

COVID-19: China's Vaccination Efforts and Its Unique Understanding of the Relationship Between Vaccine Diplomacy and Global Health Cooperation

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented pressure on global public health, and global vaccination has become seen as a necessary response to create sustainable global health governance in the future. China, which was the first country to report confirmed cases of COVID-19, has positively participated in the resulting global vaccination programme by distributing vaccines, mainly to developing countries. However, there are clear differences in understanding of vaccine diplomacy and global health cooperation between China and developed countries. This article aims to review COVID-19 vaccine distribution efforts undertaken by China. The goal of this paper is thus to determine what is China's understanding of vaccine diplomacy and global health cooperation, and how China is managing the relationship between the two. Qualitative analysis and content analysis are thus employed as the main research methods, facilitating analysis of Chinese government statements as well as interviews with global leaders and articles from various global analytical institutes. The results suggest that when dealing with the concepts of vaccine diplomacy and global health cooperation, China pays special attention to distinguish the relationship between the two concepts, emphasizing humanitarianism has weakened the national interest intention of China's global health cooperation, also, China does not regard its global vaccination efforts as vaccine diplomacy. China's humanitarian efforts thus represent an ideology in which China does not pursue profits as the fundamental purpose of international vaccine programmes and global distribution, offering a particular perspective on China's participation in global health governance.

Keywords: China, COVID-19, Global health cooperation, Global vaccination efforts, Vaccine Diplomacy