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Exploring historical writings related to past medical pandemics can help shed light on what can be expected in current medical pandemics. And help show how users behaved, reacted and eventually returned to normalcy during those past events. This can help shape how government and medical workers handle the current situation and give hope to those who feel this is the approaching end and show that humanity has encountered these type of events before and have always managed to get through them.

After the Ebola outbreak in Liberia the country started to try to return to normal. However, this return to normalcy was crippled by the after effects of the virus. As the country started to reopen travelers began returning to the city, markets and schools reopened for people to visit and the people started interacting and physically engaging with others just as they had before the virus. The streets and walls were covered in warnings and posters on how to avoid spreading the virus and explaining the symptoms to watch out for and airports implemented measures to monitor arriving people for symptoms, such as temperature checks. Some felt that the one permanent thing the virus left was fear in the country, and this fear pressured hospitals and other possible hotspots to enforce measures such as intense cleaning, incinerating garbage and intense hand washing.

During the crisis relief aid flowed into the city which helped get medical supplies and doctors to help fight the virus, and the benefits of that remain in the city and continue to do good for them. However, trying to follow these new critical medical approaches has caused the hospitals to limit the number of patients, before this having patients share a bed and other cost cutting measures were used; which has caused many to be turned away from receiving help from the hospital due to the limited number of beds. The virus has also left very few doctors as about 10% of the doctors died during the virus. Many fear that once the external relief aid stops coming in the hospitals will not be able to maintain the same level of offerings they can currently.

For families living in an area where the pandemic has hit the hardest, they are finding it hard to continue due to economic hardships. Many families have lost the main earner either due to death or loss of job due to companies leaving or closing and cannot longer afford to pay to send their kids to school and instead are sending their kids to work in order to try to bring in more money for the family to be able to afford the necessities. The lack of school and work has also led to a higher level of new pregnancies as people found other activities to fill the time; which only leads to needing more financial means to maintain a larger family. The desperation of needing essentials has caused crime to worsen making life even more difficult for those trying to get their lives back on track.

This case shows that even after the outbreak of a virus the old life that people had before might never return. The after effects of stopping progress and fighting a virus and then trying to return to normal can postpone the forward progression of a community and even a country. For the case of Liberia some feel it has easily been set back three years in its forward progression.

As more and more physicians started to see people having the flu from a mysterious influenza virus the twin cities started planning on how to deal with it. It was during World War 1 and many military personnel was returning from all around the world as the war started to come to an end. These personnel were getting sick with an influenza type disease. Unfortunately, during this time most physicians and health care workers were in Europe and other places to help with war efforts.

Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota had different views on how to approach the pandemic as more and more returning military personnel and civilians started to have symptoms. The debate on whether to isolate and how to avoid spreading the virus became the top priority. The two cities both decided to close public spaces, but St. Paul also decided to isolate people. The choices of the city on how to handle the spread of the disease altered the way individuals responded and handled themselves within their respective cities.

While closing public venues makes the most sense for avoiding the spreading of disease the city of Minneapolis announced ahead of time on when the venues would be shut down. This caused many individuals to run out and participate and mingle at the different venues in an attempt to enjoy the venue before the shutdown, leading to the virus spreading rapidly right before the shutdown of venues. The city of St. Paul took a different approach and just shut down the items and closed everything; they also took it a step further and required elevators on buildings under 6 stories to be shut down. On the other the city of Minneapolis added a requirement for public transit buses to keep their windows open to let in fresh air.

The city of St. Paul also required that physicians report all cases and isolate their patients in their home in a form of quarantine. Unfortunately, this had the negative side effect of causing the citizens to not reach out for medical help at early symptoms and instead stay at home and hope it got better to avoid getting isolated. This led to many not reaching out for help until pneumonia had already set in and they were very ill.

Many citizens were accepting the new rules, but some protested and went against the new rules and even broke them as a form of protest. Many complained that the open window rule on public transit was leading to more people getting sick with the common cold or other issues while the elevator law got push back on the fact that it would cause people with limited mobility to be unable to leave their homes and be isolated without cause in their homes.

In the end both cities took different approaches and citizens had different feelings and opinions toward the approaches taken. Civil unrest and fear of seeking medical attention followed. There is no way to determine if either approach was better as the data was faulty due to the times and process of collecting. But the one thing that is certain is that the response from the citizens; and using this data governments need to have plans in place on how to deal with response to viruses and more importantly on the effects to the people in the community to keep them and their fellow citizens safe. Comparing the actions and responses from the Spanish Flu to the modern COVID-19 show many similarities indicating that we need to find new ways to institute limits on citizens without causing civil unrest that puts all in danger.

Diaries can expose the feelings of individuals living through good times and bad times. For this the Smithsonian gathered diaries from museums and collections that included people who documented their time during the Spanish Influenza. The diaries share how the individuals dealt with the disease and/or dealt with their family and friends getting the disease. The diaries show heartbreak and sadness as they see loved ones die and fall ill to the virus.

Diary keeping is a way to add a person's life into history. The article quotes Kevin M. Levin as saying "History may often appear to our students as something that happens to other people ... but the present moment offers a unique opportunity for them to create their own historical record" (Solly). This is very true in the sense that modern sharing tools like Facebook, twitter and Instagram do record our daily interactions and life there is no guarantee that data will be available for future generations or that even if it is available it will be shared with others. Because of this, item like diaries and physical entries are critical to survive the wraths of time. It is critical that people log entries of their time during the COVID-19 pandemic as when the next pandemic happens, we need to show how historically people survived and moved on and that there is hope after this is all over.

From reading through the diary entries it is engaging to read from Violet Harris' diary. She was 15 during the pandemic and as most it did not affect her, and she saw it as an adequate thing for missing school. At this time the worst part was knowing that the missed school would be made up during the summer. However, once a friend of hers got it she realized how bad it was and a bit more fear probably settled over her. But the critical takeaway from her diary is that when her home town of Seattle lifted the ban and stuff reopened life became normal again and she was excited to go finally see "The Romance of Tarzan".

Other diaries indicate how during the pandemic they lost loved ones and the pain they suffered as they tried to fight off the Spanish Influenza or had to help as they kept their loved ones well while they fought the disease. The pain they felt when they heard about others dying in their community or learning that a close friend has succumbed to the virus. Or reading the diary of a medical professional who was saddened by not being able to do all they could to help people at their hospital.

While these diary entries are sad and remind us how fragile life can be as the world battles another virus; the COVID-19, it reminds us that others in history have dealt with and felt what we currently feel now. And in the end the world turned back to normal. Most likely until now many have never even heard of researched the Spanish Influenza from 1918 and 1919, but it is critical to understand that this happened before and sadly will most likely happen again. But these diary entries show that humans will get through it and find a way to deal with it and life will return to normalcy shortly after and then soon it will be like it never happened to those who continue living. These diary entries are a great reminder that we will all get through this and life usually returns to normal.

## References

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