

IS 445 - ACG/ACU: Data Visualization - Fall 2023

Visualization Report 5

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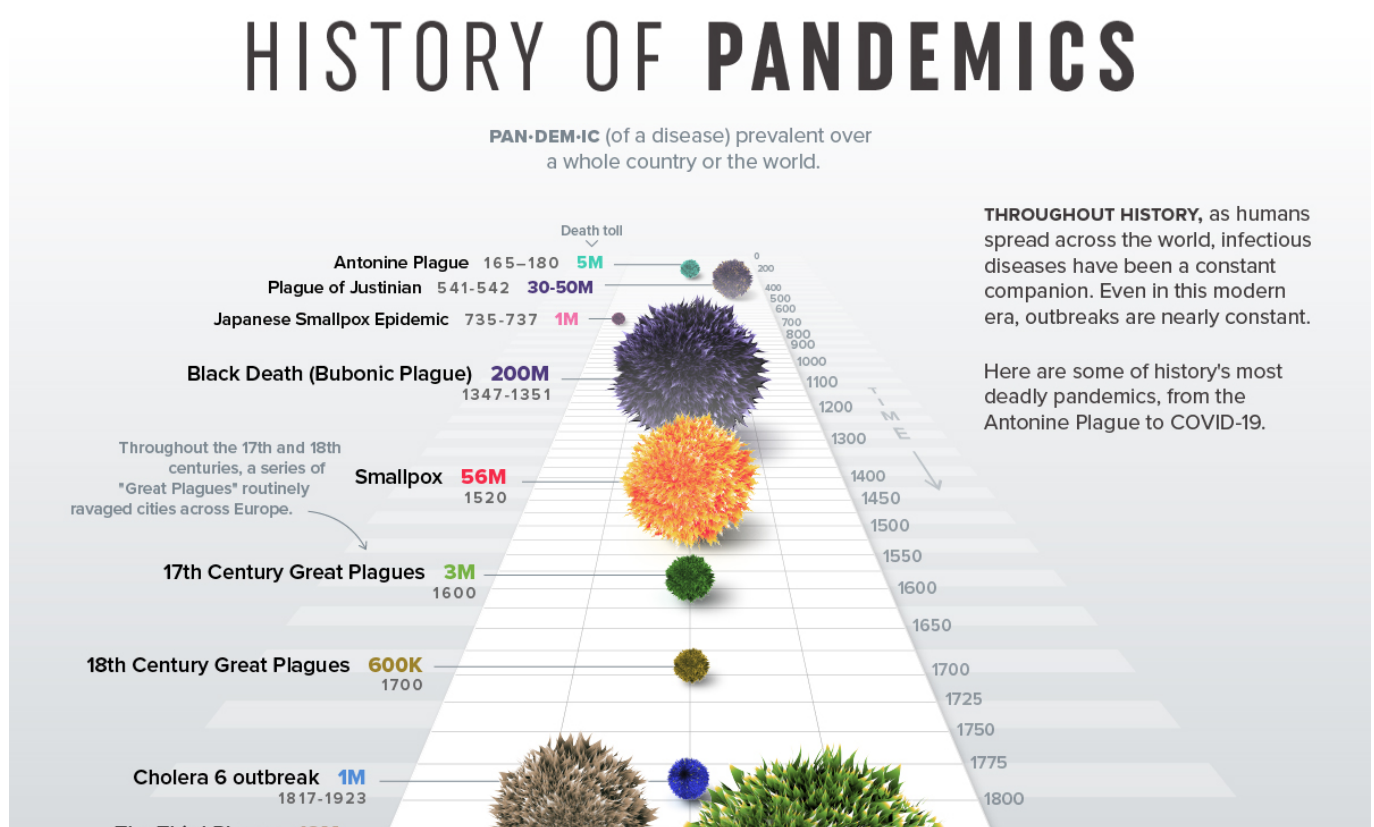
Date: September 27, 2023

