

100 Years Later: A Pandemic in 2018

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the 1918 Pandemic Flu that infected one-third of the world's population. How does this devastating outbreak compare to today's global conditions?

1918 PANDEMIC FLU

Zoonotic Diseases

New viral threat crossed over from animals to humans.



Person-to-Person

Poor sanitation and limited health services facilitated infectious disease transfer.



Transportation

Migrant workers and WWI troops transported by trains and ships contributed to the spread of the flu to Europe and around the globe.



Treatment

Lack of vaccines, diagnostics, and antibiotics limited the ability to contain the outbreak.



2018 HYPOTHETICAL

Zoonotic Diseases

Population density and urban sprawl increases risks of viral threats crossing over from animals to humans.



Person-to-Person

With the population three times that of 1918, overcrowding and megacities enhance disease transmission.



Global Transmission

High frequency global travel accelerates disease spread.



Treatment

Ability to treat diseases has improved, but the current infrastructure is inadequate.



Bioterrorism?

The Clade X exercise, simulating a pandemic caused by terrorists, predicted 150 million fatalities worldwide in the first year of a pandemic without a countermeasure, three times higher than the estimated total deaths from the 1918 Spanish Flu.

(Source John Hopkins Center for Health Security)

Global Casualties: Spanish Flu vs Clade X Exercise

150
Million (Clade X)

50
Million
(1918 Spanish Flu)