

COVID-19 isn't an excuse to be racist

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Byline: Sydney ClarkFeatures Editor

Body

Sydney Clark Features Editor

On January 30, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency due to COVID-19. This virus, believed to be first detected in China, spread to over 50 countries including the United States. This spread has caused Chinese people and others of Asian descent to be on the receiving end of verbal and physical attacks. Regardless of the situation, being racist is inexcusable.

Newspapers and news stations continue to report on the verbal abuse that Chinese American citizens have been facing in the past few months since the COVID-19 outbreak began. NBC News reported in February that in New York City, a man verbally assaulted a Chinese woman who was wearing a facemask and called her and all Chinese people diseased. CNN highlighted a subway in Los Angeles, when a man started yelling that Chinese people are filthy and that all diseases have come from China. Besides being inaccurate, this verbal abuse eventually escalates and leads to physical attacks on Asians.

According to CNN, a 23-year-old Chinese man was physically assaulted in London because of his race. After getting punched in the face, Jonathan Mok, received a few fractures and may even need to get reconstructive surgery to fix the damage. All these hate-fueled attacks occurred because of the xenophobic mindset surrounding those fearful of the virus.

Financially, Chinese restaurants have also taken a blow from the racist accusations. The Guardian and the New York Times report a recent decline in foot traffic visiting Chinese businesses in both Los Angeles and New York City. Locals as well as tourists have been refraining from visiting these shops out of fear and ignorance, worried they will contract a disease that is not there. Chinatowns and other Asian communities are not specifically harboring this virus. Merchants have been getting hit and some have even had to close their businesses because of lack of customers.

America claims to be about acceptance, yet it doesn't seem accepting for Americans to lash out at a group of people based on misinformation and fear. Anyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, can contract COVID-19. Chinese Americans aren't any more susceptible to it compared to any other race. It is ignorant to believe that they are automatically carriers of this new virus.

It is inexcusable to be hateful towards people who can't control the outbreak that has been occurring since the end of January. This virus may be a threat to the public, but Chinese citizens are not.

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