**COVID-19: what should be our focus**

COVID-19 is a virus that is being transmitted between people through respiratory droplets. The pathogen can also be easily transmitted, which can be shown by the number of detected positive cases that stands at 100291 cases as of March 6, 2020. Following a declaration of a global health emergency by the World Health Organization on January 30, the outbreak caused a number of adverse effects on countries and communities. Realizing that the pathogen would likely continue spreading throughout the world, it is important to adopt an appropriate kind of policy in response to it.

The adopted policy should be directed at decreasing the virulence of COVID-19. As of now, the death rate stands around 3%, which is high for a massive outbreak as there are already more than 3408 confirmed deaths. Its virulence depends on the form as well as the likelihood of its transmission. According to Ewald’s article, the higher the likelihood of the pathogen to be transmitted the higher its virulence. If the pathogen can move quickly between the hosts, whether the host dies or physically active would not decrease the chances of the virus to pass on its genetic information to a new host. Therefore, the policy should aim at reducing the likelihood of this transmission.

There are two sources of respiratory transmissions that the policy should tackle. First, it is a transmission through the interaction between the deceased and healthy people. Although it might be a part of some cultures, this interaction should be minimized in order to achieve less virulence. If there is no way for a pathogen to get transmitted after the host dies, it would die with the host, and the mechanism of natural selection would favor pathogen mutations with less virulence that remain alive longer. Another important aspect of the policy should be directed at reducing the transmission rates at the medical institutions, where COVID-19 thrives. According to Ewald, around four million people acquired an infection while in the hospital in US alone. Therefore, higher hygiene and more strict interaction methods should be implemented in order to decrease the virulence of COVID-19.

Overall, policies that would decrease the virulence of COVID-19 should focus on reducing its transmission rate primarily between the deceased and the healthy as well as in the hospitals. However, it remains to be seen to what extent introduction of vaccines and various drugs would have reverse effects on its virulence.

Bibliography

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