Strategic Alliances As Treatment for Covid-19 And Beyond – Summary

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Summary

We use a novel dataset of 217 strategic alliances that have emerged between January and April 2020 in response to the Covid-19 crisis. Through a careful examination of announcements, we code the gap or need that the strategic alliance is seeking to fill, the specific Covid-19-induced problems they are trying to address and the means through which they seek to address these problems. These top-level categories have emerged from a bottom-up mapping of the themes and details of strategic alliance announcements.

Our findings show that the emergence of alliances for Covid-19 started with those closest to the immediate experience of the problem, and then developed to focus on complementary equipment and infrastructure. Most recently there have been some limited examples of alliances going beyond healthcare, by tackling underlying systemic issues such as poverty and inequality. This final category is the smallest, although there are also examples of alliances that target disruptions to other systems such as food thus also going beyond healthcare. We find that as the needs being addressed shift to those related to management and infrastructure, the types of partners involved expand with both intra-industry and inter-industry alliances emerging. Only a small number of alliances to date officially include users such as hospitals or governments. Our results also show that alliances close to implementation and diffusion of solutions (scaling of manufacturing and supply chains) feature several novel inter-industry configurations.

Our research shows that there is a substantial gap in collaborative efforts between different industry sectors, governments, as well as end users of products and services which target the alleviation of COVID-19 impacts, whether they are healthcare or beyond-healthcare related.

This has wide-ranging implications for policymakers, companies, NGOs and other stakeholders which are already dealing with the second and third order consequences of the pandemic (e.g. job loss, mental health, increasing inequality), and who would benefit from collaborative action in solving this pressing and multifaceted issue.

Figures

Figure 1: Number partnerships by needs (SN – Social needs, MOI – Management, operational and infrastructure needs/challenges, CH – Core healthcare needs)

Note: We count each alliance as one, regardless of the number of partners in any given alliance.

