

The earth as we know it is constantly facing challenges, and as humans who inhabit this earth, we are always working on overcoming these challenges to pave the way for a brighter, happier and safer life. Throughout the years, we've encountered many new diseases as viruses mutated and spread. However, we are currently facing an unprecedented challenge, an event we haven't witnessed since the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918. The entire human population is currently at risk of contracting the newly discovered coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 which causes Covid-19, the disease. The virus knows no race, gender or social class. Many lives have been lost, and many more are at great risk. Millions of children around the world have been laid off their precious education, and families and economies around the world are struggling to maintain a normal lifestyle given the outbreak. In this essay, I shall begin by giving a brief introduction about coronaviruses and Covid-19, then I shall discuss and analyze the current Covid-19 pandemic in Alberta. I shall suggest ways it could be handled better by individuals, organizations and the government, and I will highlight how specific traits and qualities need to be displayed in order to fight off this virus, and how people could be convinced that the proposed ideas are our best bet moving forward in order to eradicate the virus and restore the lifestyle we have been very accustomed to.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses ranging widely in severity. The first known severe illness caused by a coronavirus emerged with the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in China. A second outbreak of severe illness began in 2012 in Saudi Arabia with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The origin of SARS-CoV-2 which causes Covid-19 remains unclear, but the widely accepted theory is that the virus originated from a "wet market" in Wuhan, China. A "wet market" is a market where farmed and exotic animals are tied up or stacked in cages, and many are killed on site to ensure freshness. Wet markets have continuously been criticized by health experts, because the close contact between animals and humans makes it much easier for viruses to jump between species. The virus that causes Covid-19 is believed to have originated in bats, and in a chain of events it passed on to another mammal carrier before finally infecting humans, starting in Wuhan. SARS-CoV-2 is believed to be a zoonotic virus, meaning it can infect different mammals and cross between species. [1]

Though the virus has been spreading rapidly around the world since December 2019, Alberta recorded its first presumptive case of Covid-19 on the 5th of March 2020. Since then, and as of the 9th of April, Alberta has recorded 1451 cases of Covid 19 [2], an exponential increase (as shown on figure 1 in the Appendix page 5) that will continue to grow, unless the government and people take a much more serious approach in combating the virus.

The government and people must agree on a common goal, and must, as Stephen Covey highlighted in his infamous book, "The 7 habits of highly effective people", begin with the end in mind. The end, which is what we are trying to accomplish is to "minimize the number of deaths in Alberta" [3]. Once our final goal is completely declared, we must decide how this final goal will be accomplished and the necessary steps we need to take, as individuals and as a government. Therefore, this leaves us with the question: How are we as individuals, organizations and a government supposed to behave and act in order to meet the end goal we declared?

Firstly, the single most important thing to do right now is to educate and raise awareness. Nelson Mandela famously said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change

the world”, and it is in fact, education that will help us overcome this virus. People have the tendency not to blindly accept laws or measures taken, without being completely convinced. Consequently, it is not right to assume that people will automatically follow the government “recommendations” of self-isolating, keeping distance and staying home. Therefore, the government of Alberta, and the educational organizations and institutes in the province must reach out to all people, especially the disadvantaged people who do not have access to internet or the opportunity of an education, and make people aware of the consequences that would follow, if the pandemic were taken lightly. Once people see the dire consequences the spread of the virus could have on them and their loved ones, they will listen to the government recommendations, and give up their comforts in order to protect the most sacred thing humans possess: life itself.

To answer the question posed earlier, we must equip ourselves with certain personality traits that are essential for combating the virus and meeting our end goal. First and foremost, we must be proactive, rather than reactive. Thus far, the people of Alberta and its government have been reacting to the spread of the virus rather than actively working on fighting it. To put things into perspective, the virus was identified in Wuhan in China in December 2019, 3 months before the first case in Alberta was detected [4]. Instead of taking the proactive approach and applying heavy measures such as social distancing and locking down non-essential services and imposing mandatory quarantine to anyone arriving from an international destination, in preparation to combat the virus, not much was done until we had our very own first case. Ever since, new laws and measures have been rolling out daily, in response to the increased cases. Had the government of Alberta instantly proposed tighter measures such as 24-hour curfews and tighter lockdowns, the virus would have certainly spread less rapidly. These very tight measures were implemented in Jordan when there were under 100 cases, and since then, Jordan has seen only 372 cases, a very slow increase in the spread of the virus. One must wonder, why isn’t the Alberta government taking more severe measures and displaying assertiveness where needed?

