



Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.

COVID-19 and the 1918 Influenza: comparing the physical, social and mental health impacts of two pandemics



Learning Objectives

- Learn about the meaning of a pandemic and the origin of both the 1918 Spanish Influenza and COVID-19
- Understand how American society responded to both pandemics as they spread through the country
- Assess the impact both pandemics had/are having on society, and the physical health and mental health of Americans

What is a pandemic?

How is it different from an epidemic?

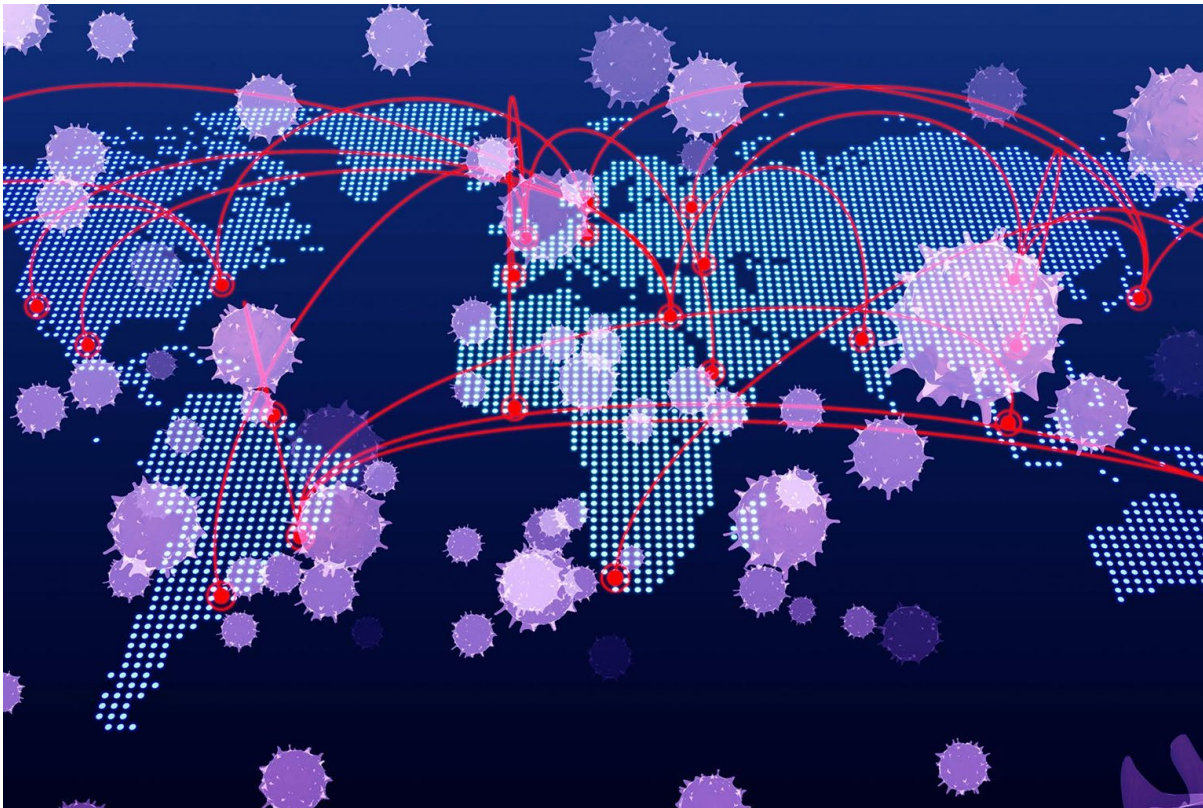


Photo
credit:
WEBMD

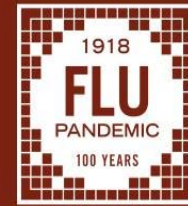
Where did the Influenza of 1918-19 originate and why is it called the Spanish Flu?

Where did the COVID-19 virus originate?



(photo credit: Marketwatch photo illustration/Getty Images)

PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACT



How many people died
worldwide as a result of the
1918-19 Influenza?

How many Americans died?



