

STAYWELL



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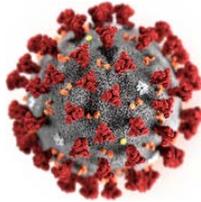
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COVID-19 Why are we making such a big deal about this illness?

This past weekend, I had a conversation with a relative who had the same question about COVID-19. He stated, "We didn't have to do this for H1N1, Swine Flu, annual flu, etc." I explained a couple of simple things to him and his response was, "Oh, when you explain it like that it makes total sense."



One thing that many people do not understand is, this is a "new" virus. When first discovered it was called Novel Coronavirus. Novel means "new" that is why this virus is a big concern. It is not understood how the virus reacts, how long it incubates, how it responds, how it is spread, how to contain the virus, and why most deaths are the elderly, also why it is spreading so fast. According to the World Health Organization, the speed of the spread is unprecedented. It reached 100,000 cases in 90 days, 200,000 in 102 days and 300,000 cases in 106 days.¹ The seasonal flu does not spread that fast!

Additionally COVID-19 is not just a cold, it is not an influenza, although it behaves like one. COVID-19 is more accurately a highly contagious pneumonia.²

What is a Pandemic?

A pandemic is declared when a sickness is spread across a country or the world. COVID-19 was declared a pandemic when 111/192 countries were infected. This took two months to happen.

One of the best know pandemics was the Spanish flu (H1N1) pandemic of 1918. It is estimated that, about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with H1N1. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50

million worldwide with 675,000 occurring in the United States.³

What Lessons were learned from the 1918 Pandemic?

A good example that can be learned from, are the cities of Philadelphia and St. Louis. As World War I was coming to an end in September 1918, Philadelphia and St. Louis had planned major parades to help sell bonds to pay for the war effort. Philadelphia officials chose not to cancel the parade even though the "Spanish Flu" was spreading. The flu was first discovered in March of that year and by September Philadelphia had around 600 cases. Over 200,000 people attended the parade on September 28, bringing people in close proximity of each other. Three days later the number of cases more than doubled. Within six weeks 12,000 people had died and within six months there were 500,000 cases and many more deaths. In contrast, St. Louis decided to cancel their parade during the same period. As a result, approximately 700 people died during the Spanish influenza pandemic in St. Louis.^{3, 4}

A major lesson learned by officials from these incidences was the safety of social distancing. When a novel virus comes out, to stop the spread of the virus and to save lives, canceling large gatherings and promoting social distancing has been shown to save many, many lives.

Why did we not have this problem with other pandemics?

Each of the epidemics in the past 70 years were known pathogens. The medical field was familiar with the diseases. They understood the disease rate, how it was spread, how to best treat it, and the long term consequences etc. There was also more time to prepare for it. Additionally, immunizations

had been provided over the years for these diseases, and people had previously been exposed to the diseases. Both, previous exposure and immunizations help build immunity to prevent and decrease severity. The result is lower death rates (i.e. number of deaths per 1000 people).

It only affects older people.

As of the time of writing this publication (3/24/2020) approximately 30 percent of all cases and 20 percent of hospitalizations were for ages between 20 and 44.⁶ That number increased to 40 percent of hospitalizations if we expand the spread age to 54.⁷ The numbers do not match up with the false propaganda that it doesn't affect younger populations. With the proper hospital treatment the younger population are not dying but, what if all the hospital beds are full because everyone gets the disease at one time. Would the younger populations begin dying without hospitalization in an Intensive Care Unit and a lifesaving ventilator? Their survival rate is higher because of age, when they receive proper care. This is why officials are trying to "flatten the curve" or spread the transmission over time with social distancing and event cancelling.

If the health care systems become over-run they cannot meet the needs of those who need treatment. There would NOT be enough beds, enough workers, and not enough supplies. Remember, the annual influenza and pneumonia fill many hospital beds each year and some years take the system to the limits. Adding this pandemic has the potential to break the system and have a higher death rate. Overtasking the health care system is the major concern, but some people say it is not any more serious than the seasonal flu. That alone can take the system to the edge in handling all the cases. Flattening the curve will help the health care system meet the needs of those who become ill.

Historical Pandemic Death Rates.

- 2009 H1N1 pandemic — 0.001 to 0.007% of the world's population
- 1968 H3N2 pandemic — 0.03% of the world's population

- 1918 H1N1 pandemic — 1-3% of the world's population.^{2, 5}

As of March 24, when writing this newsletter 17,260 have died of influenza related diseases. Since 2010 the U.S averages over 37,000 season flu cases spread out over the year with an average of 13.3 million cases in the U.S. This puts the average death rate of the seasonal flu in the U.S. around one percent.^{7, 8}

Dr. Anthony Fauci is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious diseases. He has spoken many times at news conferences and on talk shows answering questions about Covid-19. Dr. Fauci reported on March 18 the annual death rate for COVID-19 is much higher when all is calculated, "**it would still make it roughly 10 times more lethal than the seasonal flu.**"⁸

The death rate could drop if we slow the curve of spreading COVID-19 and more people can obtain access to health care. If the peak hits everyone at once, the death rate could escalate higher than the pandemic of 1918. That is why there is a major concern about COVID-19.

Sources

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