In the news

VACCINE VALUE

At the first pledging conference held by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation ([GAVI](#)) in London on 13 June 2011, donors pledged a total of \$4.3 billion of new funds to help immunize 243 million more children in 72 countries by 2015.

“Today was a vote of confidence for GAVI. But it was also a challenge to us ... to do even more” said GAVI Alliance Board Chair Dagfinn Høybråten ([GAVI Alliance press release](#)).

The idea of ‘value for money’ was a key factor in the decision by UK Prime Minister David Cameron to pledge \$1.3 billion. In a comment published in [The Observer](#) on 12 June 2011, Cameron talked about “proper transparency and accountability into how aid money is spent.” He said that “GAVI was one of the very top performers” ([GAVI Alliance press release](#)).

Similarly, Bill Gates has described the decision to support vaccination rather than, say, cancer research as: “You get more bang for your buck.” The [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) pledged \$1 billion to GAVI. Gates said: “There are more people dying of malaria than any specific cancer. ... And the world is putting massive amounts into cancer, so my wealth would have had a meaningless impact on that” ([Mail Online](#), 11 Jun 2011).

At present ~80% of GAVI money goes directly to pay for vaccines, with only a much smaller percentage used to support health care infrastructure. But according to Dr Sophie Harman, senior lecturer in International Politics specializing in Global Health at City University London, “Better health for all can only be achieved by ... the development of systems to get the outcome of [vaccine] research to the poor” ([guardian.co.uk](#), 13 Jun 2011).

The cost burden of vaccines has been recognized in a pledge by several major vaccine manufacturers to offer lower prices on a range of vaccines, such as the rotavirus vaccine produced by GlaxoSmithKline. “We will continue to drive for sustainable prices” said GAVI interim CEO Helen Evans ([The Wall Street Journal Online](#), 6 Jun 2011).

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