When young healthy soldiers began getting sick by the dozens in March, 1918, military physicians were unsure about what was causing it. (photo credit: National Archives)



A second surge began when the troops returned home at the end of World War I and celebrated their victory with parades. This second wave in the fall of 1918 proved to be much deadlier than the first wave for Americans. (Photo credit: Library of Congress)

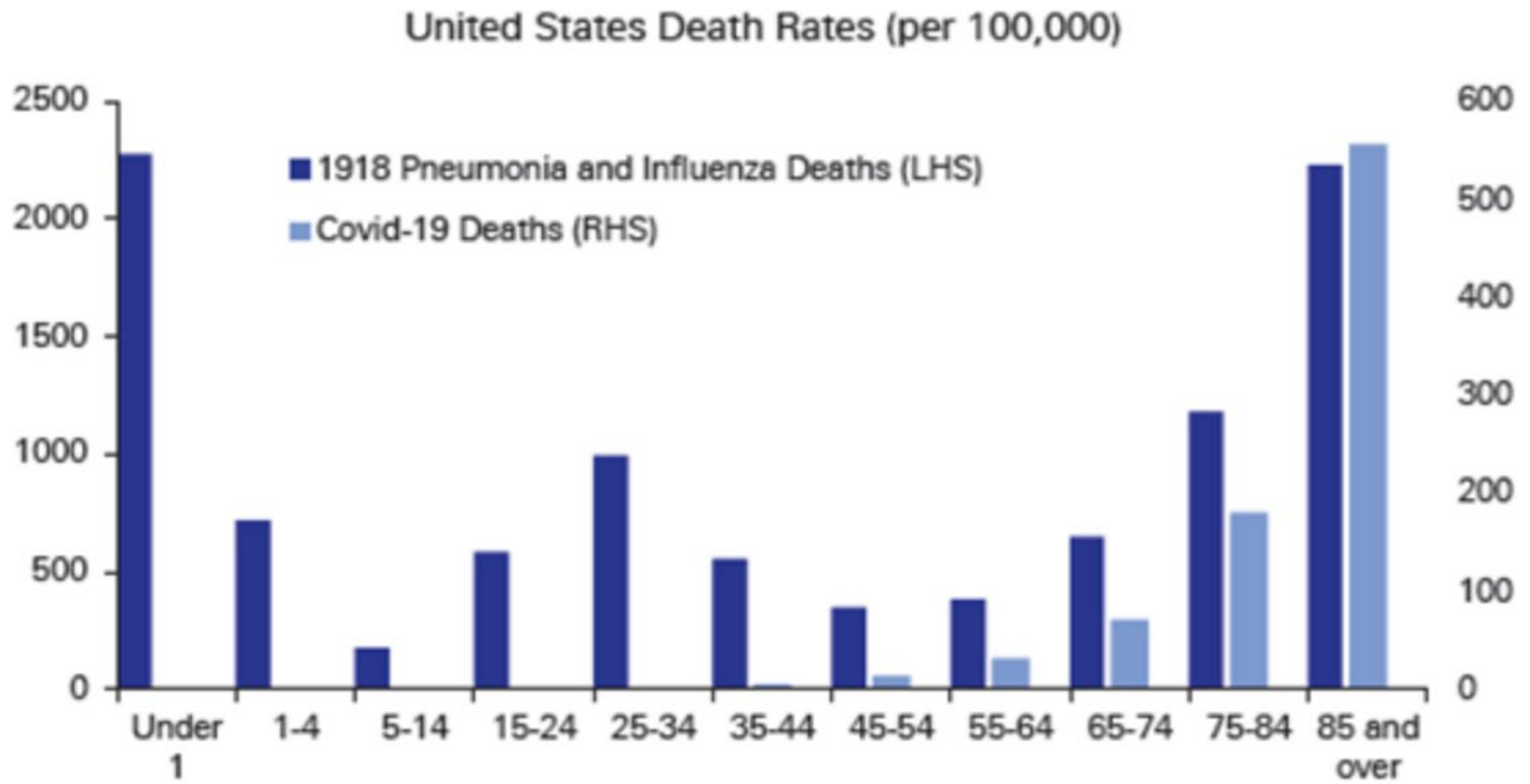
Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center



The Johns Hopkins site includes daily updates on global, national and local cases, deaths, testing, and more surrounding COVID-19. Open the link above to see what is happening around the world in real time.

PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACT

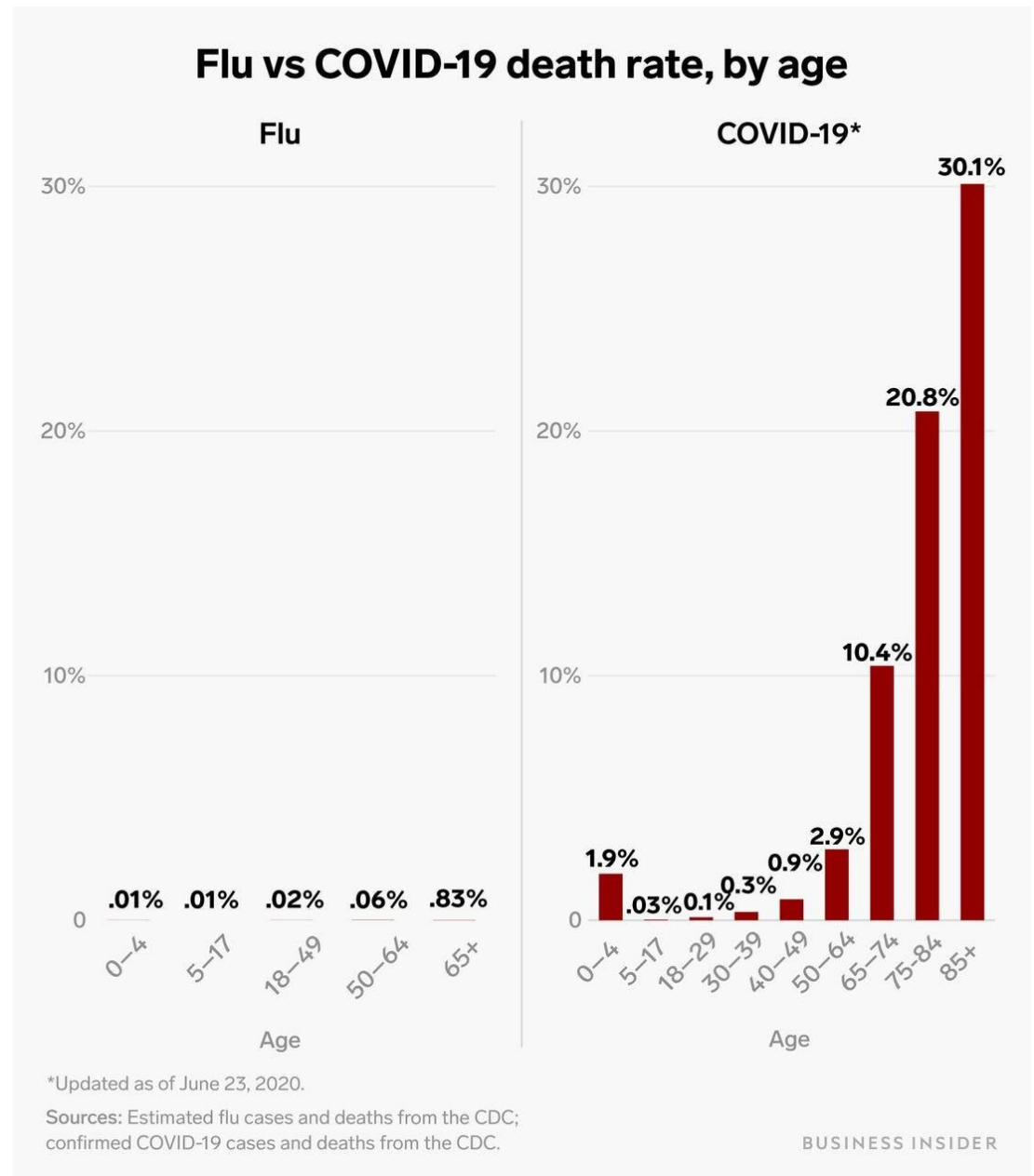
What age groups had the largest percentage of deaths for the 1918 Influenza and COVID-19?



Source: Newswatch

PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACT

What does this chart tell you about the relationship between age and the death rate of COVID-19 versus the seasonal flu?



INFLUENZA

Spread by Droplets sprayed from Nose and Throat

Cover each COUGH and SNEEZE with handkerchief.

Spread by contact.

AVOID CROWDS.

If possible, **WALK TO WORK.**

Do not spit on floor or sidewalk.

Do not use common drinking cups and common towels.

Avoid excessive fatigue.

If taken ill, go to bed and send for a doctor.

The above applies also to colds, bronchitis, pneumonia, and tuberculosis.

Compare the materials sent out by the national government for both pandemics. The 1918 guidelines are on the left and the COVID-19 guidelines on the right.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORONAVIRUS GUIDELINES FOR AMERICA

DO YOUR PART TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS

Even if you are young, or otherwise healthy, you are at risk and your activities can increase the risk for others. It is critical that you do your part to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Work or engage in schooling **FROM HOME** whenever possible.

