sachin Kumar Jain and *Simran Soni*
INTRODUCTION 171
IP RIGHTS IN VACCINE DEVELOPMENT: INCENTIVES AND INNOVATION 172
THE GLOBAL VACCINE LANDSCAPE 173
THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC 174
LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN VACCINE IP RIGHTS 175
Global Access and Equity 175
Compulsory Licensing 176
CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS IN REFORMING VACCINE IP RIGHTS 177
TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND NEXT-GENERATION VACCINES 179
Technological Advances in Vaccine Development 179
Next-generation Vaccines have the Potential to 179
mRNA Vaccines 179

DNA Vaccine 180
Subunit Vaccines 181
Attenuated Vaccines 181
Inactivated Vaccines 182
Viral Vector Vaccine 182
IMPACT ON IP RIGHTS 183
CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES 184
CONCLUSION 185
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATIONS 186
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 186
REFERENCES 186

CHAPTER 9 CASE STUDIES: IP RIGHTS AND SPECIFIC VACCINES 191
V. Raghuwanshi, P. Bhide, Y. Bhandari and *Sachin Kumar Jain*
INTRODUCTION 191
COVID-19 VACCINES AND PATENT WAIVERS 193
THE JONAS SALK AND ALBERT SABIN POLIO VACCINES (CASE STUDY- I) 194
THE ROTAVIRUS VACCINE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER 196
THE CASE STUDY OF PREVENTION (HPV VACCINE DEVELOPMENT) 197
CASE STUDY OF MALARIA 200
CASE STUDY OF PFIZER/ BIONTECH 201
CASE STUDY OF MODERNA 203
CASE STUDY ASTRAZENECA-OXFORD 204
CASE STUDY OF JOHNSON & JOHNSON/JANSSEN 205
CASE STUDY OF NOVAVAX 205
CASE STUDY OF CUREVAC 206
CONCLUSION 206
REFERENCES 206

CHAPTER 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS, PHARMACEUTI- CAL COMPANIES, AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY 211
Dakshesh Goel, Sonika Shrivastav and *Kamal Singh Rathore*
INTRODUCTION 212
POLICYMAKERS 215
Regulatory Reforms 216
Dynamic and Adaptive Regulatory Framework 216
Streamlining Approval Processes 216
International Collaboration and Harmonization 216
Proactive Response to Technological Advancements 217
Transparency and Communication 217
Post-Marketing Surveillance and Feedback Mechanisms 217
Incentives for Innovation 217
Collaboration with Stakeholders 218
Investment in Education 218
Infrastructure Development 218
Faculty Training Programs 218
Curriculum Enhancement 218
Research Facilities and Collaboration 219
Industry-Academia Collaboration 219
Promotion of Specialized Programs 219
Student Scholarships and Support Programs 220
Continued Professional Development for Practitioners 220

Industry-Academia Collaboration 220
Facilitation of Partnerships 220
Incentives for Collaboration 220
Joint Research Initiatives 221
Internship and Training Programs 221
Coordinated Regulatory Support 221
Industry Input in Curriculum Development 221
Technology Transfer Programs 221
Encouraging Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) 222
Skill Development Programs 222
Identification of Industry-Relevant Skills 223
Targeted Training Initiatives 223
Collaboration with Industry for Program Design 223
Flexible and Adaptive Curriculum 223
Promotion of Continuous Learning 223
Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms 224
Accessibility and Inclusivity 224
PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES 224
Internship and Training Programs 224
Structured Internship Programs 225
Cross-Functional Exposure 225
Mentorship Opportunities 225
Training on Industry Practices 225
Real-World Project Assignments 226
Networking Opportunities 226
Performance Evaluation and Feedback 226
Research and Development Investment 226
Strategic R&D Planning 226
Allocation of Resources 227
Emphasis on Translational Research 227
Partnerships and Collaborations 227
Investment in Cutting-Edge Technologies 227
Focus on Rare Diseases and Unmet Needs 228
Employee Training and Development 228
Strategic Training Needs Analysis 228
Customized Training Programs 228
Integration of E-Learning Platforms 228
Technical and Regulatory Training 229
Leadership Development Programs 229
Cross-Functional Training Opportunities 229
Continuous Learning Culture 229
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) 229
Access to Medicines and Affordability 230
Global Health Initiatives 230
Research and Development for Neglected Diseases 230
Environmental Sustainability 230
Ethical Clinical Trials and Human Rights 230
Health Education and Awareness Programs 231
Community Engagement and Philanthropy 231
Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Aid 231
Employee Volunteerism and Well-being 231

GLOBAL COMMUNITY 231
International Research Collaborations 232
Open Access to Research Findings 232
Support for Global Health Infrastructure 232
Collaborative Research Initiatives 232
Knowledge Sharing Platforms 232
Global Access to Medicines 233
Support for Developing Nations 233
Humanitarian Aid and Emergency Response 233
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS 233
Continuous Curriculum Enhancement 233
Industry Exposure Through Partnerships 234
Research Collaboration with Pharmaceutical Companies 234
Internship Programs and Practical Training 234
Skill Development Initiatives 234
Industry-Relevant Certifications and Training 235
Advisory Boards with Industry Experts 235
Facilitating Industry-Academia Collaboration 235
Global Collaboration in Education and Research 235
CONCLUSION 235
REFERENCES 236

SUBJECT INDEX 242

PREFACE

In the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the spotlight has never shone brighter on the vital role of intellectual property rights in the realm of vaccines. As the world grapples with unprecedented challenges, from the rapid development of life-saving vaccines to the equitable distribution of doses, the intersection of innovation and accessibility has emerged as a defining issue of our time.

"Intellectual Property Rights: Role in Current Scenario for Vaccines" embarks on a timely exploration of this complex landscape, delving into the multifaceted dimensions of intellectual property and its profound impact on the development, production, and dissemination of vaccines.

Within these pages, we navigate through the intricate web of patents, trade secrets, and regulatory frameworks that underpin the global vaccine ecosystem. From the pioneering research laboratories to the corridors of power where policy decisions are made, we unravel the threads of innovation and entrepreneurship that drive progress in the field of vaccinology.

Yet, as we celebrate the remarkable achievements of science and technology, we confront the stark realities of inequity and access that threaten to undermine our collective efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the glaring disparities in vaccine distribution, exposing deep-rooted structural inequalities that demand urgent redressal.

In this context, the role of intellectual property rights looms large, shaping not only the pace of scientific innovation but also the contours of global health equity. Through a nuanced analysis of legal frameworks, ethical considerations, and socio-economic implications, this book seeks to illuminate the path forward, forging a more inclusive and sustainable future for vaccine development and delivery.

As we embark on this journey of exploration and introspection, we are reminded of the profound responsibility that comes with the stewardship of knowledge. In the quest for scientific advancement, let us not lose sight of our shared humanity, or the imperative to ensure that the fruits of innovation are accessible to all.

This preface serves as a call to action, inviting readers to join us in a dialogue that transcends disciplines and borders. Together, let us navigate the complex terrain of intellectual property rights, charting a course toward a world where vaccines are not just a privilege but a fundamental human right.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction of Intellectual Property Rights and Vaccines

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Abstract: The traditional discourse on the relationship between vaccines and intellectual property (IP) has primarily centered on patent rights. However, this conclusion advocates for a broader perspective that encompasses copyright, trademarks, patents, trade secrets, and potentially even plant breeders' rights in the context of vaccines. By recognizing the applicability of multiple IP rights to various facets of vaccines, a more comprehensive and robust protection framework can be established. This expanded discussion introduces novel considerations that have not been routinely addressed in relation to vaccines and IP rights. The argument emphasizes that the discourse should transcend the confines of a single IP right when discussing vaccines. Instead, it encourages a holistic approach, considering the integration and cooperation of multiple IP rights. Such an inclusive view not only broadens the scope of protection for vaccines but also facilitates the development of a strategic framework that leverages the synergies between different IP rights. The integrated perspective allows for a more nuanced strategy, enabling the evaluation of why specific IP rights should be included and how they contribute to the overall development and distribution of vaccines. In essence, the conclusion contends that a shift in the discussion from the application of individual IP rights to a comprehensive consideration of multiple rights is imperative. This evolved viewpoint enhances the productivity and conclusiveness of the strategy, emphasizing the need for a reformed discourse on vaccines and IP rights to adapt to the evolving landscape.

Keywords: Copyright, Intellectual property, Patents, Trademark, Vaccine.

INTRODUCTION

Vaccines come in a range of forms and components, including specific formulations, delivery systems, components, and distribution networks, and there are a variety of intellectual property (IP) rights available. Patent rights are frequently the starting and ending point of discussions over intellectual property

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rights for vaccines. However, patent rights are not the sole form of intellectual property protection accessible to vaccinations. Other rights, including copyright, trademarks, plant breeders' rights, and trade secrets, may also apply to vaccinations.

For example, there is an ongoing debate about the ethical implications of awarding patent rights to innovations and items that improve public health, such as vaccines. This argument raises questions about whether patent rights have a good or detrimental impact on vaccine innovation and public access. Further doubts are raised about whether patent rights have a negative or good impact on the development of vaccine technology for diseases that primarily affect developing countries. This chapter admits that these discussions have been ongoing for many years and continue to be so. These are essential discussions; nevertheless, it is not the purpose of this chapter to add a voice to them.

This chapter explores how intellectual property rights impact vaccine development, use, and distribution. Right now, both ethical and practical discussions about intellectual property rights and vaccinations focus on patent rights. In the toolkit of intellectual property rights, patents provide owners with a major exclusive right, which has been utilised by various organisations to penalise those who attempt to imitate patented products. Patent rights have also been used to monopolise the market and justify exorbitant licensing costs for patent-protected products. These techniques can have a significant negative impact on the development of related technologies as well as access to patents. Thus, the scope and strength of patent rights have influenced the discussion of IP rights in general, so that the entire category of IP rights is considered as capable and culpable of the same exclusionary outcomes. In truth, patent rights are only one type of intellectual property right that may be applied to a vaccine, and the high prices and access constraints that result from the exercise of patent rights are only one option for an owner to use IP rights.

It is also noteworthy that the debate over intellectual property rights for vaccines is frequently overshadowed by the debate over pharmaceutical products and IP rights, which mostly focus on medications that do not contain vaccinations. Talking about vaccines in particular is crucial because they differ significantly from other medicinal products in terms of their characteristics and effects. Certain complications can arise in the formulation of vaccines (*e.g.*, expert input is required for some vaccines), in their distribution (*e.g.*, cold storage transit is required for many vaccines), and in their administration (*e.g.*, professional transmission is required for injected vaccinations). Because of these complications, debates on intellectual property rights in relation to other kinds of pharmaceutical items might not apply entirely to vaccines.