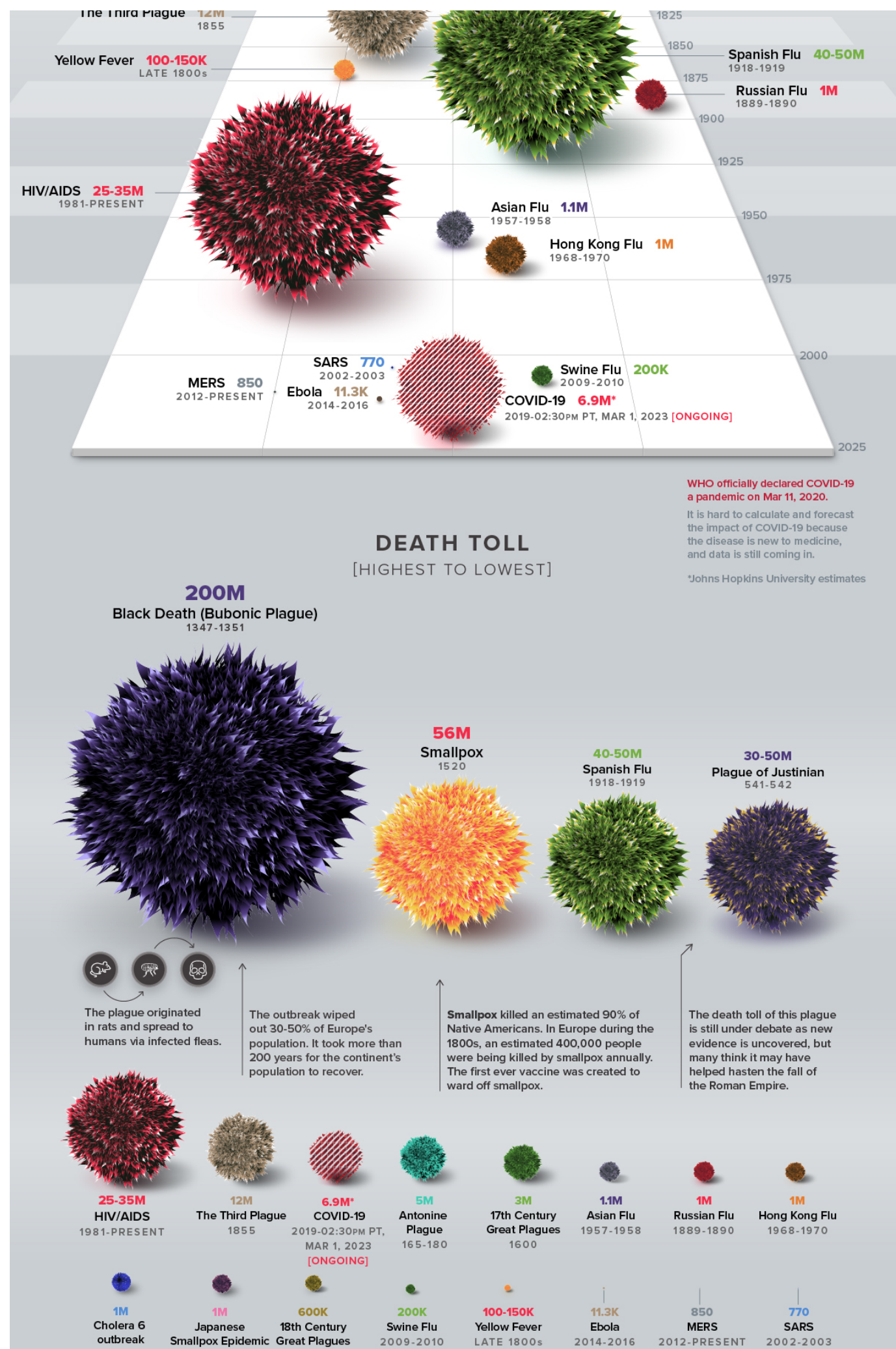
The visualization shows the history of pandemics by Nicholas LePan, published on the visualcapitalist [website](#) on March 14, 2020 and obtained on September 26, 2023.

The visualization shows the timeline of the deadliest pandemics in humankind's history, starting from the Antonine plague in 165 to Covid-19 in 2020. I like this visualization because it is very informative and well-labeled. We can see the year when the pandemic brokeout, the name of the plague and the number of people it claimed (death toll). Using colors to differentiate between different pandemics was also helpful in reading the visualization easily. I also like how they used the symbol of a pathogen/virus to represent the pandemic.

The issue with this visualization was the scaling of the axis, particularly the years and the size of the viruses. Even though it was intentional to use a 3D compressed timeline graph to present the historical occurrence of the pandemics, the size difference makes the recent pandemics more emphasized than the far past pandemics. For example, the size of the virus in the visualization is a function of the death toll of that particular virus. However, based on the 3D timeline, HIV and Spanish flu appear to be way bigger than the Bubonic plague, even though they only claimed 4 to 6 times fewer lives than the bubonic plague.

Also, some pandemics had huge death toll margins where the exact number of lives claimed is unknown. For example, 30-50M for the plague of Justinian, 40-50M for Spanish flu, and 25-35M for HIV. With these huge margins, using the "size of the virus" to compare death tolls is erroneous.





1817-1923 735-737 1700



*Johns Hopkins University estimates

Sources:
CDC, WHO, BBC,
Wikipedia,
Historical records,
Encyclopedia Britannica
Johns Hopkins University

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