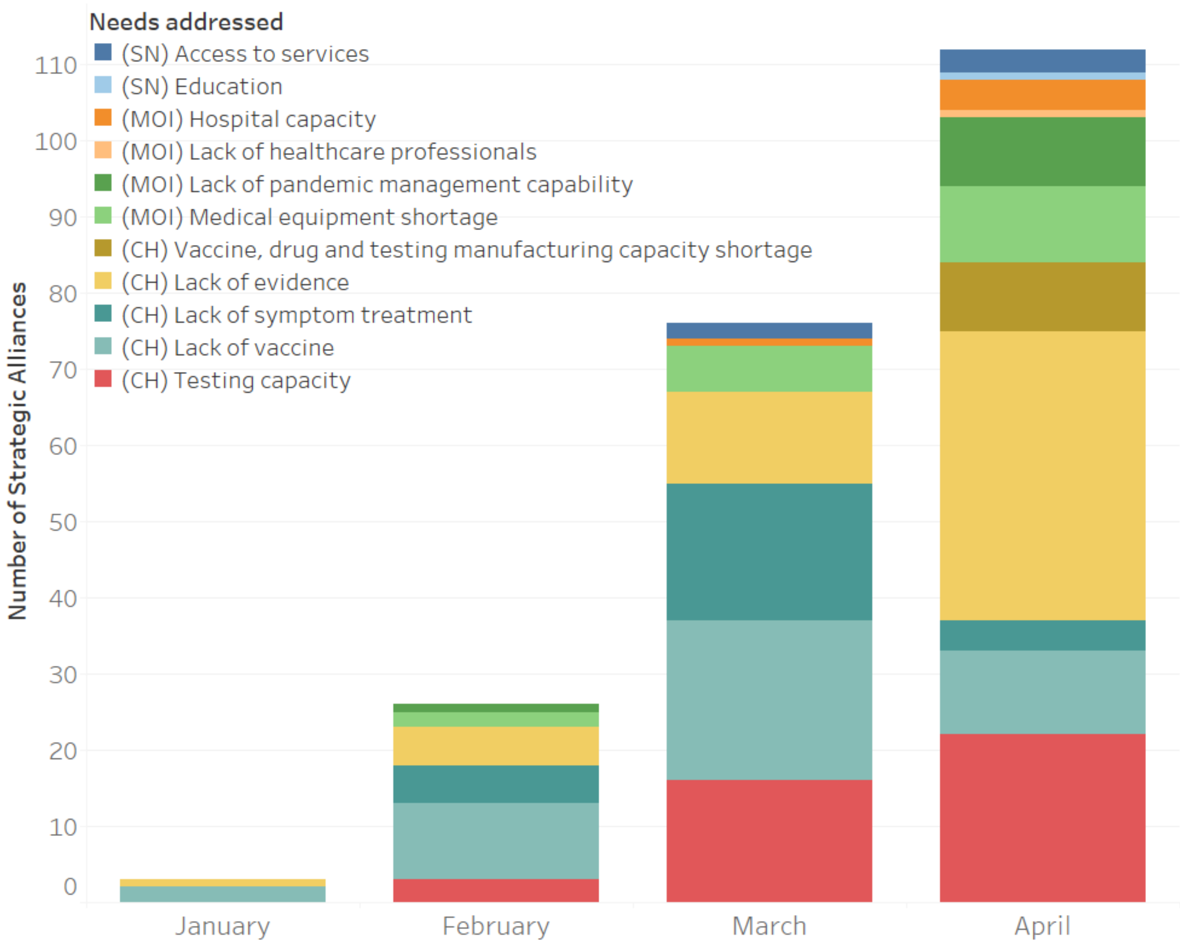

Figure 2: Strategic alliances by industry and sector (Jan – Apr 2020)

Note: We quantify the strategic alliances between industries and sectors by counting each link as one between two organisations that are linked by strategic alliances of two or more partners.

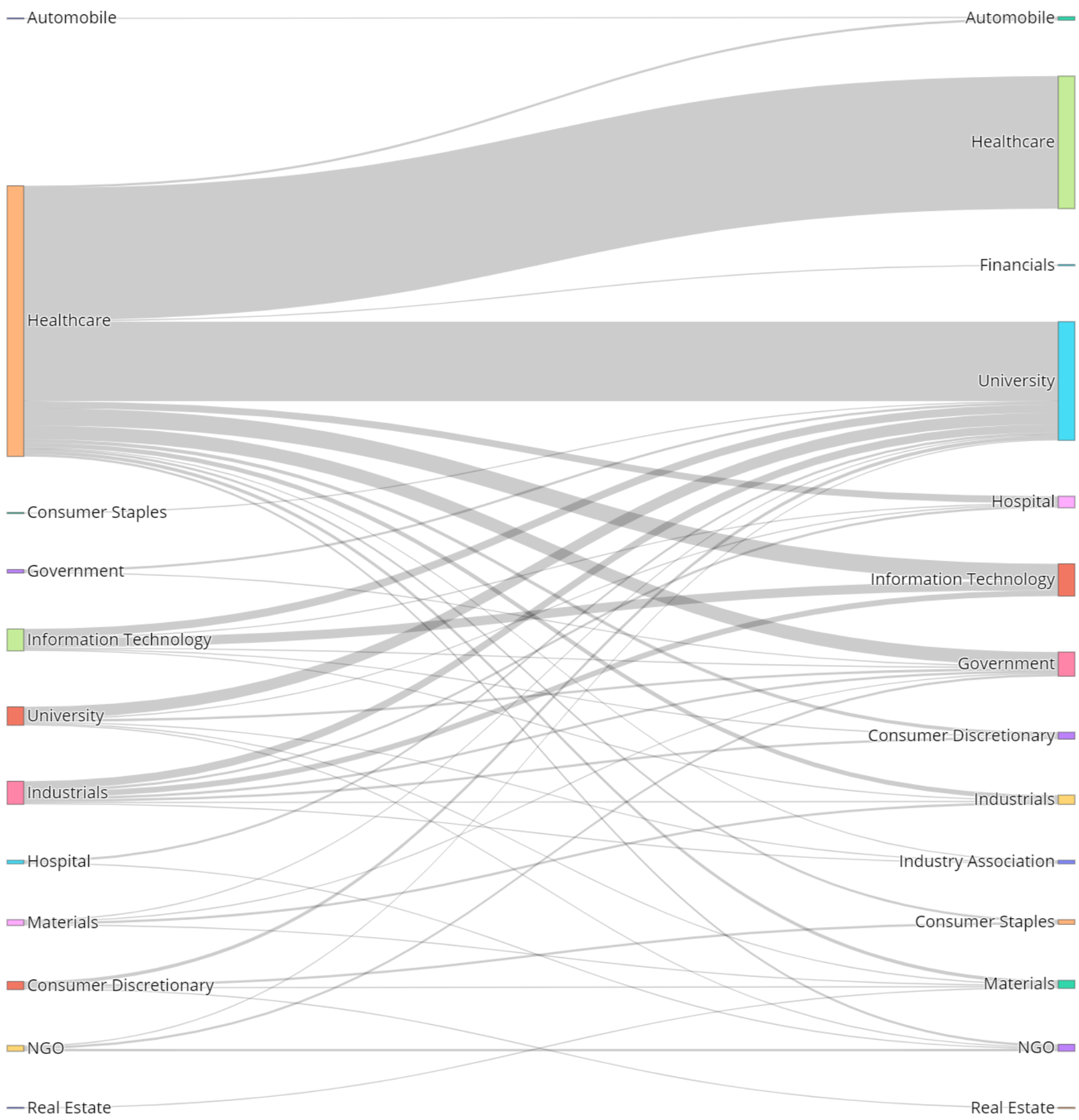

Figure 1: Needs addressed by and approaches of 217 alliances around the world (Jan – Apr 2020)