Editorial

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Accumulating evidence shows that, demographically, large segments of the world population have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular along age, gender, and race/ethnicity dimensions. This has important consequences for family structures, reproduction, and intergenerational relationships that will need to be addressed for many years to come. At the same time, the morbidity burden among survivors, as well as its implications for societies and economies, has yet to be quantified and understood. It will take time before we are able to fully assess the long-term impact of COVID-19 at the population level.

Nonetheless, 2020 comes to a close with long-awaited news of the effectiveness of three COVID-19 vaccines. Recently concluded phase 3 trials of three vaccine candidates have been promising, showing efficacy across age, gender, race, and ethnicity demographics. The efficacy of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines was over 90% in adults 65 years and older, the segment of the population that has, so far, suffered the largest share of COVID-19-related mortality. The results of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine trial have also been positive as none of the participants who received the vaccine developed severe forms of SARS-CoV-2 or were hospitalized.

Although several potential COVID-19 vaccines exist, governments across the world are faced with unprecedented logistical efforts in coordinating their production and distribution. Meanwhile, the second wave of the pandemic is in full swing, even in countries and regions where COVID-19 had little impact in spring 2020. Worldwide, almost 60 million people are known to have been infected with SARS-CoV-2 so far, and close to 1.5 million have died because of the disease. Much needed good news about COVID-19 vaccines' efficacy should not make us forget that preventing SARS-CoV-2 transmission remains the first priority right now, and that doing so is in our hands.

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