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### The Covid-19 Effect

I left my Westwood apartment the other day to witness something I never imagined I would ever see a single day in my life. I saw an open parking spot on Kelton Avenue, the street I currently reside on. Kelton is not the most active street but there are tenants from the beginning to the end of the street and cars normally occupying every single inch of legal parking curb, but there was not only one open spot, there were spots down the whole street. There was also not a soul in the street or on either sidewalk, or this was the case for the most part in the busy part of Westwood as well. Besides the very few people picking up food or groceries, the area was empty. It was as if, opposite day had actually happened and was no longer a lower school myth. These unprecedented circumstances are thanks to the global pandemic we are currently apart of stemming from the virus referred to as covid-19, also known as coronavirus. But not only is the virus, itself, and the effects of it unparalleled, the contemporary and future affects are second to none.

Covid-19 is the most intriguing sickness to occur in the world in my lifetime and arguably in the world's history. It has its own peculiar properties to it that makes it incredibly interesting. Although it did not scare the world as abruptly and leave as much hopelessness that the black plague did during its stent, it is not as trivial as the flu either, which is seen as its closest comparison. It is also not the first virus to be discovered. Yet, once it began spreading, it

broke records immediately. There is not a continent or country in the entire world that is not a victim of the virus. The virus has symptoms which resemble both the flu and a common cold, so it can be misinterpreted, even by seasoned, medical professionals.

The leading symptom which separates the virus from others is the shortness of breath that a victim of the virus may have. As for the remainder of the symptoms though, they are almost the exact same as a cold or flu. Someone with a fever, chills, cough, and/or muscle pain may not believe their life is in danger or need to take a trip to the hospital. Instead, they may self-diagnose themselves with a common cold or flu and attempt to treat themselves. The similarities in the symptoms is not the scariest part of the virus though.

The asymptomatic properties of the virus, if actually thought about, could give anyone a nightmare these days. Someone could be a carrier of the virus without even knowing and be infecting others without the knowledge they are doing so. And to compile those already scary properties, it is easily spread, like every virus. Similar to other viruses, the coughs and sneezes spread the easiest, but this is the other area where covid-19 separates itself. Aerosolized coronavirus can remain airborne for up to three hours which easily trumps every other sickness similar to it. It stays on objects and surfaces for an extended amount of time as well. These are the reasons why I believe the virus has spread so incredibly far and fast, considering it to be a global pandemic rather than an epidemic, which we would refer to as simple now. The virus itself did not affect me for a while, but when it did, it hit hard.

Although the origins of covid-19 are not truly known for a fact, it is very clear it did not start in America. Due to these circumstances, I was not as sensitive to the subject as I currently am. At the beginning of the pandemic, it was a joke in America. It is currently trending all over

every television network, as well as every social media platform, but it was for all the wrong reasons originally. Now, if the virus is the topic of conversation it is serious but months ago it was the main topic bringing laughter to the American population. There were World War III jokes and comparisons, skits where the virus was purposefully spread, and much more. But at the same time, there were a plethora of cases, as well as deaths in countries across the seas. So, I was aware the virus was a serious matter, just not where I was. It was not until the morning of March 11<sup>th</sup> when I began taking the virus seriously and it actually began to affect my life as well.

On the morning of March 10<sup>th</sup>, I woke up packed and ready to leave for Las Vegas with my team in order to participate in the 2020 Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament. Our team was on a roll. We had our seven game winning streak snapped by our cross town rivals in the previous game but still possessed an extremely high level of confidence and swagger which we planned on using to win the whole tournament and propel ourselves into our first trip to the NCAA March Madness Tournament for the first time in my three-year career as a UCLA student-athlete. So not only was I excited, but the whole group was. Upon arrival there was coronavirus gossip, but games were still being participated in and fans still in attendance. We had arrived a day early due to our late season surge which allowed us to receive a first-round bye, so we were simply enjoying ourselves, practicing, and preparing for our game on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Our spirits were very high, and we were very eager for the day to come but uncertainty struck at dinner the night before our scheduled game.