Vaccines offer huge societal benefits that other pharmaceutical treatments cannot match. According to the World Health Organisation, "much of the debate on [IP rights] and public health has focused on the possible impact that patents on final products have on the prices paid in developing countries, and thus their affordability." The nature of vaccine development and production, as well as the structure of the ultimate market, may necessitate a distinct type of argument [1]. The report goes on to cite distinctions between pharmaceuticals and vaccines, noting the following: vaccines have much smaller markets; the public sector has a greater involvement in the production, pricing, and marketing of vaccines; vaccines as biological products are more complex and costly to produce; clinical trials may also be much more expensive for vaccines; and it may be much more difficult to copy a vaccine [2]. Although these distinctions make it evident that discussions concerning the influence of patents on vaccine accessibility and affordability may differ from those surrounding pharmaceuticals, it is nevertheless true that both types of drugs play an important role in public health. It has been said that "despite the 1.5% share that vaccines have in global pharmaceutical turnover in dollars, vaccines represent much more than 1.5% of the capacity to deal with global health problems because they have positive externalities" [3].

Vaccines have provided significant societal benefits, including the elimination of diseases from entire communities [4]. This chapter will focus on the unique challenges of intellectual property (IP) rights in relation to vaccines, rather than the broader connection between IP rights and pharmaceuticals. Various types of intellectual property rights apply to vaccines, each offering distinct advantages to the proprietor.

This chapter will address the types of vaccines that seek protection, as well as the many types of intellectual property rights that are applicable to vaccinations. We will begin by looking at the features and aspects of vaccines that may be subject to various intellectual property rights, as well as the IP rights that are applicable to them. After we have established the nature of the specific IP rights that apply to vaccines, we can look at the motivations for pursuing IP rights and some of the specific elements that influence the application of IP rights to vaccines. IP rights can be used in tandem to implement an IP protection strategy for vaccines that benefits both vaccine development and public availability. There are numerous rights in the IP toolbox, and they should all be evaluated in the context of vaccine development and deployment.

Applying IP Protection to Vaccines

A prevalent misperception is that intellectual property rights apply to vaccinations in a 1:1 ratio manner. For example, such a viewpoint assumes that if patent rights

CHAPTER 2

Historical Perspective on Vaccines and IP Rights

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Abstract: As an efficient means for the prevention and management of infectious diseases, vaccines are the most notable achievements in the field of public health. This chapter explores the relationship between intellectual property (IP) rights and vaccines, including their historical development and current implications for global health. The chapter also discusses the importance of vaccinations for public health, highlighting how they can prevent disease and save lives. Simultaneously, it presents intellectual property and its significant impact on vaccine development in the pharmaceutical sector. A history of vaccines is presented, starting with important events like Edward Jenner's ground-breaking research on the smallpox vaccine. The 20th century witnessed the development of contemporary vaccines, which indicated a turning point in medical research and advances against illnesses including influenza, measles, and polio. Early IP strategies in the vaccine industry that focused on collaboration and information exchange enabled quick advancement. The contribution of intellectual property to pharmaceutical innovations and how IP rights act as vital inducements to investment in and innovation within the field of vaccine development. The impact of vaccination accessibility under the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS) is examined. Difficulties and disputes about vaccine patents and intellectual property rights are further explored, focusing on negotiating the complicated intellectual property environment for vaccine distribution. Public-private partnerships and collaborative techniques are two recent developments in vaccine research that are also covered. Lastly, a case study is provided for examining the function of intellectual property in the creation, manufacturing, and distribution of vaccines. The pandemic's effect on how the world views intellectual property rights related to vaccines highlights the continuous discussion about fair access to vaccines during public health emergencies. Overall, this chapter offers a thorough analysis of the historical viewpoint on vaccinations and their beneficial association with intellectual property rights, highlighting the difficulties and complexities present at the junction of public health, science, and innovation.

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Sachin Kumar Jain, Ravikant Gupta, Sudha Vengurlekar, Nidhi Bais & Gajendra P. Choudhary (Eds.)

Keywords: COVID-19, Intellectual property rights, Pharmaceutical innovations, TRIPS, Vaccines.

INTRODUCTION

Edward Jenner demonstrated in 1796 that vaccination against smallpox may be prevented by using material from a cowpox (vaccinia) lesion. Although the next vaccine (against rabies) was not released for another century, this marked the start of the vaccination era. In the 20th century, several innovative vaccines were developed and implemented, significantly lowering the prevalence of diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) rank vaccinations as one of the top 10 public health innovations of the 20th century [1].

This chapter explores the early history of vaccinations, highlighting significant turning points that led to the development of contemporary immunization programs. It highlights human creativity, resilience, and the pursuit of healthier communities, spanning from prehistoric practices to groundbreaking discoveries that transformed modern medicine [2].

During the early stages of civilization, prehistoric societies faced significant infectious diseases, leading to the development of strategies like variolation, which involved intentionally exposing people to smallpox to build immunity, providing hope against sickness [3].

In the late 1700s, Edward Jenner made a groundbreaking discovery in rural England that led to the development of modern immunization. He used cowpox sore material to inoculate a child, illustrating cross-immunity and confirming centuries of anecdotal evidence, marking the beginning of vaccine research [4].

The word “vaccine” originates from the Latin word “vacca,” meaning “cow,” and was named after Jenner discovered the smallpox vaccine, a significant breakthrough in the fight against infectious diseases [5].

The World Health Organization (WHO) played a role in international immunization campaigns, leading campaigns to eradicate smallpox and preventable diseases. The successful eradication of smallpox in 1979 exemplifies the effectiveness of vaccinations. Today, the WHO continues to prioritize immunization and ensure universal access to vaccines [6].

Intellectual property (IP) is an original work of human thought, be it artistic, literary, scientific, or technological. Intellectual property rights, or IPR, are the legal privilege that allows an innovator or creator to keep their creation or idea confidential for a set period [7]. These legal rights give the inventor/creator or his

assignee the exclusive right to utilize their innovation to its fullest extent for a predetermined amount of time. It has long been known how important intellectual property is to the modern economy.

Furthermore, it has been conclusively demonstrated that for innovation to benefit the public good, the intellectual labour that went into it must be acknowledged. The costs associated with research and development (R&D) have increased sharply, which has resulted in a rise in the equivalent investments required to bring new technologies to market [8]. The stakes for technology developers are now very high, thus knowledge must be protected from unauthorized use, even only temporarily, to recover R&D costs and other associated expenses and to create enough cash to support continued R&D expenditures [9]. Since it gives the creator/inventor an exclusive right to use his creation for a set period, intellectual property rights (IPRs) are an effective tool for protecting the time, money, and effort that the creator/inventor has invested in creating an intellectual property. IPR thus supports a nation's economic development by fostering healthy competition, industrial progress, and economic prosperity.

ANCIENT PRACTICES AND VARIOLATION

Throughout history, Asia and Africa have developed strategies to protect against the smallpox virus, including early immunization methods like variolation, despite potential risks and serious illness [10]. This practice dates back to prehistoric societies, with records from China describing “wenyi” in the 10th century. Traditional methods in Africa involved scarification or inhalation of smallpox particles [11]. In the 18th century, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, a British ambassador, witnessed the practice of variolation in Constantinople, which spread throughout Western Europe. Despite its effectiveness in boosting immunity, it posed serious risks, including smallpox infection and death [12].

EARLY HISTORY OF VACCINES

Edward Jenner and the Smallpox Vaccine

Edward Jenner's 1796 discovery of cowpox-induced immunity against smallpox marked a significant shift in medical history. Inspired by legends of milkmaids becoming immune to smallpox, Jenner conducted a risky experiment using cowpox sore material to inoculate a young child. This groundbreaking experiment demonstrated cross-immunity, representing that exposure to a less pathogenic disease could protect a more pathogenic one, which in turn, transformed disease prevention and introduced the term “vaccine” from the Latin word “Vacca,” meaning “cow” [11 - 15].

CHAPTER 3

Intellectual Property Rights and Vaccine Innovation

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Abstract: Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) play a pivotal role in the realm of vaccine innovation, shaping the global landscape of healthcare. This abstract explores the intricate interplay between IPR and vaccine development, shedding light on its multifaceted implications. As vaccines hold the key to combating infectious diseases, protecting the intellectual property associated with them has become a contentious issue. This paper delves into the advantages and challenges that IPR poses to vaccine innovation, discussing the impact on accessibility, affordability, and equitable distribution of vaccines worldwide. The analysis highlights the delicate balance required to incentivize research and development through IPR while ensuring that vaccines remain accessible to all, particularly in the face of global health crises. Key considerations include patents, trade agreements, licensing, and technology transfer, which can either foster or hinder vaccine development and distribution. Understanding these dynamics is critical in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and future disease outbreaks. This abstract underscores the need for global collaboration and innovative solutions that safeguard IPR while prioritizing public health, emphasizing the importance of balancing innovation and accessibility.

Keywords: Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Vaccine Innovation, Infectious Diseases, Global Healthcare, Equitable Distribution, Patents, Trade Agreements, Licensing, Technology Transfer.

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Vaccine Innovation-

A vaccine is a substance containing either a weakened or inactivated pathogen or a part of a pathogen, like its genetic material or proteins. When this substance is

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given to a person, it triggers a defensive reaction from the immune system's cells. This response helps protect individuals from a specific disease the vaccine is designed for. This entire process of giving a vaccine to someone is called vaccination. In simpler terms, vaccination is the method of safeguarding people who are vulnerable to diseases by introducing a living or altered agent (for example, the oral polio vaccine), a suspension of killed organisms (like in the case of pertussis), or an inactivated toxin (as seen in tetanus) into their bodies [1]. Vaccination is a remarkable achievement in medicine, with ongoing progress driven by multidisciplinary knowledge and substantial investments. Modernizing clinical vaccine evaluation is crucial, but challenges persist. Efforts concentrate on enhancing vaccine efficacy and safety. Advances in immunology and microbiology are swiftly applied to vaccine development. To succeed, those involved need a grasp of recent trends in vaccination and relevant diseases. Key factors include pathogen understanding (life cycle, epidemiology), immune response dynamics, antigen selection, and rigorous preclinical and clinical testing [2].

