Will Corona Virus become an epidemic?

Prafful Saxena

Self-published Author, blogger and senior accounts executive in an NBFC

The definition of “epidemic” is an unusual/unexpected increase in the number of cases of a particular disease. The definition of “outbreak” is very similar. The two used to be synonymous. “Outbreak” was considered less threatening than “epidemic” and was the preferred term in communicating with the public. In the last several decades, the two have been differentiated on the basis of scale - usually geographic. However there is no specific criteria and, like beauty, it is in the eye of the beholder.

I doubt any government agency will refer to the situation as an epidemic any time soon. There is certainly no reason refers to the few imported cases in the U.S. as an epidemic since infection took place elsewhere. Although many Chinese public health officials were trained or worked in the U.S., I don’t know that they use these terms or make the distinction. If this were happening in the U.S., it would probably be called an “outbreak” in communications but public health officials would be thinking “epidemic”.

The evidence on human-to-human transmission is very spotty. The first report was on January 15, when a husband-and-wife pair became infected. Husband worked at the wet market that was the origin of this Coronavirus. He got sick first. Wife fell sick a couple of days later. Wife swore she never went to the wet market. It could be human-to-human transmission, but it could also be that the husband brought something infected back home to share with his wife. So it was jotted down as a “maybe”.

Conclusive evidence of human-to-human transmission came on January 20, when 13 people in Guangdong province tested positive. 11 went to Wuhan. 2 never went there but were the spouses of those who went. So this was the first confirmation of human-to-human transmission in family clusters.

Same day, a dozen neurosurgeons and nurses operated on a scheduled open-cranial brain surgery on an elderly patient in Wuhan. Patient was asymptomatic before the surgery, developed a fever after. More neurosurgeons rushed in to figure out what happened and then, tested positive for Coronavirus. Barn, practically everybody in the surgery theater, a dozen of them, all got it. So now you have evidence that medical staff are particularly vulnerable, because they are exposed to aerosol and they have to do those intubation stuff.

But then, you have that guy in Japan. Guy became feverish in Wuhan on 1/3. He took a 3-hour flight to Japan on 6th Jan and was admitted to the hospital on 10th Jan. Recovered and discharged on 15th Jan. Met with hundreds of people, and scooped up with 300 people for a 3 hour flight. That was 2 weeks ago so the incubation period is well-past. Nobody else got it.

Compare this with measles. One will get measles if he just walks through a room where there was a measles patient who left the room 20 minutes before he come in. One kid gets it in class, half of the class goes down with him.

Back to China, almost all positive cases are either in Wuhan, or on people who went to / came from Wuhan. This specificity to Wuhan is an indication that this viral pneumonia is not very contagious, at least so far, because Wuhan is a major transit hub with a quarter million people going in-and-out DAILY. If this is very contagious, you’d have secondary centers of infection all over the place by now. The Chinese authority just announced that the whole city of 10 million people is under quarantine. Average incubation time for this virus is 7 days. Say you want to be on the safe side and call it 14 days.

Right now, we just don’t have enough information right now to come to a conclusion. If human-to-human transmission is so inefficient, how did all these cases come about? Are people still eating wild bat soup or something (i.e., active source in Wuhan)? Also how fast is the virus mutating in human hosts?

Now, I realise that’s not a real word. But it does pretty much fit the description of the coronavirus outbreak. The media has put so much pressure on the coronavirus that people are so misinformed, and thus over-reacting. Has anyone noticed that the only news being covered is the coronavirus? What with Trump getting impeached, the Australian fires and then floods going away and Brexit pretty much resolving there isn’t that much international news to report on. So people are turning to the virus and making huge deals about small statistics. The Flu has a 0.5% death rate and the coronavirus has a 2% death rate. But those statistics aren’t entirely true.

People in Wuhan and mainland China have been quarantined, and are too scared to ask for help when they get flu-like symptoms - or the corona. They really only get to the hospitals when it becomes so bad they might die, which is why the death rate is so high. People who don’t go to the hospital don’t get recorded. Over 85% of the people who have got the coronavirus acquired it from someone inside their family. That means that only 15% of the people who have been recorded have actually developed it from outside. And the virus is not an airborne disease, so why people wear masks baffles me.
Truth is it is a rather meaningless distinction, of significance mostly to the lay audience. I viewed things as: green light - business as usual - the usual flow of endemic cases with possibly a few late cases from a previous emergency that is dying out, you go home at the regular time and plan for the weekend; yellow light - something may be going on, a small blip in cases, an unconfirmed report of something unusual - sort of transient state that requires attention, you put some routine work on the back burner, maybe stay a bit late, make a few calls to local health care providers or neighboring health departments or send someone around to check things out. - it may go back to green or move on to the next stage; that is red light - the shit has hit the fan, people are getting sick and it is definitely unexpected, you work really late. A few people die and you kick it up even more, When you finally do get to bed, you lay there thinking if there is something you missed or should have done until you fall asleep due to exhaustion. You wake up a few hours later, kiss the wife goodbye (if you lucky enough to go home that night - otherwise you sleep at your desk), get dressed and go back to work. You are so busy that whether the problem is an outbreak or an epidemic is the furthest thing from your mind. You did not create this mess but it is your job to clean it up.

