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Vito Zazo

vzazo906@live.kutztown.edu

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Life After A Pandemic

Vito Zazo

Over 200,000 dead. The deadliest disease ever recorded. Life will never be the same again. It seems like everyday we hear something like this either on the news or on our phones. Most people hear this and accept that this is just how life is now. Most people when you ask them what they know about covid-19 they will just recite what they heard from the news or social media. Well what if I told you that the news leaves things out to fit their narrative, and not everything you see on the internet is real. The average American has not been properly informed about this virus and they do not have the information about how this pandemic is working. Knowledge is the key to overcoming any wicked problem, by using knowledge we can then prevent, overcome, and adapt to new situations.

First, I should explain what a wicked problem is. A wicked problem is a problem that does not have one exact answer. An example is sweeping trash under the couch, sure the floor looks clean but if you move the couch the floor is no longer clean. The Pandemic is a wicked problem because there is not one way to solve how to move forward from it. This pandemic has been going on for months and everyone has a different way to stop the spread. There are people that think that you need masks and 6 feet of distance, other people believe we all should just stay inside for 2 weeks, and there are some people that think that they just don't have to wear a mask. These are all vastly different approaches to this pandemic and how people are trying to prevent the spread.

Next, we need to look at this pandemic and what it is. This pandemic is due to the outbreak of a virus called Covid-19. This disease has many symptoms such as fever or chills, cough,

shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea. It is believed to have started in Wuhan and then spread around the globe like a wildfire. It has many different effects on people ranging from a person feeling completely fine and other people being stuck bedridden for the entirety of their case. Around the world over 1.2 million have died and in the U.S 200,000 (CDC) people have died from it so far. This disease is not limited to physical effects though; this Pandemic has affected citizens livelihoods and their mental health as well. According to Joel Best "... The COVID-19 pandemic is related to a wide array of what are routinely described as social problems, they describe ways the disease makes many existing problems worse, even as it creates some new ones."(Best) This disease has caused high levels of unemployment and has had effects on peoples mental health. In February the U.S has an unemployment rate of 5.3% and by the end of April unemployment spiked to 14.7%, this is the highest since the great depression. The stock market also took a big hit in March as covid-19 was beginning bringing a stop to the highest stock market ever recorded (Best). Covid-19 has caused our economy to take a turn for the worse leaving millions unemployed and stocks crushed. Many people, even though they may never contract the illness, have been affected by this virus by a lack of cash flow. It is no secret that you need money to succeed in life, it is used to purchase food and water and to secure a living arrangement. Without a job people cannot get the money they need to live comfortably. The government has unemployment but for some people who have families this money is just not enough. It is estimated that one in five adults in America and one in six children have a mental illness, with a lack of money people are not able to get the help they need for their illnesses. With this pandemic more people have reported

having “depressive episodes” meaning that they have suffered some form of mental health problem due to this pandemic. With an increase in mental health problems and people having a lack of income to get help for them experts caution that “deaths of despair” (suicide, overdose, substance use) may become worse. (Muschert) With all this evidence of how this pandemic is shaking people to their core it is clear that we should do something to stop the spread of this virus, so that people can get the help they need to live a happy, fulfilling life.

Why is it so hard to stop the spread? Well as I have stated earlier, there are many different beliefs on how to stop it viewed by different groups of Americans; but why are there different beliefs to stop it and not just one general consensus across the American public. Well the main reason is because the public has not been informed on exactly what to do. This is by part, the fault of our own government and our news outlets. The US government is a two-party system or bipartisan with Democrats and Republicans. This also leads to our news outlets being either democrat or republican. The problem with our government being bipartisan is there is two different sides who are saying 2 different things. The republicans and the news outlets that back them do not want our economy to shut down so they will tell you to carry on as usual being cautious using masks. While the democrats want the people to not go out temporarily to ensure the squashing of this virus. The problem with this is with half of America staying in and half of America going outside the half staying in does not matter anymore because millions of Americans are still going out and exposing themselves to the danger of contracting this virus.