Vaccine Innovation

Vaccine innovation encompasses progress in the creation, enhancement, and dissemination of vaccines aimed at thwarting and managing diseases. This entails pioneering methods such as mRNA and vector vaccines, as well as refinements in vaccine preservation and dissemination. These innovations play a vital role in bolstering global health by elevating the effectiveness and availability of vaccines for the prevention of infectious diseases. The core components of vaccine innovation encompass the formulation of novel and improved vaccines to combat communicable illnesses, a journey that frequently integrates a variety of scientific, technological, and medical breakthroughs [3]. Here, are the key aspects of vaccine innovation:

Antigen Identification

Scientists identify specific substances known as antigens that can trigger the immune system's response against a particular pathogen. Recent advancements in genomics and bioinformatics have improved this process. The process of pinpointing vaccine antigens can be more or less complex depending on whether the entire pathogen or materials derived from the pathogen are used. When it comes to using the pathogen itself for developing vaccines, the complexity of the materials can vary. This might involve using entire viruses or bacteria in different forms, such as reassortant, attenuated, or inactivated microbes. Attenuated pathogens are still alive and capable of replicating, but they have been modified in some way to reduce their ability to cause diseases in the host. Inactivated

pathogens, on the other hand, are no longer capable of causing disease, as they are either dead or, in the case of viruses, rendered unable to replicate. Reassortant pathogens are a specific type of attenuated organisms, containing genetic material from at least two different strains of the same pathogen, and they express proteins from all the contributing strains [2]. In situations where it's not possible to use the entire pathogen, alternative approaches come into play, like using split, subunit, or recombinant antigens. The choice of which type of antigen to use depends on what delivers the best balance of safety and the ability to stimulate an immune response, as well as what is technologically feasible. Another avenue for vaccine antigens involves recombinant DNA techniques. This method involves isolating the gene responsible for encoding the antigen and then either producing it and purifying it from a protein-production system (like yeast or insect cells) or having the vaccine recipient's body produce it directly after receiving an engineered plasmid or a live vector. It is worth noting that DNA-based candidate vaccines are still in the early stages of development compared to vaccines that use the whole pathogen as a basis [4].

Technological Platforms

Different vaccine platforms, such as mRNA, viral vectors, subunit vaccines, and inactivated vaccines, are continually evolving and are discussed below:

mRNA

mRNA vaccines are remarkable because they have strong immunological properties, a great safety track record, and the unique ability to adapt like genetic vaccines. These vaccines work by generating proteins inside the body, which in turn trigger a comprehensive immune response, involving both cellular and antibody-based defenses, without being limited by specific genetic factors. Moreover, mRNA acts as a safe carrier of genetic information, being minimal and temporary, so it does not interfere with the body's genetic code. The standout feature of mRNA vaccines is their capacity to produce nearly any protein without requiring extensive adjustments to the production process, giving them significant flexibility in development. In essence, mRNA has the potential to revolutionize vaccine technology, and this article explores various aspects to consider when creating mRNA-based vaccines. When it comes to making mRNA, you start with a cDNA template, often plasmid DNA (pDNA), and use bacteriophage RNA polymerase in an in vitro transcription process. Initially, it might seem more challenging to produce mRNA compared to pDNA. However, raw pDNA comes with issues like traces of bacterial genomic DNA and exists in different forms (supercoiled, relaxed circle, or linear) in varying proportions [5]. This makes consistently generating pure and uniform pDNA, which is crucial for vaccine

CHAPTER 4

The Debate on Patent Protection for Vaccines

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Abstract: In recent years, there has been a strengthening and harmonization of global standards for patent protection. Patents are important for development, as evidenced by the discussion surrounding the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreement of the World Trade Organization. However, research on the geography of knowledge transfer indicates that knowledge is spatially sticky, indicating that patent impact may be overstated. Amidst the fervent discourse, a few key issues frequently dominate the discourse in the academic, regulatory, and policy domains: is the number of patents excessive? Do patents create impassable "thickets" that hinder the path of new innovators and implementers? Do the cumulative royalties from multiple patents covering a single product amount to excessive royalty rates? How should reasonable licensing terms and damages for patents be defined? However, there is scant or no empirical support for a number of these claims. In order to find holes in the arguments made thus far and areas where more research could help the debate, this chapter provides an overview of the literature on the current patent policy debate. These days, the public is highly aware of patents; debates and questions concerning the patent system's fairness, the legitimacy of a large number of patents, and the rights of those who "have" versus those who "have not" are common.

Keywords: COVID-19, IPR, Patent, Pandemic, Patent debate, TRIPS, TRIPS waiver, Technology transfer, Vaccines.

INTRODUCTION

An invention discovered by an applicant is granted a patent, which is a legal document granted by the government for a specific amount of time regarding the discovery or development of something new. It gives protection, of such discovery, to the petitioner. A patent is granted for a finite amount of time—up to 20 years. A patent defence indicates that the innovation cannot be applied, widely distributed, or sold to third parties without the patent holder's consent. For the

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Sachin Kumar Jain, Ravikant Gupta, Sudha Vengurlekar, Nidhi Bais & Gajendra P. Choudhary (Eds.)

period that the invention is protected, the patent holder is free to decide who may or may not utilize the patented invention [1]. Even though the notion of intellectual property rights (IPR) is relatively new to the globe, the pharmaceutical business is a successful technology sector that has grown consistently over the past few decades [2]. India's permission from the World Trade Organization and its vow to execute the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) concession have witnessed a variance in the Indian pharmaceutical business. In every industry, the manufacturing sector is required to obtain the product's patent; however, many industries are unable to handle patents [3].

The legal exclusive rights granted to an inventor for revealing a novel process, item, or idea that is beneficial, non-obvious, and not naturally occurring are known as patent protection. It is the sole method available for limiting an invention's production, licensing, manufacturing, and sales. Anyone can produce a product that is the same or comparable without facing legal ramifications if there is no patent in place. A specific amount of time is allotted for patent protection.

A method, product, or innovation that offers a novel technical solution is eligible for patent protection. A patent must be granted for an invention that is novel, practical, inventive, and helpful; in other words, the solution for which the patent is sought need not be a simple one. Innovation in product design, technology, and composition typically results in the granting of patent protection. An improvement on previously known patented inventions is the subject of the vast majority of patent applications. Following the patent award, the patent holder is the only one with the authority to stop others from using the patented invention for profit [4].

The number of patents connected to vaccines that have been granted has steadily increased annually for the last 20 years. Therefore, it is critical that individuals working on vaccination research understand the potential hazards as well as the benefits that come with patents. In addition to outlining the possible risk of infringing on the patent rights of other parties and its possible repercussions, this chapter seeks to provide a concise overview of how and when vaccine developers may be granted access to patent rights.

SIGNIFICANCE OF VACCINES IN PUBLIC HEALTH

It is difficult to overstate the influence that vaccinations have had on global health. No other technique has had such a significant impact on population growth and mortality reduction as safe water [5]. One of the most significant scientific developments of the twenty-first century has been the creation of safe and effective vaccinations against diseases that significantly increase morbidity and mortality. Vaccination is unquestionably one of the public health measures that have improved health outcomes worldwide, along with sanitation and good

drinking water. An estimated 6 million deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases have been avoided each year as a result of vaccinations [6].

By 2055, the earth's population is estimated to reach almost 10 billion, a feat that in part is due to effective vaccines that prevent disease and prolong life expectancy across all continents. There is still much to be done to ensure the financing, provision, distribution, and administration of vaccines to all populations, in particular those which are difficult to reach, including those sceptical about their protective value and those living in civil disruption. Agencies including the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Initiative (CEPI), with their multiple funding streams, have been instrumental in expanding vaccine benefits to all. The importance of these organizations in global co-operation and participation was essential in the setting of the 2019 global pandemic of SARS-CoV-2, in light of the health and economic impact of COVID-19 on societies in high-, middle- and low-income countries.

BRIEF HISTORY OF VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

Human usage of preparations to prevent certain infections has been reported since 1500 AD, beginning in China where smallpox was prevented by variolation, which is the transfer of material from scabs into the skin. In the United Kingdom, Edward Jenner noted in 1796 that milkmaids who had previously contracted cowpox naturally were immune to smallpox [7, 8]. He discovered that vulnerable hosts might become immune to smallpox by receiving little doses of pus from cowpox lesions, which most likely included a vaccinia-related virus. In 1798, a smallpox vaccination was created. It took nearly a century of research to reach the next stage of scientific advancements, which involved manipulating infectious agents to extract appropriate vaccination antigens. At the turn of the 20th century, vaccinations against live-attenuated rabies, inactivated anthrax, and chicken cholera were made possible by Louis Pasteur's work with attenuation by heat or oxygen [9]. Alternative methods of attenuation involving serial passage of *Mycobacterium bovis* led to the live Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine, still in use today for the prevention of tuberculosis. The creation of yellow fever vaccinations, which are produced in the embryonic tissues of chickens, also took advantage of serial passage [10, 11]. As techniques for treating and killing bacteria with heat or chemicals were developed, whole-cell bacterial vaccines were created, leading to the development of whole-cell typhoid, cholera, and pertussis vaccinations by the end of the 19th century. The diphtheria and tetanus toxoid vaccines were created in 1923 thanks to techniques developed by Alexander Glenny and Barbara Hopkins to use formaldehyde to inactivate

CHAPTER 5

Access to Vaccines and Intellectual Property

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Abstract: Intellectual property and patents have become one of the most controversial issues relating to access to medications since the World Trade Organization (WTO) was established and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) was put into effect. While patents are not the only obstacles to obtaining life-saving medications, they can be very important or even decisive. Due to the patent holder's ability to set prices during the period of protection in the absence of competition, the majority of people living in developing countries might not be able to afford the treatment. Many nations within the Global South confront significant barriers to vaccine access, owing in part to restrictive intellectual property law. With reference to the TRIPS agreement, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), this chapter attempts to resolve the issues of intellectual property and vaccination availability.

Our aim is a global legislative framework for human rights and health that is based on universal cooperation and collaboration, with a focus on long-term goals and unfettered access to pharmaceuticals without any regard for intellectual property.

The trade-related portions of intellectual property rights that regulate the creation, manufacturing, and distribution of medications and medical technologies are a relatively recent area of pharmaceutical policy.

Keywords: Intellectual Property(IP), Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights(TRIPS), Worldwide health legislation, World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the implementation of the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), intellectual property, and patents have emerged as one of the most contentious topics pertaining to access to medications

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Sachin Kumar Jain, Ravikant Gupta, Sudha Vengurlekar, Nidhi Bais & Gajendra P. Choudhary (Eds.)

[1, 2]. While patents are not the only obstacles to obtaining life-saving medications, they can be very important or even decisive. Given the patent owner's ability to set prices during the treatment's duration of protection in the absence of competition, the majority of people in developing countries might not be able to afford it. Many nations in the Global South confront significant barriers to vaccine access, owing in part to restrictive intellectual property law [3 - 5]. This chapter aims to introduce important topics related to intellectual property and vaccine access on the basis of COVID-19, Malaria, and SARS vaccines. We envision a human rights and global health legislation framework built on solidarity and international cooperation, with funding focused on long-term goals and access to medicines free of intellectual property constraints. This paper provides a prompt case-by-case evaluation of the initial patent landscape that scans and develop side for accelerating development and access through patent pools and other forms of intellectual property management [6 - 8].