IF YOU WORK IN A CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INDUSTRY, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule. You and your employers should follow CDC guidance to protect your health at work.

AVOID SOCIAL GATHERINGS in groups of more than 10 people.

Avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts — **USE DRIVE-THRU, PICKUP, OR DELIVERY OPTIONS.**

AVOID DISCRETIONARY TRAVEL, shopping trips, and social visits.

DO NOT VISIT nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE:

- Wash your hands, especially after touching any frequently used item or surface.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.

CORONAVIRUS.GOV

The United States Public Health Service issued this pamphlet in October of 1918 as part of a public education campaign to slow the progress of the disease. Credit: Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division

The federal Coronavirus Task Force issued this PSA in 2020 about COVID-19.

PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACT

How might the way we treat an influenza pandemic differ in 2020 than a century ago?



History.com Children were taught to gargle to help stop the influenza in 1918. (photo credit: History.com)



Walter Reed
Hospital Flu Ward
in Maryland, 1918

(photo credit:
Library of
Congress)



A health care professional wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) takes the temperature of a potential COVID-19 patient. (photo credit: BCBS.com)

KEY TIMES to Practice Social Distancing

✓ **Inside your home** when someone has, or thinks they have, COVID-19
If possible, stay at least 6 feet away.



✓ **Outside your home**
Stay at least 6 feet away from people outside of your household in indoor/outdoor spaces.
Stay out of crowded places if possible.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

CS317639-A 07/05/2020

CDC Public Service Announcement, 2020

SOCIAL IMPACT

What similarities or differences do you notice in how people interacted on three slides about social impact?



Baseball players wearing protective masks during the Influenza of 1918. (photo Credit George Rinhard/Corbis, via Getty Images)



Baseball game in the summer of 2020. (Photo credit: Bloomberg.com)

SOCIAL IMPACT



In San Francisco, police court was held outside. The city Board of Health issued recommendations to the public on how to avoid contracting the influenza. These included avoiding using mass transportation during the rush hour, avoiding crowds and paying attention to personal hygiene. (photo credit: CDC)



In Seattle, Washington, anyone who wanted to ride the street car was required to wear a mask in late 1918. (photo credit: Library of Congress)



A young child wears a mask in 2020 (photo credit: phila.gov)

SOCIAL IMPACT



Schools closed for several weeks in Denver, Colorado in the fall of 1918. (photo credit: Library of Congress)

