

Pharmaceuticals and Security: The Role of Public-Private Collaborations in Strengthening Global Health Security



University of Sussex
Centre for Global Health Policy



Health Security Threats

Protecting populations and economies against acute cross-border public health threats is a pressing political priority for countries around the world. Threats include new pandemics, bioterrorism and infectious diseases.

Such health threats are no longer viewed 'merely' as important international health issues but as threats to global security that can affect the stability of entire states and economies.



Government-Industry Collaborations

Governments have formed collaborations with pharmaceutical companies to ensure that new medicines are developed, that they are provided in sufficient quantities, and are available in the places that they are needed. Yet public-private partnerships for health security also need to manage difficult policy-making tensions. On the one hand, the public sector has an interest in strengthening health security, and doing so in as cost-effective a manner as possible – especially given increased pressure on public finances. On the other hand, pharmaceutical companies are commercial businesses that need to remain profitable, and that are ultimately accountable to their shareholders.

The elevated role of pharmaceutical companies in health security policy thus generates a tension between the role of ‘industry-as-partner’ and ‘industry-as-lobbyist’ – as recently highlighted in the controversy around the World Health Organisation’s handling of the 2009 influenza A (H1N1) pandemic. Further research on the role of pharmaceutical companies in public-private partnerships is therefore necessary to determine how these tensions might be responsibly managed in the future.



The Project

This project is funded by the European Research Council at the Centre for Global Health Policy, at the University of Sussex. This project opens up a new research agenda in the study of health security – one that focuses, for the first time, directly on pharmaceutical companies as core actors in health security policy. In so doing, the project will generate important new knowledge about the **formation, workings,** and **effectiveness** of public-private partnerships to enhance the resilience of populations and economies against a range of transnational health security threats.

The project aims to:

- Map the key public-private partnerships between governments and pharmaceutical companies that have recently formed to strengthen health security
- Analyse the political and commercial drivers behind these collaborations in a range of different geographical and institutional contexts
- Examine how governments are persuading pharmaceutical companies to focus on health security threats with limited commercial potential
- Look at how pharmaceutical companies are adapting

Case studies

Pandemic preparedness – Europe

Particular attention will be given to the role of the pharmaceutical sector in the promotion and provision of vaccines and antiviral medications for bird flu (H5N1) and swine flu (H1N1). It will also analyse the impact of such initiatives as advance purchase agreements, the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework and international pandemic preparedness policy.

Infectious diseases in low and middle income countries (LMICs)

This case study will examine government-industry collaborations with regard to accessing quality medicines in LMICs, including the WHO/Novartis Coartem Public Purchase Agreement, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, and the International Medical Product Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force (IMPACT).

Bioterrorism – United States

The case study will focus on the role of Project BioShield and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) in developing new pharmaceutical products for the US Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).

About the centre

The Centre for Global Health Policy at the University of Sussex is an interdisciplinary research centre dedicated to advancing the knowledge base for global health policy. Bringing together more than thirty researchers, across more than ten disciplines, it undertakes work in the areas of global health diplomacy, global health policy analysis, and the exercise of power in global health. Members of the Centre have significant track records of attracting external funding for global health policy research, publish widely on contemporary global health challenges, and organise regular workshops, roundtables and conferences on pressing global health issues. For more information about the Centre, its members, and activities, please see www.sussex.ac.uk/globalhealthpolicy/.

Contact us



Professor Stefan Elbe

Stefan Elbe is Director of the Centre for Global Health Policy and Professor of International Relations at the University of Sussex. He has published widely on global health security, including *Securing Global Health* (Polity Press), *Viral Alert* (Columbia University Press) and *Securing the Future of HIV/AIDS* (Oxford University Press). He will be leading the research strand focusing on the role of medical countermeasures in pandemic preparedness planning.
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Dr. Anne Roemer-Mahler

Anne Roemer-Mahler is a Research Fellow in Global Health Policy in the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex. She received her doctorate at the University of Oxford in 2010. Her work focuses on the role of pharmaceutical industries from emerging markets in global health policy, and she will be leading the research strand on government-industry collaborations with regard to access to quality medicines in LMICs.
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Chris is currently completing a PhD in International relations. He will be leading the research strand on the role of public-private collaborations in the creation of medical countermeasures against bioterrorist threats.
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