One of the biggest health catastrophes of the past century worldwide is the COVID-19 pandemic. Although a number of COVID-19 vaccines have been developed swiftly, giving millions of people hope, many nations find it extremely difficult to obtain access to them, partly because of stringent intellectual property (IP) rules. This is due to the fact that vaccination patents, a particular kind of intellectual property right, establish production monopolies, which raise costs and restrict access. Because of the stark differences in vaccination availability that it causes between the Global North and the Global South, as well as between nations among rulers and others, this injustice has been nicknamed “vaccine apartheid” [6, 7].

Effect of Technology Transfer on Access to Vaccines

In the context of pharmaceutical technology transfer, it can be challenging to present concrete proof that the transfer affects local product accessibility. When it comes to immunizations, this is considerably simpler to prove. There are several instances of technology transfer to developing nations improving immunization access, which in turn improves population health. The technology for several fundamental vaccines was transmitted to many developing nations in the early to mid-20th century to support national supplies [9]. Due to this technological transfer, producers from developing nations today produce 64% of the basic (Essential Programme of Immunization) EPI vaccines (Fig. **1**) [10, 11].

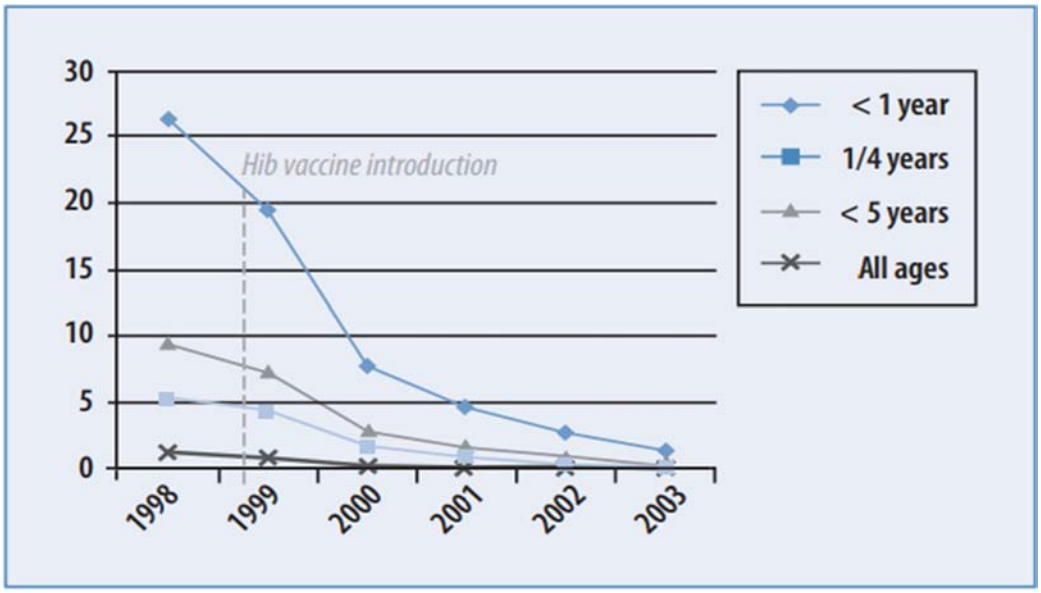

Fig. (1). Example of Haemophilus influenzae type b(Hib)Vaccines.

Source: MS/SVS/COVER

These technology transfer initiatives led to a significant drop in vaccination costs and an increase in vaccine capacity. Eight prequalified producers are currently offering vaccinations containing Hib.

This enhanced ability was reinforced by WHO epidemiological research that showed the condition was widespread in numerous nations.

The Functions of Patent

The overwhelming majority of participants (81.2%) agreed that patents are meant to promote innovation.

Merely 5% of the participants expressed disagreement with this viewpoint, while the remaining 13.6% responded neutrally.

Knowledge of the role of the patent indicates that the participants were familiar with the objectives of the patent [6, 12, 13] (Fig. **2**).

CHAPTER 6

International Agreements and Vaccine IP

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Abstract: This chapter mainly discusses international agreements and treaties related to vaccines, including their types and functions. International agreements are formal understandings between two or more sovereign states or international organizations that set obligations, standards, and guidelines to ensure stability, collaboration, and resolve conflicts among nations. It has been mentioned that international agreements are formal understandings between sovereign states or international organizations to ensure stability, collaboration, and conflict resolution among nations. Typical types of agreements include bilateral, multilateral, regional, and trade agreements. The World Trade Organization is the only international organization that deals with trade regulations, and Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and oversees minimum standards for intellectual property regulation, including vaccines and medical products. Additionally, it also includes a regulatory process for vaccines including preclinical and clinical studies, the Biologics License Application, and the marketing authorization application. Specific regulations related to biological products, blood products, and diagnostic materials are also mentioned. These also highlight international agreements and initiatives related to vaccines before the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization and the World Health Organization. Overall, international agreements and treaties related to vaccines, the regulatory process for vaccines, and the importance of international cooperation in addressing vaccine-related challenges and promoting public health are discussed in this chapter.

Keywords: Regulatory process, Biologics license application, International agreement, Marketing authorization application, Patent, Public health, Treaties, Vaccine equity, Vaccines, World Health Organization, World trade organization.

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Sachin Kumar Jain, Ravikant Gupta, Sudha Vengurlekar, Nidhi Bais & Gajendra P. Choudhary (Eds.)

INTRODUCTION

A formal understanding or arrangement between two or more sovereign states or international organizations is called an international agreement. These agreements may be in the form of pacts, accords, conventions, protocols, or treaties, among other formats. International agreements are used to set obligations, standards, and guidelines that control how the parties interact. To promote stability, resolve conflicts, and encourage collaboration among nations, international accords are essential. They can address a broad spectrum of topics, representing the many interests and worries of the participants. Trade agreements, accords pertaining to human rights, arms control, and environmental norms are a few examples of international agreements [1].

Any legally binding agreement between states is referred to as a "treaty" under international law (countries). A treaty may go by many different names, such as a convention, protocol, pact, accord, etc.; what distinguishes a treaty from other agreements is its contents, not its formal title. A treaty is defined by U.S. law as a legally binding agreement between nations that needs to be ratified and receive the Senate's "advice and consent." Executive Agreements refer to all other agreements, which are international treaties. A group of nations negotiates a treaty, either through an institution created especially for that purpose or through an already-existing entity like the UN Council on Disarmament. Several years may pass during the negotiation process, depending on the nature of the agreement and the number of signatory nations. Following the conclusion of discussions, officials from each of the participating states sign the treaty. Before the treaty is ratified and becomes legally enforceable, the terms may stipulate that it must be signed. A government can ratify a treaty by depositing an instrument of ratification—a document that formally confirms the government's agreement to the conditions of the treaty—at a site designated by the treaty.

Only the language of a treaty is legally binding unless it calls for other agreements or actions. A treaty's amendments are often only legally obligatory on the states that have ratified them. Agreements made at summits, review conferences, or gatherings of the state's parties are enforceable in politics but not in law. The UN Charter is one treaty that does provide provisions for other legally binding agreements. Countries committed to be legally bound by resolutions enacted by UN organizations like the General Assembly and Security Council when they signed and ratified the Charter. As a result, UN resolutions are enforceable against UN Member States without the need for ratification or signature.

An international agreement known as the IHR (2005) was made between the World Health Organization and 194 States Parties to keep an eye on, report, and

address any incidents that might endanger public health worldwide. It aims to avoid needless interference with international trade and traffic while preventing, controlling, and responding to the international spread of illness in a way that is appropriate for and limited to public health threats [2].

TREATY PERSUASION

International agreements and treaties come in a variety of forms, each with a distinct function and a broad scope of topics covered. These are a few typical kinds:

Bilateral Treaties

There are two parties involved in these. Bilateral treaties between two countries can address a variety of topics, including trade, security, and cultural interaction.

Multilateral Treaties

Multilateral treaties, as opposed to bilateral ones, involve three or more participants. These agreements frequently deal with complicated problems that call for international cooperation. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are two examples.

Regional Treaties

Aimed at resolving regional issues, these accords encompass nations that are part of a certain geographical area. For instance, the Treaties of Rome and other European Union accords regulate how the EU operates.

Trade Agreements

The purpose of these agreements is to encourage and control international trade. Examples are the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which have been superseded by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

These are but a few instances of the various kinds of treaties and agreements that the international community has, which deal with certain problems or situations [3].

World Trade Organization (WTO)

The only international organization that deals with international trade regulations is the WTO. It was established on 1st Jan 1995 by Uruguay Round negotiations. It

CHAPTER 7

COVID-19 and the Role of IP Rights in Vaccine Development

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Abstract: The pandemic sparked many discussions on IP rights and compulsory licensing was the first solution that many governments turned to, as it was widely believed that existing patent rights were the only obstacles preventing the world from obtaining a cure for COVID-19. However, the reality was quite different. When the pandemic first hit, there was simply no medicine or vaccine that was being blocked by a patent right because no treatment or vaccine existed. This mindset meant that innovators and researchers were expected to develop a cure in the shadow of the threat of compulsory licensing. What happened was that many innovators and pharma companies combined patent tools, opened up their intellectual property and know-how, and shared their knowledge for the sake of humanity.

Keywords: COVID-19, Coronaviruses, Intellectual property rights, Patent tools, SARS.

INTRODUCTION

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause respiratory illness in humans. They are called “corona” because of crown-like spikes on the surface of the virus. Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and the common cold are examples of coronaviruses that cause illness in humans.

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The new strain of coronavirus — SARS-CoV-2 — was first reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019. It has since spread to every country around the world.

The coronavirus, specifically SARS-CoV-2, gained significant worldwide attention starting in early 2020 due to the rapid spread of COVID-19. In December 2019, cases of a mysterious pneumonia-like illness were reported in Wuhan, China. By January 2020, Chinese authorities identified the cause as a novel coronavirus, later named SARS-CoV-2, which is the virus responsible for COVID-19 (Fig. **1**).

