

COVID-19

(Standard)

In the 17th and 18th centuries the terms **epidemic** and **pandemic** were used widely and often interchangeably in various social and medical contexts. The first known use of the word 'pandemic' is reported to 1666 as vernacular disease. Later in 1828, Webster's dictionary listed epidemic and pandemic as synonymous terms. The 1889 and 1918 influenza diseases which spread globally differentiated the meaning of the word 'pandemic' from that of an 'epidemic'.

An 'epidemic' affects a large number of people within a community, population or region where as a 'pandemic' **i)** affects a wide geographical area, often worldwide, **ii)** affects a greater number of people than an epidemic, **iii)** is often caused by a new virus or a strain of virus that has not circulated among people for a long time. Humans usually have little to no immunity against it. A pandemic often creates a social disruption, economic loss and general hardship.

"Facing a pandemic is like facing a war.

You never know the end."

(Malik Rahmat Ullah)

Let's glance through some recent pandemics. The 1918 influenza pandemic (Spanish flu) took the lives of around 50 to 100 million people around the world. The 1957 influenza pandemic (Asian flu) became reason of 1.5 million deaths worldwide. In 1968, another influenza pandemic (Hong Kong flu) took around 1 million lives. The swine flu pandemic of 2009-2010 created an estimated 700 million to 1.5 billion people.

Coronavirus disease is the **most disastrous pandemic** of 21st century. It is abbreviated as COVID-19. It is caused by a coronavirus named as SARS-CoV-2. Coronavirus are a large family of viruses, several of which cause respiratory diseases in humans from the common cold to more rare and serious diseases.

Covid-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancer are more likely to develop serious.

Experts say that COVID-19 **originated in bats. It made the jump to humans at one of Wuhan (China)'s open area markets.** From Wuhan, it spread to other parts of China and then moved to rest of the world. The most affected countries are America, India, Brazil, Russia, UK, France, Spain, Italy, Turkey and Germany. America got so much affected by COVID-19 that **Steve Magee** had to say:

"COVID-19 has elected itself the

President of America."

The **statistics** of this pandemic are disastrous. According to WHO's report published in February 1st, 2020, a total of 223 countries, areas or territories have been found victim of this disease. A total of 103.98 million confirmed cases and 2.26 million confirmed deaths have been reported worldwide.

Government of Pakistan launched an official website (covid.gov.pk) to keep the people aware about this pandemic. According to this portal's latest report, a total of 5,51,842 confirmed cases have been reported in Pakistan. Out of which, around 5,07,502 have recovered, 11886 have died and 32,454 active cases.

Symptoms revealed that this disease affects different people in different ways. Most affected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization. Few of the serious