The public health system in the U.S. and most developed countries are on yellow light right now and taking steps to keep from going into red. However, they are working like it has already. People should believe in God, and be afraid to allow themselves too much. Divine laws are the most correct laws for people by which people live for millennia. And these communist atheists who do not believe in God are permissive. Each religion has its own prohibitions on the use of certain products. Christians have their own list of allowed and forbidden foods, Jews have Kasher food, Muslims have Halal food. And you look what these Chinese atheists eat? Bat interspersed with a snake and here is the answer, their permissiveness led to the fact that God begins to punish them. Not fearing God, the Uyghurs were driven into genocide. Christians are forbidden to go to church, and even their Buddhists, Failugun, were forbidden to meditate in the morning. Where is democracy in this society? The virus that punishes them is the result of the activity of this totalitarian communist regime. It is a pity the simple people of China, who are not guilty in anything, but suffer for such a godless government.

Novel CoV now meets the epidemic criteria. It is likely to kill hundreds of thousands in the quarantined region. While this sounds like a staggering toll garden variety influenza predictably will take down nearly 200,000 in China this season. On average a flu season sees deaths numbering +/- 650,000 worldwide.

The Chinese government has moved heaven and earth to contain n-CoV in Wuhan and several other quarantined areas. Those efforts put a diagnosed 99.3% of infections in those regions - likely upwards of that percentage of all cases - since there are bound to be substantial numbers of cases who just bundled up at home hoping they had a common chest cold or the flu. In the rest of the world where we're warned such is unlikely to be the case. And I imagine there'll be many succumbing to n-CoV after suffering the 'common' flu that makes the rounds seasonally. If health authorities beyond the PRC do their jobs there's no reason for a pandemic - when a contagion goes epidemic in a number of regions on different continents.

**How effective is Hydroxychloroquine?**

It's a tablet which is affected on corona virus. All the doctors are working on it. Doctors use it as a mixture with the some other tablets. Many people doubt about the Chinese government and Chinese people because there are indeed some cases of concealing the epidemic in January in Wuhan. The local government in Wuhan didn’t understand the seriousness of this COVID-19; they don’t want the economy to stop. This is totally understandable because in China stable and the increase of GDP are the main criteria for evaluating the leader. They want to keep it quiet so nobody gets panic and they can keep their position. I have to say that those poor decisions they make are one of the reasons why the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan.

Actually President Trump did the same thing in March, “this is just flu”, it’s kind of disappointing, many people in China believe US is way more developed and they should do much better with all of their advanced technology. But as soon as the central government discovered the severity of the outbreak, things have changed. Wuhan locks down on Jan 23 and the government builds new hospitals, medical assistance came from all over the country. One can search for 火神山 and 雷神山 in google, it’s amazing, hospitals build in 7 days. The government order people to stay at home and wear masks.

It is those strict rules and immediate responses that protect Chinese people from the SARS-CoV-2 and buy time for people all around the world and the same reason why China doesn’t have that much death number than the US or Italy. If the rest of the world does the same thing earlier, it can have much less death number.
This figure from NEJM shows China notified the world of coronavirus in Early January. Honestly, I don’t think China is responsible for the world outbreak. It’s like “I told you so, but nobody listens”. Maybe the western is too confident. The Chinese government is not perfect and has many problems. But maybe it’s time for some people to put down prejudice put down that political BS or ideology and focus on saving lives. Chinese people are not bad guys, we want peace and a good life just like you. Don’t believe those media entirely, they are always biased and only report news they want to. Both for Chinese media like CCTV and US media like CNN fox etc.

How will WHO confirm if the corona virus is completely stopped from spreading?

With decades of experience behind them in assisting countries to cope with Epidemics and Pandemics, and particularly in declaring specific countries/Zones free from an Epidemic, the WHO has clearly laid down methods to wind up an anti-epidemic Health Drive. It would be weeks and months after the last reported case of the epidemic that such a declaration would be made. The intervening period is used to do random testing of the General population to rule out camouflaged presence of the germs/viruses. All reasonable precautions are taken to ensure that no residuary presence goes unnoticed.

Is there a place which is not infected with the corona virus?

According to North Korea, they don’t have the virus. There are a few countries that are still not reporting COVID-19. But these are shrinking on the WHO situation reports every day. And of course North Korea has it. They are probably full of it. A foreign worker has reported his company was paid a huge bonus to finish a hospital in NK way before scheduled & his company is now negotiating a new hospital close to it. So why there is rush if there is no infection?