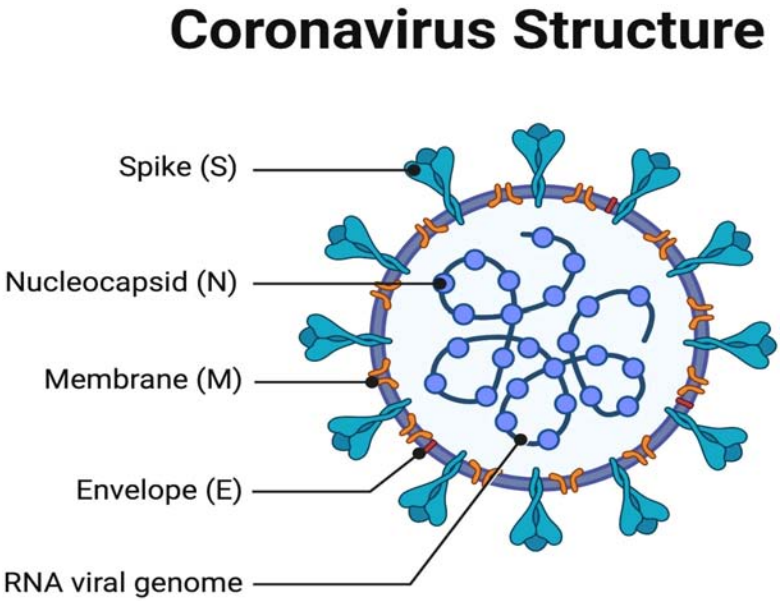

Fig. (1). Structure of corona virus.

The rapid spread of COVID-19 beyond China's borders, coupled with its high transmission rate and potential for severe illness in vulnerable populations, prompted global concern and response. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020, and later declared it a pandemic on March 11, 2020 [1 - 6].

What is the Incubation Period for COVID-19?

The incubation period for COVID-19, caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, typically ranges from 2 to 14 days after exposure. However, most commonly, symptoms appear around 4-5 days after exposure to the virus. During this incubation period, an infected person may not show any symptoms but can still spread the virus to

others, which is a significant factor contributing to the rapid spread of COVID-19 [7 - 10].

The Incubation Period for the New Coronavirus

The median incubation period, or the time at which half of the infected individuals will develop symptoms, is around 4-5 days. It is important to note that during this incubation period, infected individuals can spread the virus to others, even if they themselves do not yet show symptoms. This characteristic of the virus has contributed significantly to its rapid spread worldwide [11, 12].

The entry of SARS-CoV-2 into host cells primarily involves several key steps:

- **Attachment:** The spike protein (S protein) on the surface of SARS-CoV-2 binds to a specific receptor on the host cell surface. This receptor is angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2), which is expressed in various human tissues, including the respiratory tract, lungs, heart, kidneys, and intestines.
- **Primed for Entry:** After the initial attachment, the spike protein must be primed by cellular proteases. This priming step involves cleaving the spike protein into two subunits (S1 and S2), which activates it for fusion with the host cell membrane (Fig. **2**).
- **Fusion and Entry:** Once primed, the viral membrane fuses with the host cell membrane. This fusion allows the viral genetic material (RNA) to enter the host cell cytoplasm.
- **Release of RNA:** Once inside the host cell, the viral RNA is released and used as a template for replication and transcription of new viral components.
- **Assembly and Release:** New viral particles are assembled within the host cell and then released to infect new cells or individuals [13 - 16].

What are the Symptoms of Coronavirus?

The symptoms of coronavirus, specifically referring to COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2, can vary widely in severity and presentation. Common symptoms include:

Respiratory Symptoms

o Dry cough

o Sore throat

o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

CHAPTER 8

The Future of Vaccine IP Right

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Abstract: It took a while for new vaccines that specifically target the requirements of poor nations to be developed. To solve this issue, several new public-sector vaccine development and research programs have been started. These new initiatives discover that they frequently want to work with the commercial sector and that, in doing so, they have to deal with the problem of managing intellectual property (IP). The significance of intellectual property management and the most effective ways for public sector organizations to manage it are not widely known. Because the regulatory process drives vaccine research and development, intellectual property management has become crucial. The cost of developing vaccines has skyrocketed due to the regulatory procedure, particularly for the extremely complex new vaccines that are currently being developed. For the necessary big investments, investors thus look for IP protection. On the other hand, we contend that, in light of this new perspective, intellectual property rights are crucial for raising the significant sums of money required to satisfy legal obligations. As a result, the general public as well as investors appreciate intellectual property rights. In the lack of public sector processes for carrying out the duties that the private industry currently performs, the public sector needs to boost its level of expertise in handling intellectual property and develop and execute tactics that will assist the public sector in achieving its public health goals, particularly for the poor and, among these individuals, the poor in developing countries.

Keywords: COVID-19, Compulsory licensing, Global health equity, Health diplomacy, Intellectual property, Next-generation vaccines, Public health, Pandemics, Technology transfer, Vaccine IP rights, Vaccines.

INTRODUCTION

The pace at which new vaccinations that target illnesses of particular concern in underdeveloped nations are being developed and introduced is extremely slow. In

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poor nations, there has never been a rotavirus vaccination. The manufacturer withdrew it due to a link between vaccination and intussusception. Even in the absence of these safety concerns, there was worry over the product's comparatively high price, which was an unconnected issue. Even though a safe and efficient vaccination against S. pneumoniae infection was recently developed, it is not being used widely in underdeveloped nations due to its high cost and inability to protect against certain pneumococcal strains that are common in these areas [1].

World leaders have talked about the possibility of a worldwide waiver of the patent rights related to the COVID-19 vaccines in an attempt to get rid of some of these prohibitive obstacles that prevent the vaccine's benefits from being distributed internationally. The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights ("TRIPS Agreement") submitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO) may theoretically be amended to achieve such a patent waiver [1, 2]. Research believes that because patents keep information about how to make vaccines from being used by other pharmaceutical companies worldwide, they constitute an obstacle to a proposed three-step method that could produce a fairer distribution of vaccines.

A decision has been made regarding the proposed Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver for COVID-19 vaccines, medicines, and diagnostics by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference. The Conference voted to partially waive TRIPS, but only for vaccines, in a contentious decision [3].

IP RIGHTS IN VACCINE DEVELOPMENT: INCENTIVES AND INNOVATION

The establishment of novel approaches aimed at enhancing worldwide health holds significant humanitarian and financial significance. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has already destroyed trillions of dollars worth of market value from U.S. stock indices and has the potential to kill over a million people in the country alone, serves as a striking example of this issue. Furthermore, COVID-19 is just one of several risks to world health. A startling 25% of deaths worldwide and more than two-thirds of mortality in children under five are attributable to infectious diseases, which include HIV, TB, hepatitis, and malaria. Nearly 150,000 Americans lost their lives to infectious diseases in 2014, and it is now acknowledged that global health is both a national security concern for the United States and a factor in the expansion of the world economy.

Among the global industries with the highest concentration is the vaccination sector. Before 2019, Pfizer, Sanofi, GSK, and Novartis accounted for more than

80% of global vaccination sales. Nonetheless, their vaccines mostly benefited the richest 20% of the global population, who zealously defended their monopoly rents with the use of patents and other tools related to intellectual property rights. Clinical trial results and other significant documents, for instance, are protected as confidential information, making a patent waiver essentially ineffective. Not only are vaccines essential, but so are many other pharmacological items [2, 3].

The COVID-19 pandemic's patent race victors were handsomely compensated by the stringent enforcement of vaccination patents, but it is reasonable to wonder if this left nearly eight billion individuals at the mercy of a small number of profit-driven companies. This scepticism is justified given that, even a year and a half after the vaccine's launch, half of the world's population was still unvaccinated, the virus continued to mutate and diminish the effectiveness of vaccinations, and the NPI's widespread interference severely hindered global trade and production opportunities. Furthermore, the major vaccine companies have mostly disregarded the less wealthy potential customers, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, while treating wealthier nations as preferred clients [4].

THE GLOBAL VACCINE LANDSCAPE

Until November 2021, several COVID-19 vaccinations were authorized, while more than 326 COVID-19 vaccine candidates were being developed. According to the WHO, 194 vaccines were in pre-clinical development in November 23, 2021, and 132 vaccine candidates are presently undergoing testing in clinical trials. Finding the genetic sequence of a virus is the first step in creating a vaccine for it. On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organisation did, however, issue a warning regarding a novel coronavirus strain that was affecting individuals in China [4]. Later, Chinese officials confirmed the identification of a novel coronavirus strain that infects humans, and on January 11, 2020, the first genomic sequencing for SARS-CoV-2 was made public.

In the absence of safe and highly effective vaccinations and treatment options, non-pharmacological treatments are utilized to minimize transmission and the burden of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), however, the majority of these interventions come with hefty financial expenses. We urgently need effective COVID-19 vaccinations to lessen the significant burden of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality. In order to guarantee appropriate safety and immunogenicity in a range of individuals (*i.e.*, different ages, medical problems, severity of attack, geographic location, *etc.*), vaccine development is a drawn-out procedure that requires multiple testing steps [5]. The National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) states that a vaccine must pass four phases of clinical studies before a license to manufacture it is granted. This process can take up to ten years.

CHAPTER 9

Case Studies: Ip Rights and Specific Vaccines

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Abstract: Numerous intellectual property rights apply to vaccines. Vaccines may be covered by patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets. In response to various diseases including the pandemic, there have been debates regarding intellectual rights on vaccines. In the end, the federal government only placed an order for 3.2 million pills, fewer than 80,000 of which were filled by February 2023. The exact amount of government financing committed to one of India's companies has not been made public by the US government. A case study of global companies was unable to create a COVID-19 vaccine that was approved. Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, the global pharmaceutical company was awarded funding from the Gates Foundation for a project called "mRNA vaccine platform for rapid response in case of pandemic preparedness." Some companies mentioned in its German government development support were disclosed in regulatory filings, along with the government's "transferable and nonexclusive right to utilize any intellectual property created during the sponsored project, in the case of a special public interest." The Biopharmaceutical company has an in-licensing agreement with a Canadian company and important components for their patented LNP technology, which involves milestone and royalty payments. Additionally, a global biopharmaceutical company signed many contracts to enable the expansion of its vaccine production. The company has a sizable portfolio of patents covering its vaccination technique.

Keywords: BioNTech, COVID-19, HPV vaccines, Killed pathogen, Moderna, Polio vaccines, Pfizer, Rotashield, Technology Transfer, Vaccines, WHO.

INTRODUCTION

The significantly rapid development of various coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines is the outcome of special cooperation between businesses,

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government health organizations, and academic labs. New vaccines have been introduced, but there are also worries about how they will be made available in adequate amounts and dispersed equitably over the world [1, 2]. A waiver from certain of the terms of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) that would enable developing nations to manufacture their vaccines was suggested in October 2020 by Eswatini, India, Kenya, and South Africa. However, the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom, the United States, and some other countries have resisted the waiver since it has been viewed with skepticism, particularly by high-income countries [3, 4].