Let us consider the mobility change graphs provided by google [5]. If we consider Alberta’s mobility change with regards to the different sectors provided (given in the appendix, page 5 figure 2), we notice a significant decrease in mobility across retails, recreation, groceries, parks, transit stations and workplace. This data is definitely positive, because at the given time it is imperative that people remain home and only interact with the outdoors if it is absolutely necessary. However, it is still not good enough, and the government needs to take a more assertive and proactive role to meet its end goal. If we compare the Alberta mobility graph to that of Spain (given in the appendix, page 6 figure 3), we clearly notice that the said country had a significantly larger decrease in mobility compared to Alberta due to the tighter measures taken and curfews imposed. If we now compare the curves of cases in both Alberta and Spain, we can see that the curve has started to flatten in Spain. Therefore, it could then be inferred, that these tight measures are successful in flattening the curve and if Alberta were to implement similar measures it would without a doubt help in reducing the number of cases and deaths in Alberta.

The second trait that must be displayed by the government and individuals is to “Put first things first”, habit 3 from Stephen Covey’s book [3]. Prioritizing the important things will help us tackle this pandemic and meet our final goal, so what exactly should individuals and the government prioritize? The individual must prioritize the health and well being of themselves and of their community above all other things, such as entertainment and socialising. If the individual is convinced that health is at the top of the priority list, they will without a doubt, maintain social distancing and stay at home, regardless of their eagerness to go out. The

government on the other hand must prioritize the health and well being of the province and must also prioritize the containment of the virus. Furthermore, if the final goal is to minimize the amount of deaths in Alberta, the government must prioritize the health of the elderly and chronically ill before anyone else. If we look at data from 'Our World in Data' [6]. We can evidently see that the elderly and people with chronic illnesses are at the greatest risk of deaths (given in the Appendix, page 6 and 7, figures 4 and 5). Therefore, the Alberta government must prioritize these people at high risks and provide them with the hospitalization needed in order to meet the goal of minimizing the deaths toll in Alberta. Furthermore, in order to minimize the cases and deaths, the government of Alberta must prioritize investing in the healthcare system and in the large research institutions who would be working by the hour on testing and developing vaccines and drugs for this virus. The extra investment in healthcare would mean more patients would get access to hospitalization and therefore they would have a much lower chance of dying. Moreover, despite Alberta having one of the highest number of tests per capita in Canada and the world, with more money invested in healthcare, the Alberta Health Services could carry out even more tests, and as a result, identify more cases before their condition gets critical and before they spread it around to more people. This would ensure that the virus is better contained, and people are less likely to die. The Alberta government must put people before profit in these difficult times.

Additionally, another essential trait that must be displayed by Albertans and the Alberta government is "think win-win" [3]. The Alberta government must implement this trait when dealing with other provinces within the country and other nations worldwide. That means that the Alberta government must be willing to help other provinces and countries that are suffering from shortage of medical supplies or staff and it also means the Alberta government must be willing to accept help if offered. It is crucial to understand that for Alberta to eradicate the virus, the whole world must also be on the verge of eradicating the virus, otherwise, it will find a way back into the province, and it is only through international cooperation and a "win-win" state of mind will Alberta successfully be able to tackle this gruesome virus.

Finally, once the individuals, the organizations and the government adopt these new habits and approaches to solving this crisis, synergy forms. As Stephen Covey put in his book, "Synergy is when people work together in very effective and successful ways, synergy is the 'fruit' of the habits and approaches mentioned above" [3]. Once the people of Alberta and its government achieve synergy, then 'the impossible' becomes an obsolete term, and we will certainly observe positive changes in numbers of cases and deaths due to the pandemic, and eventually we will see ourselves come out on top and defeat the virus.

To conclude, we are without a doubt living in stressful and unprecedented times. The normal flow of life that we have been so accustomed to has been disrupted by this malicious virus. However, if the individual and the government of Alberta are ready to take the necessary measures to combat the virus, and reinvent their beliefs, methods and personality, we will without a doubt minimize the number of cases and deaths we see in the province, and not only that, we could very well see Alberta on the front lines of this fight, acting as a role model to the world and leading it into eradicating this deadly disease. It is education, proactiveness, prioritizing, assertiveness and most importantly synergy that will be the main habits we display in our fight and victory over the virus.

