

# COVID-19: The Global Pandemic and its Impact on Society

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## Perspective

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## DESCRIPTION

In late 2019, a new viral disease emerged in Wuhan, China, causing a global pandemic that has affected every corner of the world. COVID-19, caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), has disrupted global economies, overwhelmed healthcare systems, and caused millions of deaths. The pandemic has also revealed the strengths and weaknesses of our societies, highlighting the importance of science, public health, and solidarity in tackling global challenges.

SARS-CoV-2 is a member of the coronavirus family, which also includes the viruses responsible for the SARS and MERS outbreaks. The virus is highly contagious and primarily spreads through respiratory droplets generated when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes. Once inside a host, the virus attaches to human cells using a spike protein and enters the cell, where it replicates and spreads to other cells. The virus can cause mild to severe illness, with about 20% of cases requiring hospitalization and a fraction leading to death.

### The importance of testing and contact tracing

One of the key strategies for controlling the spread of COVID-19 is testing and contact tracing. Testing allows us to identify infected individuals and isolate them, while contact tracing helps identify and quarantine individuals who have been in close contact with the infected person. This strategy has been successful in countries like South Korea and Taiwan, which have been able to contain the virus without resorting to strict lockdowns. However, in countries where testing and contact tracing infrastructure is weak, such as the United States and Brazil, the virus has spread uncontrollably, causing massive disruptions and deaths.

### **Vaccines and therapies**

Developing effective vaccines and therapies is essential for controlling the pandemic and mitigating its impact. To date, several vaccines have been developed and approved for emergency use, including those produced by Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson and Johnson. These vaccines have been shown to be highly effective at preventing severe illness and hospitalization, and are being distributed worldwide. Additionally, several therapies, such as the antiviral drug Remdesivir and monoclonal antibodies, have been authorized for emergency use, providing a lifeline to those who contract the virus.

### **The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on society**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on societies across the world. The pandemic has caused widespread illness and death, overwhelmed healthcare systems, and disrupted economies and supply chains. The impact of the pandemic has been felt particularly strongly in emerging and developing countries, where healthcare systems and social protections are often weaker. In this article, we will discuss the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on society.

### **Disparities in healthcare and health outcomes**

The pandemic has also highlighted existing disparities in healthcare and health outcomes. In many countries, marginalized communities, including low income workers, people of colour, and indigenous communities, have higher rates of infection and death from COVID-19. This is due to a combination of factors, including underlying health conditions, lack of access to healthcare, and exposure to the virus in frontline jobs.

The pandemic has also revealed weaknesses in healthcare systems, particularly in emerging and developing countries where healthcare capacity is limited. The pandemic has overwhelmed healthcare systems, leading to shortages of medical supplies and equipment, and forcing healthcare professionals to work under extreme conditions.