There are numerous vaccination forms and components, including distinct formulations, delivery methods, parts, and distribution networks. Similarly, there are numerous intellectual property (IP) rights that apply to vaccines. Vaccines may be covered by intellectual property rights such as patents, copyrights, trademarks, plant breeders' rights, and trade secrets. Therefore, discussing IP rights and vaccines should not start and stop with a single IP right being applied to a vaccination [5 - 7]. Multiple intellectual property rights that apply to vaccines should be discussed, as well as how to use them in concert to create a strategy that supports vaccine development and distribution. With this approach to IP rights for vaccines, the integrated rights can be taken into account alongside the reasons for using IP rights to protect vaccines and the issues surrounding specific IP rights for vaccines, like available IP credits for humanitarian purposes and mandatory licensing schemes. Although it requires attention, seeing vaccines as the target of several IP rights can have a big impact on vaccine distribution and development [8, 9].

The burden of IPRs and Licenses makes a difference for the nations who have forced IPRs on the generation of immunizations but hampers the ‘less created countries” too. Topical investigation tends to appear that the “developed countries” have forced IPRs and Licenses on their antibodies that permit them to offer the antibodies at a better cost as IPRs and Licenses guarantee that the antibodies are one of a kind and are exceptionally compelling in treating the illness and hence strengthening the “underdeveloped countries” to buy the immunizations at a better cost (Fig. **1**) [10, 11].

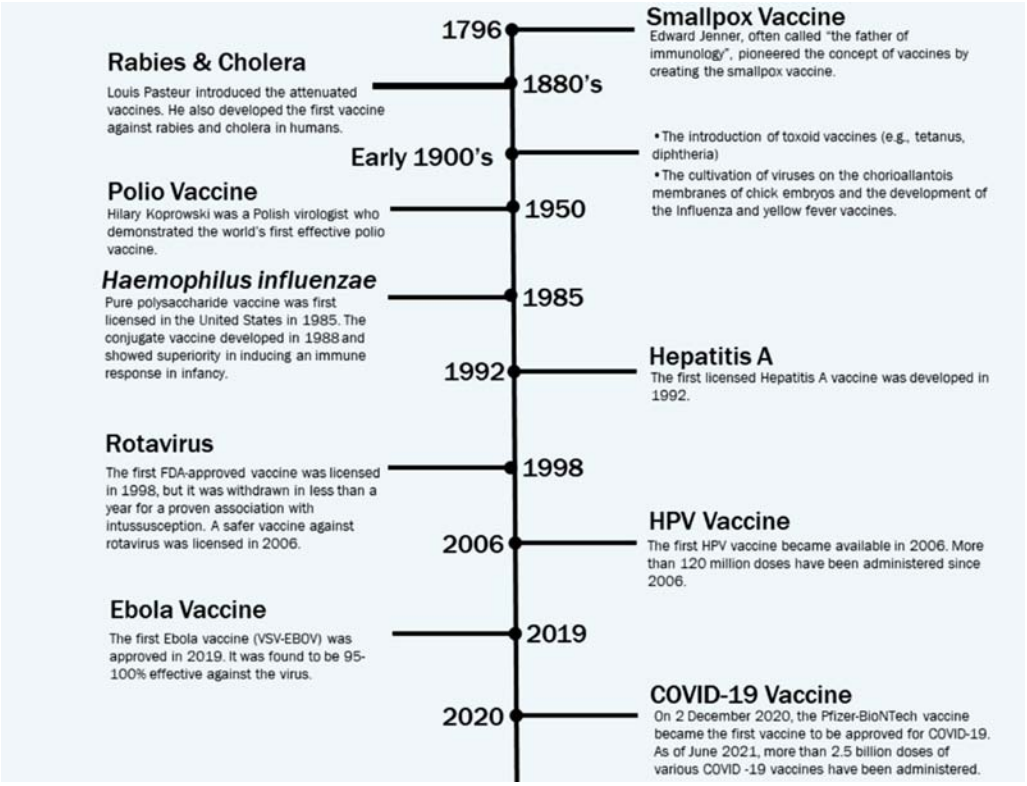

Fig. (1). Vaccine history timeline [55].
(COVID-19, coronavirus disease 2019; FDA, U.S. Food and Drug Administration; HPV, human papillomavirus).

COVID-19 VACCINES AND PATENT WAIVERS

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been debates regarding intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines. Developing countries and public health advocates have called for waiving intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines to increase global access and accelerate production [12, 13]. They argue that this would allow more manufacturers to produce vaccines, thereby addressing the global vaccine shortage. However, some pharmaceutical companies and countries with strong pharmaceutical industries have opposed this move, citing concerns about disincentivizing innovation and the potential negative impact on future drug development. Governmental awards of intellectual property rights, particularly patent rights, are ingrained in national legal systems worldwide for practical purposes. The foundation of long-standing intellectual property theory and policy is the notion that participants will be motivated by the possibility of getting a patent [14, 15]. To allocate funds to areas that might not receive enough funding for research and development (R&D). This utilitarian

CHAPTER 10

Recommendations for Policymakers, Pharmaceutical Companies, and the Global Community

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Abstract: The pharmaceutical industry plays a crucial role in global healthcare, with policymakers, pharmaceutical companies, and communities working together to ensure access to safe and effective medicines. This document provides insights and recommendations for policymakers, pharma companies, and global communities to navigate the evolving landscape of pharmaceutical regulations, quality control, and access to essential medicines.

Key themes include the impact of regulatory policies on drug marketing, the importance of regulatory quality control in the pharmaceutical industry, and the evaluation of collaborative medicines registration initiatives. The document also highlights new approaches to regulatory innovation emerging during the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasizes the need for cleaner production quality regulation strategies.

Furthermore, the document addresses challenges faced by pharmaceutical industries, such as intellectual property rights protection, meeting global requirements during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, and transforming pharmaceutical curricula to align with industry needs. It also discusses the professional competency and challenges faced by clinical pharmacists in India, quality management techniques for pharmacy institutions, and bridging the gap between academia and practice.

Overall, the recommendations presented in this document aim to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of pharmaceutical systems worldwide, ultimately improving access to essential medicines and promoting better health outcomes for all.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pharmaceutical curriculum, Pharmaceutical industries, Regulatory policy, Regulatory framework.

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INTRODUCTION

The pharmaceutical sector occupies a central and indispensable role in the vast landscape of global healthcare. As a cornerstone of medical progress, it serves as the driving force behind the development of life-changing treatments and therapeutic breakthroughs, contributing significantly to the well-being of individuals worldwide. The intricate interplay of innovation, regulatory frameworks, and societal well-being within the pharmaceutical domain necessitates a nuanced and collaborative approach. Achieving excellence in the sector demands concerted efforts from a spectrum of stakeholders, including policymakers, pharmaceutical companies, educational institutions, and the global community [1]. This essay embarks on a journey to explore the multifaceted challenges faced by the pharmaceutical sector and outlines a comprehensive, collaborative strategy to address them, offering tailored recommendations for each stakeholder group.

The dynamic nature of the pharmaceutical landscape underscores the need for a visionary approach from policymakers. Positioned at the intersection of scientific advancement, patient safety, and economic growth, policymakers play a pivotal role in shaping the regulatory environment that governs the industry. A critical aspect of this is the imperative for comprehensive regulatory reforms that strike a delicate balance between fostering innovation and ensuring the safety and efficacy of pharmaceutical products [2]. Streamlining approval processes and staying abreast of technological advancements become essential components of a regulatory framework that is not just robust but agile, capable of adapting to the rapidly evolving landscape of pharmaceutical innovation [3].

In tandem with regulatory reforms, policymakers must recognize the foundational importance of education in propelling the pharmaceutical sector forward. Allocating resources for the development of state-of-the-art pharmaceutical education infrastructure becomes imperative. This includes the constant evolution of laboratories, the establishment of cutting-edge research facilities, and the implementation of faculty training programs to ensure that educators remain at the forefront of industry trends. By doing so, policymakers contribute to the cultivation of a skilled workforce that is not only knowledgeable but also adaptive to the dynamic demands of the pharmaceutical industry [4].

Moreover, policymakers can play a crucial role in fostering collaborations between pharmaceutical companies and educational institutions. Such partnerships create symbiotic relationships, enriching academic curricula with real-world insights and ensuring that educational programs align seamlessly with industry needs. By facilitating these industry-academia collaborations,

policymakers contribute to the holistic development of pharmaceutical professionals, nurturing a workforce that is not only academically sound but also practically adept [4].

Skill development initiatives stand as another pillar of policymaker interventions. In a rapidly evolving industry, ensuring the employability of pharmacy graduates requires proactive measures. Policymakers can champion targeted programs that promote industry-relevant skills such as data analytics, regulatory affairs, and quality control. By doing so, they align the skill sets of graduates with the evolving needs of the pharmaceutical sector, creating a workforce that is not only job-ready but also capable of driving innovation within the industry.

As the torchbearers of innovation and economic growth within the pharmaceutical sector, pharmaceutical companies form the bedrock of progress. Their role extends beyond the development of life-saving drugs; they are instrumental in shaping the industry's trajectory through strategic initiatives that balance short-term gains with long-term sustainability.

Internship and training programs emerge as a linchpin for bridging the gap between academic learning and practical application. Pharmaceutical companies should take the lead in establishing robust internship and training programs, providing students with hands-on experience and facilitating a seamless transition from academia to the pharmaceutical industry. These initiatives not only contribute to the professional development of individuals but also foster a pipeline of skilled professionals ready to tackle the industry's evolving challenges.

Furthermore, the commitment to research and development becomes non-negotiable for pharmaceutical companies aspiring to lead the industry. Allocating substantial resources to fuel innovation, the development of new drugs, and the exploration of cutting-edge technologies is not merely an investment in the company's future but a commitment to addressing the ever-changing healthcare needs of the global population. Long-term investments in R&D position companies as innovators, ensuring they stay competitive in a landscape defined by scientific advancements and breakthrough discoveries.

Employee training and development represent another dimension of corporate responsibility. With the rapid pace of pharmaceutical advancements, companies must invest in continuous training programs for their existing workforce. This commitment to ongoing education ensures that employees remain well-versed in the latest technologies, methodologies, and industry trends, contributing to the overall adaptability and resilience of the pharmaceutical workforce [4, 5].

