

# THE ALCIVAX

**Alcimed** navigates the near future of work debate, its impact on cities, and how it might change what is for dinner ultimately.

[www.alcimed.com](http://www.alcimed.com)



Edition #13 - 29 May 2020

## Home is where the work is?

Confucius once said, "The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home." Some industry giants are now also wondering if, "the strength of the economy can come from a workforce at home."



### The Stakes & Debate

Just how excited are people about going back to work? According to the [Global Work-From-Home Experience Survey](#), 68% of us are working successfully from home, with highest success rates in the Americas and the lowest in Asia Pacific. Globally, working at home 2 days a week, could save time & money on commuting, office space, and CO2 emissions, and is popular among workers.

But what is best in the long run? This [introduces the question of what kinds of work are "tele-robust" or "tele-fragile"](#). Robust work: individual tasks in established projects based on existing hierarchies and social capital, work well from distance. Fragile work: collaborative tasks on new projects involving the evolution of the organization and the development of social capital, are at high risk of failure. This probably explains why according to the survey, distraction free work and creativity are up, but mentoring and collaboration are down. Former McKinsey Director, Olivier Sibony suggests not protecting this fragile work with in-person interaction could destroy a company.



### The Proposals

In New Zealand, Prime Minister Ardern has [proposed a 4-day workweek to salvage the domestic travel industry](#) before opening the country back up to international travel. In Japan, [companies found the technical hurdles to equip employees for working home almost insurmountable](#) with lack of broadband computers, even in home cooking facilities.

[Google, Microsoft, Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan, Capital One, Zillow, Slack, Amazon, PayPal, Salesforce](#) have all announced continued work from home with companies like Twitter, Facebook, and Shopify contemplating going almost permanently remote, even for [non-production jobs at automotive group PSA \(Peugeot\)](#).

Apple is blazing its own trail trying to get employees back on site as soon as possible. Perhaps they understand how important social interaction is for driving disruption, though some have speculated that their commitment to secrecy during new development makes work from home uniquely challenging.



### The Food High Wire Act

What happens to the business lunch when we are all stuck at home? The restaurant industry has seen heavy losses ([\\$80 B just in the US](#)) and [globally seated dining capacity is down 86%](#). Even when restaurants re-open many dining experiences may not be the same. Already [struggling high end venues are facing additional pressures as the small farms that provide specialty ingredients are also hurting](#). Michelin stars don't mean financial safety. Chef Thomas Keller, of French Laundry fame, is raising awareness that [insurance companies aren't paying out on business interruption policies](#) because they do not cover civil authority shutdowns like these. So what happens now? Some chefs are going [completely mobile, with food trucks fully equipped with online ordering](#) to prevent waiting in line. What if these are the first signs that the "foodie" culture is dying? If so, [René Redzepi, chef at the famed Noma, in Copenhagen will survive](#). He is reopening Noma as a burger joint. Velbekomme and bon appétit.



## Urban Impacts

But how would this impact the way we live? One of the immediate effects may be re-imagining urban life. Many people move to bigger cities in hopes of having better job prospects, despite the smaller living space. [Density has been a severe disadvantage that many cities possess](#). Crowded elevators, skyscrapers and crowded commutes will lead to a dramatic rethinking of living in big cities. [Many New Yorkers have fled the city \(~50K in 3 months\)](#). Anticipating a mass exodus from the high cost of Silicon Valley living, Facebook has declared remote employee salaries will reflect their personal cost of living. [If the pandemic drags on, retail and other service industry jobs may disappear, further encouraging exit](#). The [urban exodus](#) may only shift people to mid-sized cities, which seem easier to navigate.

The majority of COVID cases have been in urban environments thus far, but the same is true in every pandemic. Therefore it is too early to declare the appeal of city dwelling entirely dead. [Global urban planning experts see some changes coming to cities that may keep the allure alive](#). As some leave in search of safety, rents will fall providing new opportunities for musicians and artists to return, revitalizing cultural centers. More investment will also help urban spaces prepare for the next pandemic. [New York City created a contact-tracing operation and has hired about 1,700 tracers that speak 40 languages](#).

Coronavirus is transforming cities across the globe. [More green space and better social infrastructure may become the new urban reality](#). But some cities are using the pandemic to reach their climate change goals. [Medellin, Colombia aims to cut carbon emissions by 20% by 2030, increasing and provide 50k electric bikes to residents](#). Globally, [cities are investing in more bike and pedestrian areas](#). With [subway ridership down 92% in places](#), public works upgrades, like water and transportation, [can replace aging infrastructure with solutions that can withstand the worst predicted effects of climate change](#).



