



COVID-19 Pandemic Is Not the End of the World: A Global Perspective

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Dear Editor,

This is not the first time that the world experiences epidemics and pandemics. However, going back to history, nothing has killed more people than infectious diseases ([Table 1](#)). The COVID-19 pandemic shows how vulnerable we are, and we can learn how to avoid similar pandemics in the future ([1](#)). History reveals many pandemic and epidemic diseases around the globe, including Chikungunya, Cholera, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, Ebola virus disease, Influenza, Lassa fever, Meningitis, MERS-CoV, Nipah virus infection, Plague, SARS, Smallpox, Yellow fever, and Zika virus disease, among others ([2](#)).

History reveals the worst pandemics that have killed millions of human beings around the globe. The Spanish flu was an influenza pandemic that spread around the world between 1918 and 1919. The CDC estimates that about 500 million people (1/3 of the world's population) became infected with the virus, and about 50 million deaths occurred worldwide ([3](#)). The Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history between 1347 and 1351 that killed an estimated 75 to 200 million people across Europe and Asia. The Black Death re-surfaced in London in 1665 for the Great Plague of London and killed 20.0% of London's population in just 1.5 years, with an estimated 100,000 deaths ([3](#)). The "Asian Flu" began in East Asia in 1957. The influenza virus of the H2N2 strain was first discovered in Singapore and killed about 1.1 million people worldwide ([3](#)). The Hong Kong flu pandemic of 1968 originated in China. Caused by an influenza virus (H3N2), it was the third pandemic flu outbreak to occur in the 20th century and killed at least one million people globally. The "swine flu" occurred in 2009 with a novel influenza virus, H1N1. The virus was first detected in the US and spread quickly to

the US and the world. Between 2009 and 2010, there were 60.8 million cases and at least 575,400 deaths worldwide. HIV/AIDS was first discovered in the early 1980s. AIDS was first detected in American gay communities and has killed about 32 million people worldwide since it was discovered ([3](#)).

In this modern era, the outbreaks (Pandemic, Sporadic, or Epidemic) are almost constant; however, not every outbreak reaches the pandemic level, as is in the case of COVID-19. It is normal to have the outbreak of infectious diseases everywhere as human beings have spread across the globe. Nowadays, it is easy to move from one part of the world to another within a short period, and this can help (directly or indirectly) in the easier transmission of infectious diseases across the world. Nevertheless, healthcare progress has helped in achieving possible measures to prevent, tackle, or give a quick response to an outbreak in any part of the world.

Footnotes

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Table 1. Top 20 Epidemics and Pandemics in the History

Name	Year	Estimated Deaths	Origin	Type
Prehistoric epidemic	3000 BC	Unknown	China	Epidemic
Plague of Athens	430 BC	75,000-100,000	Greece	Epidemic
Antonine Plague	165-180AD	5 million	Near East	Pan & Epi
Plague of Cyprian	250-271 AD	5000	Roman Empire	Pandemic
Plague of Justinian	541-542 AD	25-100 million	Eastern Empire	Pandemic
The Black Death	1346-1353	75-200 million	Central/East Asia	Pandemic
Cocoliztli Epidemics	1545-1548	5-15 million	Mexico	Epidemic
American Plagues	16th century	Unknown	America/Europe	Pandemic
Great Plague of London	1665-1666	100,000	London	Epidemic
Great Plague of Marseille	1720-1723	100,000	France	Epidemic
Russian Plague	1770-1772	100,000	Russia	Epidemic
Philadelphia Yellow Fever	1793	5000	United States	Epidemic
Flu Pandemic	1889-1890	1 million	Russia	Pandemic
American Polio	1916	6000	United States	Epidemic
Spanish FLU	1918-1920	17-50 million	Unknown	Pandemic
Asian Flu	1957-1958	1 million	China	Pandemic
HIV/AIDS	1981 to date	35 million	United States	Pan & Epi
H1N1 Swine Flu	2009-2010	151,700-575,400	Mexico	Pandemic
West African Ebola	2014-2016	11,325	Sudan/DR. Congo	Epidemic
Zika Virus	2015-to date	Unknown	Uganda	Epidemic

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