SUBJECT INDEX

A

Acute gastroenteritis 196
Adaptive Regulatory Framework 216
Adenoviral vectors 48
Adjuvants 7, 51, 52, 56, 75, 199, 200
Advance 143, 144
  market commitment 144
  purchase agreements (APAs) 143
Advocates 166
Affordability 3, 39, 44, 62, 90, 101, 107, 162, 165, 230
African 35, 95, 115, 151
  intellectual property 115
  meningitis belt 35, 151
  union 95
  vaccine acquisition task team 95
Alzheimer's disease 36
American red cross 142
Anti-SARS-CoV-2 98
Antibodies 50
  necessary 50
  producing 50
Antigens 4, 46, 51, 52, 54, 57, 75, 181
  encapsulate 51
  meningococcal 75
  purified 52
  recombinant 46
  surface 4, 75, 181
  target tumour 57
  vaccine's 54
Antimicrobial 55, 105
  agents 55
  resistance 105
Anxiety scales 174
Artificial intelligence 227
Atomic energy 78
Attenuated 45, 181, 199
  pathogens 45, 199
  vaccines 181

B

Bacille Calmette-Guérin 147
Bacteriophage 47
  polymerases 47
  promoter 47
Bangui agreement 115
Bilateral agreements 101, 143
Bilateral arrangements 85
Bioinformatics 45, 56, 57
Biologics license application (BLA) 134, 140, 152, 198
Bovine reassortant rotavirus vaccine 197

C

Canadian 5, 6, 15, 17, 18, 31, 191
  company 191
  government 31
  IP laws 5
  law 6, 15
  patent legislation 17, 18
Capacity 17, 98, 101
  decision-making 101
  financial 17
  mRNA's 98
  pharmaceutical 17
Capsular polysaccharides 75
Catalyst 60, 61, 214, 220
Chronic 36, 160, 180
  condition management 36
  liver disease 180
  respiratory disease 160
Cialis 85
Cinematography 78
Civil disruption 74
Climate Change 136
Clinical 35, 37, 58, 59, 61, 92, 97, 98, 129, 134, 137, 138, 139, 140, 147, 152, 164, 166, 167, 173, 174, 198, 199, 204, 205, 211, 230
  capacities 92
  development 61, 138, 139, 152

investigations 198
manifestations 174
pharmacists 211
presentations 174
studies 98, 134, 152, 173, 204, 205
tests 129, 199
translation 138
trials 35, 37, 58, 59, 97, 137, 139, 140, 147, 164, 166, 167, 173, 198, 230
Clopidogrel 124
Closed-door tactics 97
Comparative performance 199
Compensation 12, 64
Competition 61, 83, 84, 85, 104, 106
generic 83, 85
healthy 104
promoting 61
stifle 84, 106
Compliance 19, 20, 217
Components 4, 7, 11, 45, 54, 52, 55, 224
active 54
core 45
immunostimulatory 52
integral 224
pivotal 55
plant 11
unique 4, 7
vaccine's 4
Compulsory licences 126
Computational 56, 57
approaches 56
methods 56, 57
models 56
strategies 56
tools 56
Computer-aided designs 179
Conjugate vaccines 35
Contractual disputes 83
Copyright 9, 10, 11, 93, 162, 163
holder 10, 11
laws 10
owner 10
protection 9, 10, 11, 162, 163
violations 93
Coronaviruses 155, 159
Cowpox 25, 26

D

Data 56, 81, 105, 122
demographic 122
genomic 56
regulatory 105
survey 81
Databases 59, 80, 103
Debate 2, 72, 81, 164, 178
long-standing 81
ongoing 2, 164
patent policy 72
reform 178
Decision 100, 172, 217
contentious 172
final 100
regulatory 217
Defensive 45, 84
litigation 84
reaction 45
strategies 84
Deoxyribonucleic acid 98
Diabetes 36, 160
Digital era 93
Diphtheria 49, 74, 76, 145, 196
Discoveries 25, 60, 78, 103, 217, 227, 232
groundbreaking 25, 60, 217
initial 227
laboratory 227
scientific 78, 103, 227, 232
DNA vaccines 167, 180, 201
DNase 47
Doses 38, 102, 195, 196
booster 38
consecutive 196
initial 195
total 102

E

E-Learning platforms 228
Ebola virus 37
Economic 16, 26, 32, 75, 94, 105, 114, 160, 161, 162, 163, 212, 213
development 26, 32, 160, 161, 162
difficulties 16
disparities 94
growth 114, 161, 163, 212, 213
interests 105
lockdown 75
prosperity 26
Electronic patent certificates 104
Embryonic tissues 74

Empirical literature 81
Employee 213, 228, 229, 231, 236
  development 229
  training 213, 228, 236
  volunteerism 231
Entities 8, 48, 120, 178, 215
  corporate 8
  dynamic 215
  novel chemical 120
  novel molecular 120
  versatile 48
  vulnerable 178
Environment 61, 160, 163, 178, 212
  competitive 61
  creative 160
  cultural 163
  political 178
  regulatory 212
Epidemic meningitis control 142
Epidemiological investigations 27
Ethical 92, 93, 177, 229, 236
  conundrum 93
  duty 93
  issues 92
  practices 229, 236
  principle 177
Ethics codes 93
Evaluation 45, 66, 96, 112, 216, 217
  case-by-case 112
  clinical vaccine 45
  comprehensive 66, 96
  continuous 216, 217
Exploratory data analysis (EDA) 174

F

Factors 7, 14, 46, 53, 98, 119
  colony-stimulating 98
  genetic 46, 53
  pertinent 14
  response-invoking 7
  scientific 119
Financial 13, 16, 32, 37, 60, 96, 185, 204, 220, 233
  agreement 204
  assistance 37, 220
  implications 185
  investments 60
  loss 96
  rationale 13
  resources 16, 233
  structures 32
Firms 16, 91, 120, 143, 144
  domestic 16
  pharmaceutical 91, 120, 143, 144
Flaviviruses 148
Flu virus 50
Free trade agreements (FTAs) 117, 123
Funding 28, 63, 178, 191, 206
  awarded 191, 206
  increased 63
  long-term 28
  reduced 178

G

Gene therapies 180, 217
Genetic 44, 46, 48, 53, 57
  code 46
  information 46
  markers 53
  material 44, 46, 48
  profile 53, 57
  variations 53
Global 10, 18, 27, 33, 34, 35, 45, 49, 50, 65, 55, 59, 74, 160, 163, 166, 174, 185, 214, 231, 232, 233, 236
  campaign 27
  challenges 18
  citizenship 231, 233
  co-operation 74
  efforts 27, 50, 59, 185
  health 33, 34, 45, 49, 50, 65, 166
  pandemic 10, 50, 74, 174
  scale 35, 55, 59, 160, 163, 214, 232, 233, 236
Guidelines 129, 159, 217
  local health 159
  regulatory 217
  trial data protection 129

H

Harare protocol116
Healthcare 33, 58, 59, 65, 90, 121, 149, 174, 176, 177, 199, 214, 217, 218, 231, 232
  delivery systems 33, 121
  ecosystem 231
  infrastructure 231
  market 65

professionals 58, 59, 217, 218
providers 149
resources 33, 177
solutions 214, 232
systems 59, 90, 174, 176, 199, 232
Hepatitis 4, 8, 49, 50, 51, 75, 76, 84, 127, 148, 150, 180, 181, 182, 200
cure 127
domestic recombinant 150
inactivated 50
preventing 49
unfused 200
Hepatocytic stage 201
Herpes zoster 149
High-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) 47
Host cell 157
cytoplasm 157
membrane 157
surface 157
Hypertension 36
Hypothesis testing 138

I

Illegal prescription items 13
Illnesses 4, 14, 24, 26, 28, 37, 45, 99, 136, 144, 145, 149, 150, 156, 160, 185, 192
communicable 45
contagious 28
deadly 145
emerging 37
human infectious 28
infectious 37, 149
liver 150
pneumococcal 144
severe 156
Illusory patent agreement 85
Imatinib mesylate 88
Immune 28, 35, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 98, 145, 179, 180, 181, 182, 196
-compromised individuals 196
induction level 35
people 28
reactions 48, 53
response 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 98, 179, 180, 181, 182
system 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56, 145, 180, 181, 182
Immunity 25, 26, 27, 35, 48, 52, 76, 94, 102, 145, 196, 198
boosting 26
broader 35
cowpox-induced 26
developed 102
durable 52
ensuring long-lasting 48
gut 196
herd 27, 76
population's 145
Immunodeficiency 196
Immunogenetics 53
Impediments 32, 33
Imperative pillars 57
Implementation 18, 32, 53, 59, 100, 111, 126, 199, 212, 220
Implications 2, 24, 44, 55, 91, 179, 194
ethical 2, 91
far-reaching 179
grave 194
multifaceted 44
wide-reaching 55
Inactivated vaccines 46, 50, 51, 52, 182
common 182
critical 50
effective 51
Incubation period 156, 157
median 157
Industrial 26, 30, 97, 102, 115, 127, 128, 220
collaborations 220
designs 30, 102
patent office 115
progress 26
research 97
use 127, 128
Infection 27, 35, 49, 50, 74, 75, 144, 145, 147, 150, 151, 172, 174, 175, 180
acute respiratory 75
bacterial 49, 50, 151
fatal 35
meningococcal 35
pandemic-related 151
pneumoniae 172
Influenza 24, 50, 51, 52, 53, 75, 149, 150, 180, 181
inactivated 75
seasonal 51
swine 150

Infrastructure 15, 17, 36, 37, 55, 76, 77, 92, 94, 98, 99, 121, 199, 218
  advanced 17
  cold chain 99
  ineffective 121
  internal 17
  refrigeration 55
  social care 76
  state-of-the-art 218
Infringement 82, 85, 93, 161
Innate immune sensors 48
Intellectual property (IP) 1, 14, 24, 25, 29, 61, 93, 95, 96, 102, 103, 111, 112, 125, 160, 161, 162, 164, 171, 203
Intellectual property rights (IPR) 2, 3, 5, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26, 32, 36, 39, 44, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 77, 104, 111
International 29, 31, 34, 63, 77, 79, 115, 129, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 141, 142, 143, 145, 147, 148, 149, 151, 152, 156, 162, 178, 179, 230, 233
  agreements 134, 135, 137, 139, 141, 142, 143, 145, 147, 148, 149, 151, 152
  concern 156
  coordinating group 142
  covenant 162
  depository authority (IDA) 79
  health programs 29
  law 129, 135
  organizations 31, 34, 77, 134, 135, 136, 142, 143, 151, 230, 233
  partnership 63
  patent 115
  relations 178, 179
Internship programs 219, 225, 226, 234
Interventions 147, 173, 194, 213, 227
  licensed 147
  policymaker 213
  targeted therapeutic 227

J

Japanese encephalitis virus 151
Jurisdictions 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 84, 116
  multiple 84
  numerous 116
  particular 6

K

Knockoff versions 86
Knowledge 72, 86, 90, 103, 129, 214, 219, 221, 222, 232
  creation 129
  exchange 214, 219, 221, 222, 232
  monopoly 90
  resources 103
  sharing platforms 232
  transfer 72, 86, 214

