

Targeting 2024: The quest to create a universal COVID vaccine

[Jonathan] Heeney and colleagues face a challenge that has long proved insurmountable for scientists: to develop vaccines that can not only protect against a single coronavirus, but multiple strains, varieties, and perhaps even entire families of them. A comparable feat has never been managed in the history of virology, after more than two decades of chasing the same goal in influenza yielded little of note. Some have even compared the task's ambition, scope and difficulty to the infamous Manhattan Project of the 1940s, which pushed the boundaries of physics at the time, and yielded the world's first atomic bomb.

Money is being thrown at the target in unprecedented sums. CEPI have allocated an initial budget of around [\\$200m](#) (£169m/€193m), with the NIH adding an additional [\\$36m \(£30m/€35m\)](#) to the pot. Buoyed by their success in developing one of the first Covid-19 vaccines, Moderna has recently entered the fray, announcing their intention to produce a vaccine which could protect against all four coronaviruses that cause the common cold.

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Scientists are hopeful that the first variant-proof Covid-19 vaccines will be available by 2024, potentially ushering in a wave of coronavirus jabs offering increasingly broad protection. For many, this would be up there with some of the most important breakthroughs in modern healthcare.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)