Another problem of this pandemic is bipartisan news outlets don't always tell you everything about this virus. The republicans are the senate majority and are in the white house right now with an election upcoming. This means that the democrats want to have those seats.

With that happening they are looking for excuses to get the American people not to vote for republicans. This is where we hear the terms deadliest disease and why the death count is hammered into our heads by these democratic news stations. What these democratic news stations fail to mention is the statistic of the deaths. 200,000 may have died but that is only 99.9995%(CDC Website) of the U.S population. That means that 99.995% of Americans have either not contracted this virus or have recovered from it.

On the other hand, we have the Republican news sources that seem more targeted on talking about the status of the cure/ vaccines. Fox news has been talking about different companies and how they are on clinical trials of new vaccines. In a Fox news article talking on the status of vaccines they say that multiple companies may have a vaccine for Covid-19 out before the end of 2020.(Leggate) This is because they want it to look like the republicans are working on keeping our economy from shutting down and finding a way to make people not sick. What Fox doesn't do a good job at is mentioning when a company's trial has failed or fallen into a delay.

When asking people what they think we should do in the future to prevent another pandemic everyone has a different opinion. Some people think that the response around the world has been very fast and proves that we will be able to tackle new problems with the same speed. In Samuel Brannen's research paper, Changes in Global Government, he states "The speed and extent of the global economic and public health response to the virus has been taken to by many activists to signify that global mobilization on policy issues is possible..."(Brannen). While there are other people that think that we need to take larger precautions in our lives to prevent the outbreak of something like this again. It has been proven that distance is a safe way to combat viral diseases. In a research paper titled After Covid-19: Australia and the World

Rebuild, the author uses some historical cases of people “socially distancing” during other major outbreaks of diseases he uses the cholera outbreak in London as an example stating how they took the handle off of the communal water pump and the outbreak trickled to a stop. This was done for physical distancing of people so they were not all around the pump getting each other sick.(Coyne) if history shows that physical distancing is a safe way to defeat viruses some may debate why we do not practice public safety like this all the time to decrease the chance of spreading illnesses.

The problem with both of these solutions is that there is always going to be one side who is unhappy with the other way and does not wish to conform. What I think that America should do to prevent another pandemic is to put more resources into our nation’s disease prevention center. Our nation has the CDC which is the center for disease control. They are the ones who list all the info for diseases whether new or old. What they don’t do is create vaccines for these diseases. The race to a vaccine for this pandemic has been headed by private companies. I feel as this is why this pandemic has dragged on for so long. Private companies have limited budgets and therefore they need to develop things in a cost-efficient way, they also have to find a way to profit from this drug since they cannot afford to lose money on anything. If the government had an agency with the capabilities to make a vaccine for this virus we may have seen and end to this pandemic earlier. The agency would have a greater budget for developing the vaccine and more money could be allocated to them to help speed up the process. This may also help to increase the amount of people who use the vaccine right away because they know that it came from the government and not a company they may never have heard of before. I also think that if the CDC was in charge of making vaccines people will be more inclined to listen to

their standards on health. For some people they have to see before they believe something, if they were to see the CDC is working on curing this pandemic, they may listen to what they have to say for prevention. This would help to get all the citizens of our nation back on the same page. Knowledge is power and by getting a central form of disease prevention and curing the people will be more people who know who to listen to.

This is what I think our solution to the pandemic wicked problem is. Our country has been misinformed and mis provided for and the citizens have suffered because of it. If our government was transparent and had a means to give out consistent information, we would never be this far into a lockdown with more and more of our citizens falling ill. Also, if our government was working on developing a vaccine for this virus we may as well have been done with this pandemic a lot sooner. The people deserve to have constant knowledge of what is going on in their country and they deserve to have the resources needed to eliminate more problems. My solution will not only help keep the nation better informed but better protected if an outbreak like this occurs again.

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