L

Laboratory 27, 56
  staff 27
  workers 27
  culturing 56
Labour 16, 26, 104
  educated 16
  intellectual 26
Landscape 44, 48, 57, 60, 61, 63, 94, 178, 183, 184, 185, 212, 213, 218
  complicated 94
  dynamic 185
  educational 218
  global 44, 61
Laws 14, 15, 20, 29, 100, 106, 135
  domestic 106
  first-to-file 15
Lawsuit 123
Leadership 229
  development 229
  training programs 229
Legislation 11, 19, 114, 125
  cooperative 19
  national 114
Lentiviruses 48
Leukemia 88, 124
  chronic myeloid 88
Licenses 11, 18, 63, 89, 99, 100, 124, 126, 177, 184, 192, 194, 196, 197, 199, 200, 203, 205
  biologics 199
  compulsory 11, 18, 100, 124, 177
  forced 126
  grant 63, 124
  negotiating 63
  nonexclusive 203
  obligatory 18, 126

voluntary 63, 99, 100
Liposomes 51
Lopinavir/ritonavir 124
Louis Pasteur's work 74
Low-income countries 17, 63, 74, 90, 105, 175
Lyophilization 55
Lyssavirus 150

M

Machine learning 227
Malaria 146, 200
vaccinations 146
vaccine initiative (MVI) 200
Mandatory licensing schemes 192
Manufacturers 18, 31, 62, 65, 83, 84, 85, 100, 124, 126, 166, 172, 175, 177, 184, 193
biosimilar 83
foreign 126
generic 65, 83, 84, 100, 177, 184
granting 62
third-party 184
Manufacturing 7, 31, 36, 73, 86, 140, 166, 230
capability 36
facilities 31, 140
partners 86
procedure 140
processes 7, 166, 230
sector 73
Medical 7, 19, 24, 82, 88, 96, 106, 111, 126, 139, 140, 173, 212, 231, 232, 233
devices 82, 140
equipment 126
operation 139
problems 173
procedures 7
progress 212
research 24, 139
sciences 88, 232
supplies 96, 231, 233
technologies 106, 111, 139
treatments 19
Medicines patent pool (MPP) 63, 184
Meningococcal conjugate vaccines (MCVs) 151
Multilateral 101, 177, 217
agreements 217
efforts 177
rules 101
Mycobacterium bovis 74
Myeloma 118

N

Nasal 174, 199
congestion 174
spray 199
Nature 3, 4, 12, 59, 60, 64, 82, 125, 135, 212, 216, 218, 219, 229
competitive 82
diverse 219
dynamic 212, 218
ever-evolving 59
genetic 4
global 64, 216
interdisciplinary 60
intricate 125
regulated 229
sensitive 12
vaccine's 4
Needle-free immunisations 13
Neisseria meningitidis 151
Nerve damage 150
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) 95, 96, 230
Non-pharmacological treatments 173
Novel 120, 173
coronavirus strain 173
molecular entities (NMEs) 120
Nucleic acid 200

O

Obstacles 18, 28, 29, 33, 34, 86, 88, 90, 94, 111, 112, 129, 172
prohibitive 172
significant 129
Open reading frame (ORF) 47
Open-source drug discovery (OSDD) 97
Optimization 54, 99
Organizations 59, 63, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 105, 115, 124, 125, 135, 142, 192, 204, 206, 231
charitable 231
civil society 124
government health 192
non-governmental 95
non-profit 97
philanthropic 63

private sector 98
regional patent 115

P

Palliative care 121, 145
Pandemic 36, 38, 55, 63, 90, 91, 95, 96, 99, 155, 156, 165, 166, 175, 176, 184, 191, 200, 201, 203
influenza 200
outbreak 201, 203
preparedness 191
response 63, 90
viruses 91
Paralysis 150, 196
vaccine-induced 196
Paralytic poliomyelitis 195, 196
Partnerships 62, 142, 143, 149, 212, 215, 219, 220, 221, 222, 227, 230, 232, 233, 234, 235
fostering 149
industrial-academic 221
strong 234
Patent system 17, 66, 76, 81, 82, 84, 87, 90, 91, 106, 107, 129, 194
domestic 82
international 66
modern 194
Pathogen 56, 75
epitopes 75
strains 56
Pathogenicity 148
Pathophysiology 138
Patient 84, 125, 139, 218, 227
access 84, 125
advocacy groups 218
care 139, 227
Person 7, 8, 10, 45, 78, 156
infected 156
living 10
Perspectives 1, 7, 9, 20, 57, 106, 161, 166, 167, 176, 199, 218, 232, 235
broader 1
consumer's 9
diverse 57, 199, 232
integrated 1
Pertussis 45, 49, 50, 76, 145, 181
Pharmaceutical companies 61, 83, 86, 91, 165, 166, 177, 191, 204, 211, 212, 220, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234
global 191
international 204
multinational 86
Pharmaceutics 155, 191
Pharmacodynamics 139
Pharmacognosy 191
Pharmacokinetics 139
Pivotal 44, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 60, 61, 212, 214, 218, 221, 222
drivers 61
element 60
facet 54
role 44, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 212, 214, 218, 221, 222
Placebo 147, 198
Plagiarism rank 93
Plague 150
Plant breeders 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 20, 192
Plasmid linearization 47
Plasmodium falciparum 201
Pneumococcal 35, 144, 172
conjugate vaccine (PCV) 144
serotypes 35
strains 172
Pneumonia 34, 144, 159, 174
severe 174
Policies 14, 33, 77, 81, 85, 103, 105, 111, 118, 120, 123, 124, 193, 211
industrial 77, 120
national patent protection 118
pharmaceutical 111
public 85
regulatory 211
Policymakers 211, 212, 213, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 235, 236
Poliomyelitis 34, 150, 196
Poliovirus 50, 150, 194, 195
inactivated 194
live 50
wild 50
Polyvalent vaccinations 75
Preclinical 58, 137, 152, 201, 227
assessments 58
candidate 201
development 137, 201
phase 58
studies 137, 152, 227

Preservatives 55
Pressure 37, 130
Production 3, 17, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 92, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 112, 173, 175, 176, 184, 205
  agreements 205
  capabilities 101
  monopolies 112
  opportunities 173
  turnaround 94
Professional development 213, 220, 225, 226
Prophylaxis 30
Proteins 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 75, 98, 157, 179, 180, 181, 197, 198, 200, 201
  capsid 181
  carrier 75
  circumsporozoite 200
  generating 46
  putative 75
  spike 50, 157
  thrombospondin-related adhesion 201
  viral 180

Q

Qualified medical personnel 121
Quality 98, 178, 185, 211, 213, 219, 223, 225, 232, 234
  assurance 98
  control 178, 185, 211, 213, 219, 223, 225, 234
  healthcare 232
  management techniques 211

R

Rabies 4, 16, 25, 26, 29, 34, 87, 103, 146, 148, 150, 180, 182, 193, 201, 226, 227, 228
  vaccine 182
  virus 150
R&D 26, 87, 193, 201, 226
  efforts 227
  expenditures 16, 26
  institution policies 103
  investment 87, 227, 228
  projects 87
Recombinant 46, 47, 148, 183, 198, 205
  adenovirus type 183
  baculovirus technology 198
  DNA techniques 46
  DNA technology 148, 205
  RNA polymerase 47
Reference member state (RMS) 141
Regional 115, 126, 136
  patent agreement 115
  pharmacies 126
  treaties 136
Regulatory 20, 29, 58, 59, 137, 191, 206, 211, 212, 213, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 223, 225, 228, 234
  advantages 228
  affairs 213, 219, 223, 225, 234
  agencies 20, 58, 59
  bodies 29, 137, 217
  complexity 216
  filings 191, 206
  frameworks 211, 212, 217, 221
  policy 211
  reforms 212, 216, 217, 218
  support frameworks 216
Remarkable 48, 56, 98
  efficiency 48
  facet 56
  progress 98
Research 38, 61, 66, 78, 95, 103, 106, 146, 217, 220, 232, 219
  activity 78
  articles 78
  consortia 95
  data 38
  endeavors 66
  estimates 146
  exception 106
  facilities 103, 219
  findings 61, 214, 232
  grants 220
Respiratory tract 157
Rheumatoid arthritis 84
RNA 47, 75
  species 47
  vaccine platforms 75
  viruses 75
Rotavirus 196, 197, 206

S

Sabin vaccination 195
Sacubitril 119
Safety 48, 49, 50, 58, 59
  profile 48, 49, 50, 58

record 49
standards 59
Salk 194, 206
Jonas 194
Salk vaccination 196
Scrutiny 61, 66
Security 27, 29, 60, 99, 136
Septic shock 174
Serotypes 35, 50
Services 8, 10, 98, 103, 161, 162, 163
Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) 155
Shelf life 55
Smallpox 25, 26, 27, 28, 74
epidemics 28
eradication 25, 27
infection 26
particles 26
vaccination 74
virus 26
Spikevax vaccine 203
Sporozoites 201
Stakeholders 34, 61, 64, 149, 166, 167, 176, 178, 179, 212, 214, 217, 218, 220, 229, 236
international 149
key 229
local 34
Stevenson-Wydler Acts 31
Supply chain 36, 101, 145
bottlenecks 101
constraints 145
weaknesses 36
Systems biology 53, 56

T

Target 48, 51, 171, 199
antigen 48
cells 51
illnesses 171
population 199
Technological 46, 162, 117, 202
development 202
fields 117
platforms 46
progress 162
Technology transfer (TT) 36, 44, 61, 62, 83, 86, 87, 102, 103, 112, 113, 143, 166, 185, 221
Temperature 54, 55
constraints 55
fluctuations 54, 55
range 55
Therapeutic 117, 138, 152, 200
procedures 117
targets 138, 152
use 200
Thermostability 54
Trade 1, 2, 5, 12, 13, 20, 44, 114, 129, 134, 135, 136, 137, 151, 161, 163, 164, 178, 191, 192
agreements 44, 129, 134, 135, 136, 151, 178
legislation 114
regulations 134, 137, 151
secrets 1, 2, 5, 12, 13, 20, 161, 163, 164, 191, 192
Trademarks 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 160, 161, 163, 165, 191, 192
Trans-pacific partnership (TPP) 136
Typhoid fever 29

V

Vaccination 27, 28, 74, 75, 86, 94, 101, 111, 112, 142, 143, 145, 194, 195
antigens 74
availability 86, 111, 112, 145
campaigns 27, 28, 142, 143
coverage 145
distribution 94, 101, 142
doses 143, 194, 195
forms 75
Vaccine 3, 28, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 57, 58, 63, 65, 74, 75, 112, 143, 152, 167, 171, 173, 175, 177, 184, 185, 194, 197, 204
accessibility 3, 28, 33, 34, 63
alliance 38, 74, 143, 152, 175, 184
apartheid 112
approval 31, 65
candidates 57, 58, 75, 167, 173, 197, 204
IP rights 171, 175, 177, 185
research and development (VRD) 37, 38, 57, 171, 177
scarcity 194
shortage 194
Vesicular stomatitis viruses (VSV) 48

W

Whole-cell typhoid 74
Whooping cough 181
World's vaccine deficit 33

Z

Zika virus 37, 180

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