# Vaccine Progress & Problems

Moderna's coronavirus vaccine is on track to become the fastest vaccine ever developed. This kind of speed is largely derivative of the revolutionary—and yet, on a large scale, untested—biomedical technology behind the Moderna vaccine.

Merck joins the vaccine race using a two pronged approach on proven technologies, working alongside nonprofit IAVI to develop a potential vaccine using recombinant vesicular stomatitis virus technology already used for the Ebola vaccine and with Themis using measles vaccine tech.

Cyberattack shut down hundreds of Israeli websites last week, including research centers working on a COVID vaccine. While the attempt failed and did not impede the vaccine development process, cyberattacks have been reported on other vaccine research centers and healthcare systems around the world. The Red Cross has urged for them to cease.

In total, five vaccines developed by Chinese companies are being tested on humans, which is the most in any country. An early stage study in the Lancet showed that an experimental vaccine from China's CanSino Biologics was safe and generated an immune response. China is also pursuing more traditional vaccine technologies that are more amenable to mass production.

As more vaccines like Novavax start Phase 1, a new problem has arisen, finding enough infected people for completing trials successfully.



# Treatment: More than One Option

It seems increasingly unlikely that a single drug will cure Covid-19. Remdesivir works best on people receiving oxygen for example. Physicians from the Bradford Royal Infirmary (BRI) in the UK, currently participating in eight different clinical trials to try and find a cure for Covid-19, believe that the key will be a combination of drugs. While they are optimistic that a combination treatment will be available before the end of the summer, Fujifilm's Avigan has hit testing delays dashing hopes of quick approval by June. But other combination tests have begun with India's Glenmark to study potential drug combination (favipiravir and umifenovir). Also, analogs of Cerdelga and Remdesivir are effective as broad-spectrum antivirals against coronavirus as using both drugs in combination led to a significant reduction in the replication capacity of the coronavirus and to the destruction of the infected cell.

The World Health Organization has temporarily suspended its clinical trials that use hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 patients over concerns that the drug may do more harm than good. Patients in the trial have been randomly assigned to hydroxychloroquine or three other experimental drugs in various combinations.

Research exploring inhaled nitric oxide's potential to treat COVID-19 is underway. The treatment is called INOpulse and is said to be the only treatment designed to deliver a targeted dose of nitric oxide. In previous clinical studies, nitric oxide was found to inhibit the replication of severe acute respiratory syndrome-related coronaviruses. Bellerophon Therapeutics is spearheading the trial.

Blood clots are a dangerous problem in some coronavirus patients leading to pulmonary embolisms and strokes in people suffering from the illness, even younger patients. An observational study conducted by Mount Sinai found that using blood thinners as a preventative measure was helpful to avoiding the clots. A second study of 6,000 patients will be used to validate the results.

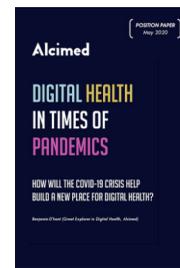


# Collecting the Data

As countries relax lockdown restrictions, older adults who are at higher risk must contend with the continued burden of uncertainty and isolation. While others venture out into the world again, high-risk individuals may opt to stay home in fear of becoming critically ill, with good reason.

Many governments are just starting to record death tolls in care homes -- and the figures are staggering. Data published shows that more than half of all coronavirus deaths in nations including Belgium, France, Ireland, Canada and Norway occurred in care homes or among care home residents in all settings.

The head of WHO's emergency program warned "that the disease can jump up at any time" so contact tracing programs are beginning to focus on those with symptoms, close contact with someone who tested positive and people in facilities such as adult-care facilities, nursing homes and shelters. As inter-European travel resumes, better data tracking will be necessary to monitor for a second wave.



Complex monitoring can be aided by digital health solutions. Have you read our analysis on how digital health can help in times of pandemic?

[Click here to download Alcimed's full position paper.](#)



# All joking aside

Consumers are turning to products to fortify their immune systems. In Asia, consumers are turning to traditional remedies; black garlic is in demand in Vietnam, and Indonesians are stocking up on jamu, a medicine made from natural ingredients. In the US, orange juice is this year's best-performing commodity.

How badly are you looking forward to a night out for dinner or to a bar with your friends? What about a candle lit green-house dinner in Amsterdam? Perhaps "bumper tables"—inflated tubes allowing people to social distance while eating and talking in outdoor settings?



# The Museum Challenge Championship Round: Picasso

A Women With A Bird



Image Credit: [buzzkill\\_13](#)

Woman In A Hat



Image Credit: [InfiniteCatPower](#)

Dora Maar



Image Credit: [lil-drummer-girl](#)

Girl Before A Mirror



Image Credit: [Ariellacharny](#)