

International collaboration in the post COVID-19 era – implications for future adaptation

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Collaboration during the pandemic in science

- Especially at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic many scientists strengthened their existing connections and looked for new ones
 - > global catastrophe made scientists to work together
- There was especially increase in collaborations involving individuals who had never worked together before, even from different disciplines
 - > more novel ideas and solutions

Collaboration during the pandemic in science

However,

- collaboration is not always equal and similarly beneficial to all partners: “often follows an agenda that suits the bigger, richer partner”
- > this concern became even stronger during the pandemic
- The pandemic also interrupted projects and reduced travelling

International collaboration

- Those who collaborate internationally may originate more often from another country or they have experience from international context
- Very often international collaborations start somehow face-to-face or side-by-side
- Benefits of face-to-face meetings
 - Interaction is more natural, getting to know each other better
 - Getting understanding of each culture involved (for instance: school visits, joint dinners, informal discussions)

Opportunities and challenges for collaboration in the post COVID-19

- How to keep open mind for different kinds of collaboration to create novel ideas (e.g., cross discipline)
- How to create participation and involvement if only online meetings (especially when you have never personally met before)
- On the other hand, online platforms, such as Teams, create immediately working space both for synchronous vs. asynchronous working
- No need for travelling (energy crisis, carbon footprint...) vs. benefits of understanding other culture by visiting the country

Thank you!

References:

Main reference: Maher, B. & Van Noorden, R. (2021). How the COVID pandemic is changing global science collaborations. *Nature* 594, 316-319. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-01570-2>

Discussions with colleagues

An unpublished manuscript that I was privileged to review