What is a Pandemic?

It is defined as an epidemic that has spread over multiple countries or continents; it occurs when there is an increase in exposure and transmission of a disease in a community.

An endemic is the baseline level of a disease. This is the normal number of cases in a particular community. Examples include the opioid crisis in southern West Virginia and chicken pox.

An epidemic is a sudden increase in an infectious disease in a community, a population, or a region. Examples include typhoid fever and diphtheria.

An example of a pandemic is the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a problem that has reached a national level. Not only is COVID-19 a localized issue in southern West Virginia, but it is also an issue in different states, countries, and continents.

The epidemic of COVID-19 began in Wuhan China, in late 2019. At this point it was an epidemic. When it began spreading to more countries and eventually across the world, it became a pandemic.

H1N1 (Spanish Flu):
In 1918 the H1N1 flu virus was the cause of the deadliest pandemic of the 20th century. It targeted those younger than 5 years old, 20-40-year-olds, and those older than 65. There were no vaccines or treatments available at the time. The number of deaths was estimated to be 50 million worldwide.

H2N2 (Asian Flu):
In 1957-1958 a new influenza A (H2N2) emerged in East Asia. The estimated number of deaths were 1.1 million worldwide.

New Novel Influenza A (H1N1) (Swine Flu):
In 2009 a new novel influenza A (H1N1) emerged in the United States and quickly spread across the world. This virus contained a combination of genes not previously seen in animals or humans. The CDC estimated that 151,700-575,400 people worldwide died, and globally 80% of those deaths were people younger than 65.

Covid-19

December 2019: First identified in Wuhan, China
January 2020: First case of COVID-19 in the US
February 2020: First COVID-19 death in the US
March 11th, 2020: WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic
March 24th: U.S. National Guard activated in all 50 states. U.S. reaches 50,000 coronavirus cases
April 2020: CDC begins testing for coronavirus immunity. U.S. coronavirus death toll passes 50,000
June 2020: Trials for COVID-19 vaccine begin in South Africa. The U.S. acquires over 500,000 doses of Remdesivir from Gilead
July 2020: WHO acknowledges evidence suggesting airborne coronavirus transmission. ICUs in hospitals across Florida and Arizona reach full capacity due to COVID-19 cases
August 2020: Moderna and the federal government negotiate a deal to supply the US with 100 million doses of its experimental COVID-19 vaccine. The FDA issues emergency authorization for plasma treatment
September 2020: US passes 7 million COVID-19 cases. Moderna’s vaccine shows acceptable safety
November 2020: US becomes the 1st country to reach 10 million cases. Pfizer, and Moderna vaccine results shows more than 90 percent effective in preventing COVID-19
March 2021: US passes 500,000 deaths and 29.5 million cases.

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See Reference for full, in-detail, COVID-19 event timeline.

References


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