Conclusion from COVID-19 Stories

Timelines of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in China and the U.S. reveal detailed stories of how the first few cases gradually developed into a pandemic, and how government officials and health agencies acted together in fighting the transmission of the virus outbreak.

China and the United States exhibited different spatial patterns of coronavirus spread in their respective regions. In China, most cases originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province. Direct controls of the origin of the virus (such as the shutdown of the city and later the province) helped prevent the virus from spreading further. In the U.S., however, the first few confirmed cases were scattered across states on the east and west coasts, which made containment problematic and required nation-wide preventive measures.

Both governments have struggled to assess the virus accurately in terms of its severity. Coronavirus was underestimated and was not acted upon proactively. Chinese officials took three weeks to confirm human-to-human transmission. The U.S. government, even having received warnings about COVID-19 from WHO and having weeks to prepare, didn’t introduce social distancing and stay-at-home policies until it was too late to prevent mass contamination. A lack of testing kits and necessary medical care equipment has also plagued the effectiveness of the response.

China and America have not succeeded in stopping the spread of COVID-19, but most of the world has failed as well. The global community was not prepared for the coronavirus, but it will also learn from its mistakes. COVID-19 is truly the first pandemic of the modern era and will serve as a landmark case in which health organizations and officials will look back on to aid them in future times of pandemic crises. It is a painful but necessary lesson the world needed to learn in order to strive forward confidently in the future. It will certainly not be the last time there will be a global health emergency, but with the selflessness shown by healthcare workers and other essential employees today, there is certainly cause for hope looking ahead.