In a time and age where everyone, of all ages, has some sort of mobile device allowing them to surf web and observe updates around the world, our devices were the bearers of bad news that night. Our team took a trip to a restaurant inside our hotel that night and in the midst of

waiting for our meals, as well as eating once the food arrived, there were numerous news articles with terrible covid-19 news. The virus had reached America shortly before our trip and it spread in the blink of an eye. Not only was the common general population being affected, but there were professional athletes testing positive. Soccer players were the first victims, which led to games being postponed and cancelled, then leagues' seasons were being cancelled, and ultimately the sport itself. But, the NBA had yet become accustomed to these repercussions. That night was a milestone though. Games were started to get cancelled before and during their occurrences, but that was not the deciding factor. On the same night, Rudy Gobert tested positive for the virus, becoming the first to do so. It was only down from there.

He and his team, as well as their opposition that night, was rushed to the hospital and tested for the virus. Thankfully, there was an underwhelming number of positive cases, yet this left the NBA commissioner, Adam Silver with a monumental decision to make. Very intelligently, Silver decided to suspend every facet of the NBA indefinitely including games, practices, team facilities and more. Now, this is when my team and I were forced to reluctantly accept the high possibility of our ensuing game being cancelled as well. There was speak of games still happening, but with limited and essential fans only which solely consisted of direct family members though. With that being said, I cannot speak for my teammates, but even with the clear evidence leaning towards our game being cancelled, I went to sleep that night with hope of the opposite. Unfortunately, my teammate woke me up to a twitter post confirming the exact news I was dreading. The whole tournament was cancelled overnight, and we had to leave that same day. Now, for almost two months, LA has been on lockdown and its length is indefinite, but I do not see it ending anytime soon.

As of now, there are only essential workers employed, a mask or some sort of face covering is mandatory at every food and grocery establishment, and every high capacity establishment is closed. These are circumstances we have never had to live underneath in America. They are unfavorable conditions, but I believe this pandemic will allow Americans to grow as a country and population in the future. I see the effects of this pandemic shaping everything in our world in the future.

First of all, there will be more emphasis on sanitary habits in every single establishment. At the moment, there are masks and gloves being worn in stores in order to lower the spread of germs and bacteria as well as the thorough cleaning of establishments. I believe the masks and gloves will cease once the pandemic is over, but the cleaning of stores will continue as precaution. Sporting events will be monitored a lot closer now. If sports continue any time soon, athletes will have to be repeatedly tested for the virus, they will be forced to quarantine if competing, and there be no fans in attendance at any event. I believe fans will be allowed once the pandemic is over and players forcibly quarantining will cease, but the testing of athletes will continue once it is over, just not as frequent. I also believe our country will take matters similar to this pandemic more serious earlier in the future. Instead of taking to social media and ridiculing the situation, I believe the whole American population will take it more seriously. But not only will the citizens or victims take it seriously, the government and our president will take appropriate measures in order to protect his or her people from the matter. This pandemic pertains to early Spanish culture though as well.

In the early ages of Spain, the country was economically challenged to say the least. There was no true wealth in the country, not even amongst the richest in the country like the king

and queen. This was before the drastic change in Spain. Their own form of our covid-19, yet this was not a disease, nor did it carry a negative connotation, but it spread and affected the country almost as fast as the coronavirus, if not as fast. The Golden Age during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century was the turning point of that country. It directly affected the citizens of the country, as well as the future of the country and its citizens for the years to come. The surge of trade and money grew the country into a powerhouse over the years and cemented its legacy but that was not it. The country's social hierarchy and system was drastically affected, as well as the emergence of the New World. No longer did the nobility have all the power, but the middle class quickly began to emerge, and the New World invited those of lower class to become successful in their society. Power was ultimately eliminated and everything about the country was changed for the better, as well as the country's practices.

Furthermore, I believe covid-19 is the most intriguing thing to ever happen to this world, most definitely in my lifetime. The virus itself is unprecedented, from its symptoms to its effect on the world itself. The virus has changed the way of life as we know it and it will change our future, or at least our near future as well. The virus is testing the world at the moment. Testing how we can react to such a terrible and abrupt situation. Testing our patience and cooperation as a whole and, in my opinion, will change the way we approach life for the better. We will emerge from this stronger, wiser and more equipped for future endeavors similar to this.