References

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- [5] "google," 2 April 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/>. [Accessed 6 April 2020].
- [6] "Our World in Data," [Online]. Available: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>. [Accessed 5 April 2020].

Appendix:

Figure 1:

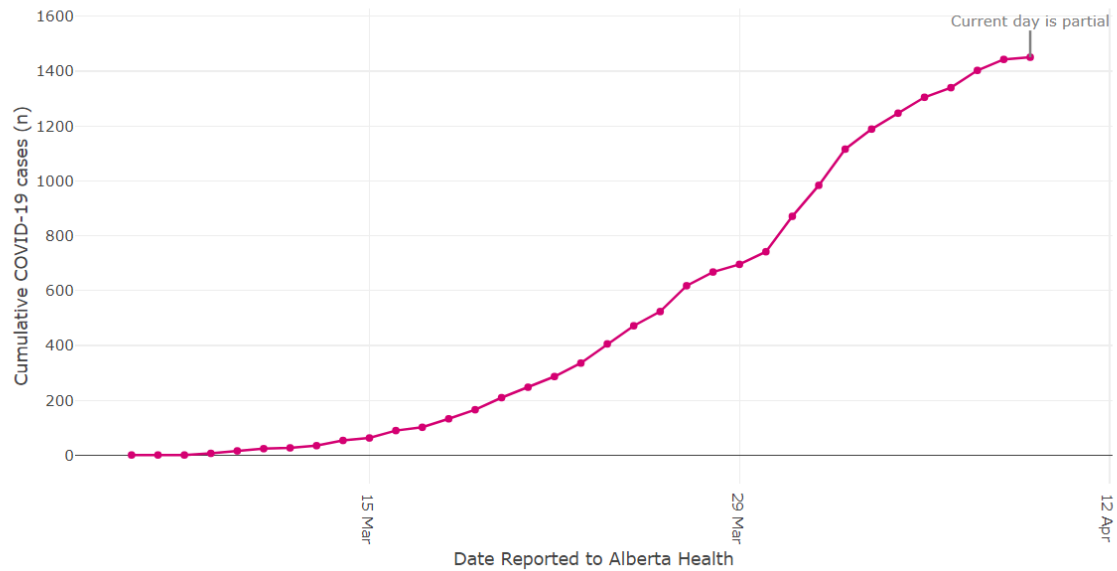
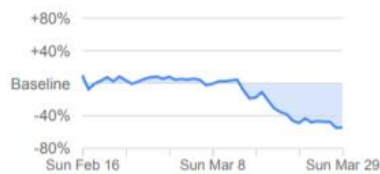


Figure 2:

Alberta

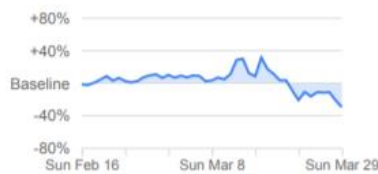
Retail & recreation

-55% compared to baseline



Grocery & pharmacy

-29% compared to baseline



Parks

-23% compared to baseline



Transit stations

-63% compared to baseline



Workplace

-41% compared to baseline



Residential

+13% compared to baseline

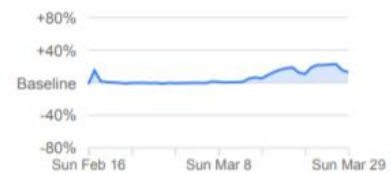


Figure 3:

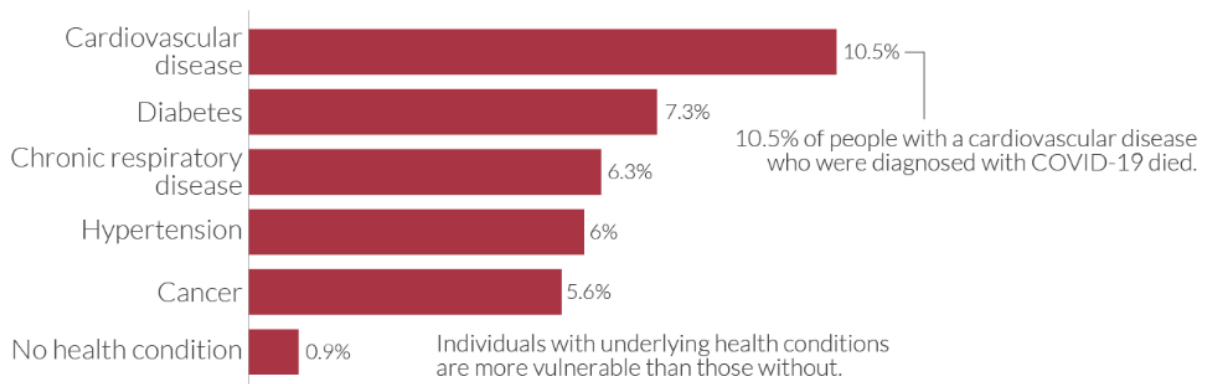


Figure 4:

Coronavirus: early-stage case fatality rates by underlying health condition in China

Our World in Data

Case fatality rate (CFR) is calculated by dividing the total number of deaths from a disease by the number of confirmed cases. Data is based on early-stage analysis of the COVID-19 outbreak in China in the period up to February 11, 2020.



Data source: Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia Emergency Response Epidemiology Team. *Vital surveillances: the epidemiological characteristics of an outbreak of 2019 novel coronavirus diseases (COVID-19)—China, 2020*. China CDC Weekly.

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Figure 5:

Coronavirus: case fatality rates by age

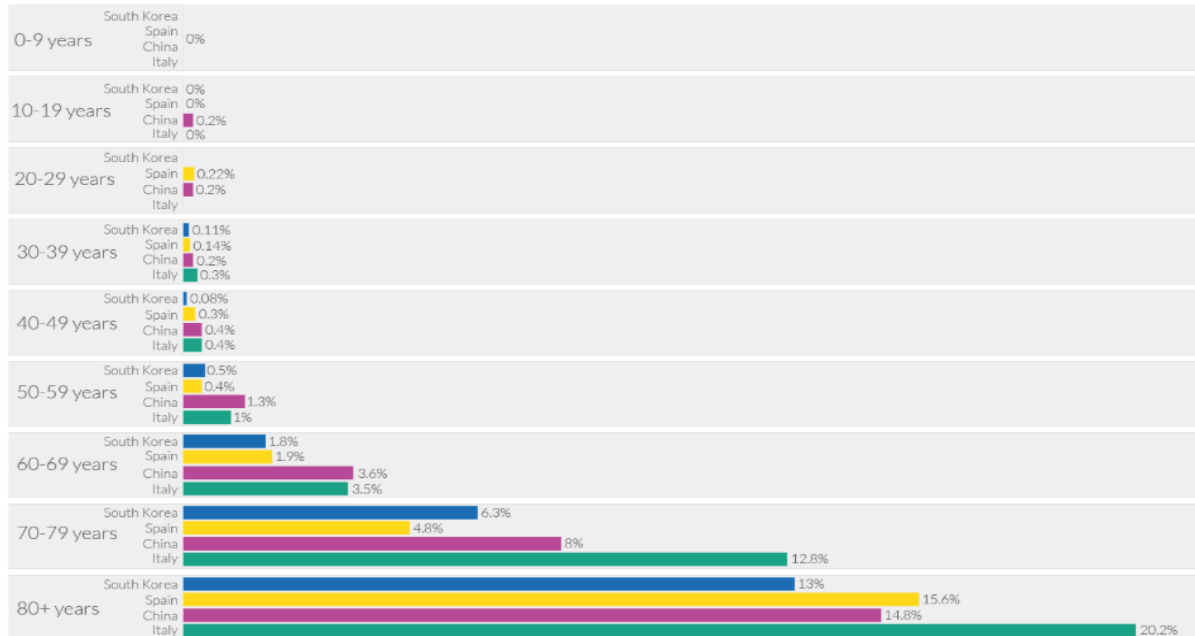
Our World
in Data

Case fatality rate (CFR) is calculated by dividing the total number of confirmed deaths due to COVID-19 by the number of *confirmed* cases.

Two of the main limitations to keep in mind when interpreting the CFR:

(1) many cases within the population are unconfirmed due to a lack of testing.

(2) some individuals who are infected will eventually die from the disease, but are still alive at time of recording.



Note: Case fatality rates are based on confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19 as of: 17th February (China); 24th March (Spain); 24th March (South Korea); 17th March (Italy).

Data sources: Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Spanish Ministry of Health; Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC).

Onder G, Rezza G, Brusaferro S. Case-Fatality Rate and Characteristics of Patients Dying in Relation to COVID-19 in Italy. *JAMA*.

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