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## The COVID-19 (otherwise known as the coronavirus) Outbreak

The year 2020 has been quite strange: we were faced with the threat of World War III, Australia was mostly on fire, and the world was shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this essay, I am going to investigate COVID-19, previous coronaviruses, and what everybody can do to help flatten the curve, and more importantly, *keep the curve low*. What I mean by the “curve” is the amount of people being hospitalized versus the amount of space and resources the hospitals have. So, without further adieu, let’s start investigating!

Let’s start with the background. The first case of the novel coronavirus reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) was reported from Wuhan, China, and was reported on December 31st, 2019. Many people speculate that it started in a bat (which someone proceeded to consume), although nobody knows for sure at this point in time. On February 11th, 2020, WHO gave this coronavirus its official name: COVID-19 (**C**orona**V**irus **D**isease of **2019**). It is also technically referred to as SARS-CoV-2 (**S**evere **A**cute **R**espiratory **S**yndrome **C**orona**V**irus **2**), named after the 2002 SARS outbreak, also caused by a strand of coronavirus.

Next, I want to look at some coronaviruses that have affected us in the past, such as SARS and MERS. SARS, as I stated earlier stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. According to WHO, “An epidemic of SARS affected 26 countries and resulted in more than 8000 cases in 2003. Since then, a small number of cases have occurred as a result of laboratory accidents or, possibly, through animal-to-human transmission (Guangdong, China).

Transmission of SARS-CoV is primarily from person to person. It appears to have occurred

mainly during the second week of illness, which corresponds to the peak of virus excretion in respiratory secretions and stool, and when cases with severe disease start to deteriorate clinically. Most cases of human-to-human transmission occurred in the health care setting, in the absence of adequate infection control precautions. Implementation of appropriate infection control practices brought the global outbreak to an end.” This is a brief summary of the SARS epidemic, just showing how it started, how it spread, and how it ended.

Next, let’s look at MERS. MERS stands for **M**iddle **E**astern **R**espiratory **S**yndrome. The first reported case of MERS was in 2012, but it is still active now. According to WHO, “Since September 2012, WHO has been notified of 2494 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV. 858 MERS-CoV associated deaths have occurred since September 2012. Since September 2012, 27 countries have reported cases of MERS-CoV.” This just shows that even though it has been around for almost eight years, it has not had many cases or deaths.

Now, finally, I want to look at what people can do to stop the spread of COVID-19. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has released a lot of information regarding COVID-19, including some tips. According to the CDC, “If you have a fever, cough or other symptoms, you might have COVID-19. Most people have mild illness and are able to recover at home. If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

- Keep track of your symptoms.
- If you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing), get medical attention right away.” This just shows you what you should do if you have any of the common symptoms. Another helpful article included the quote, “People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

*Or at least two of these symptoms:*

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell” This is a list from the CDC regarding common symptoms of COVID-19.

In conclusion, the new disease COVID-19 was first reported in Wuhan, China, and has been spreading rapidly since then, some previous coronaviruses that have caused pandemics and epidemics include SARS and MERS, and if you experience a fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or other symptoms, you should try your best to self isolate. However, if you experience a new shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or a new confusion, you should call a doctor *immediately*.

## Works Cited

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