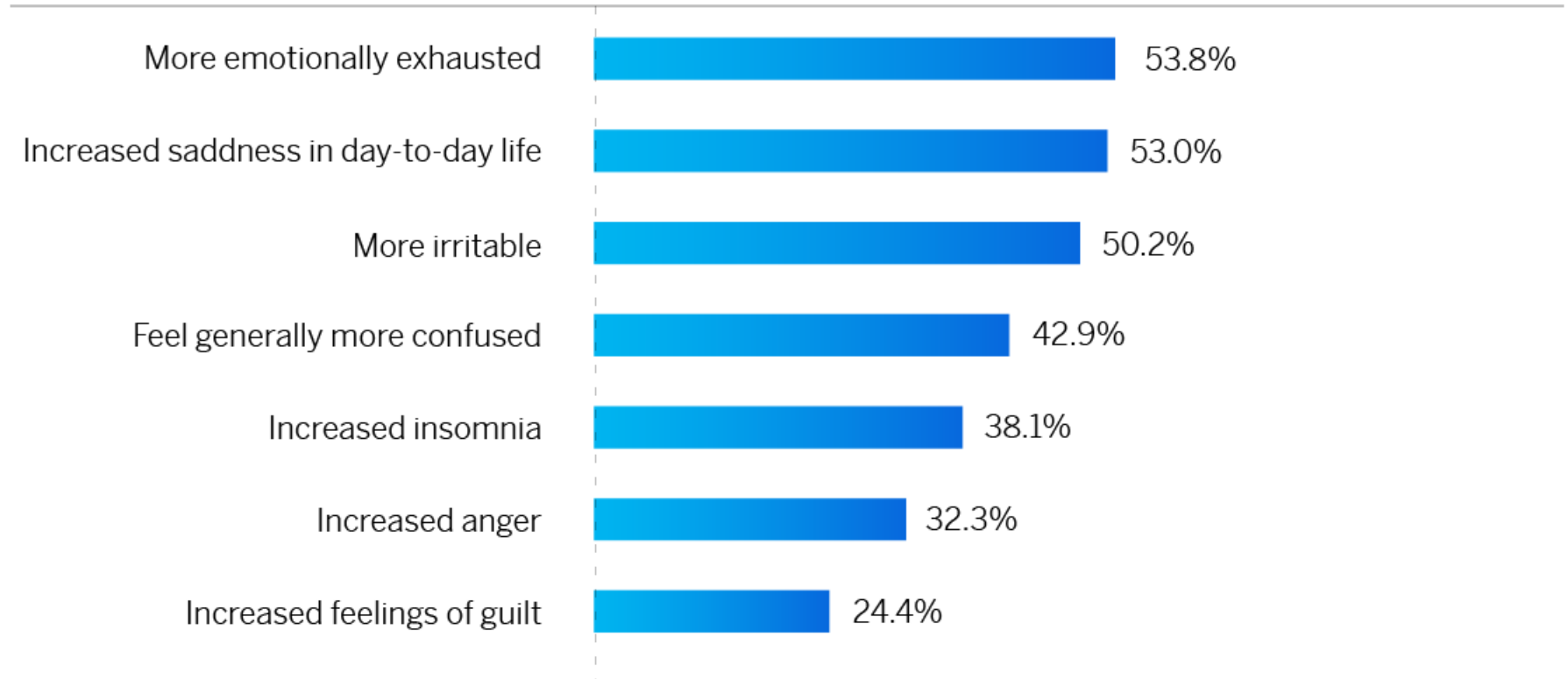


Most schools went to virtual platforms for education when the pandemic began in the United States.

(photo credit: nbcnews.com)

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

Mental health symptoms since COVID-19 outbreak



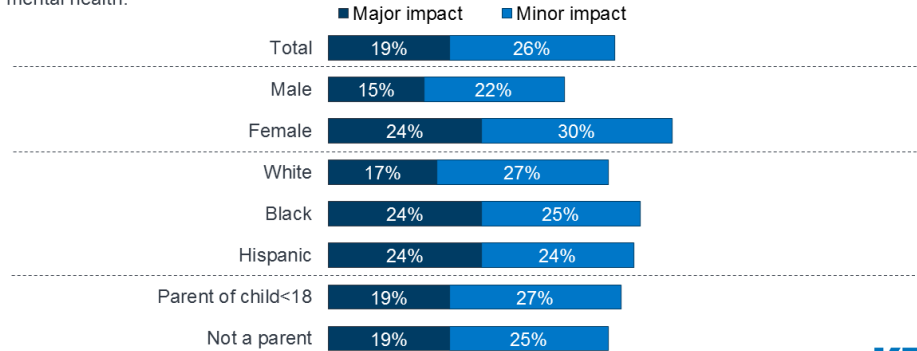
Source: Qualtrics.com

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

Figure 8

Significant Shares Say The Coronavirus Has Had A Negative Impact On Their Mental Health

Percent who say they feel that worry or stress related to coronavirus has had a negative impact on their mental health:

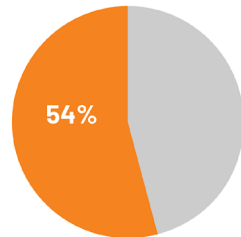


SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted March 25-30, 2020). See topline for full question wording.

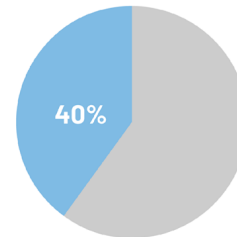


More Than Half Who Lost a Job or Income Say the Coronavirus Crisis is Harming Their Mental Health

Share who say worry and stress is having a negative impact on their mental health



of those who **have** lost job or income



of those who **have not** lost job or income

Graph source: Kaiser Family Foundation

There is less information available about the mental health impact of both pandemics than about the physical health impact.

Why do you think that is the case?

What impact do you think the Influenza of 1918-19 had on the mental health of children? How about the current COVID-19 pandemic?



Children wear flu masks in Starke, Fl., during the Spanish influenza outbreak of 1918. (photo credit: State Archives of Florida -1918)



A child working independently in an in-person, socially distanced school setting (photo credit: UNICEF.org)

Resources for extension projects

The Center for Disease Control has a site dedicated to the Influenza of 1918-19 which includes an historical overview, photographs, a timeline and personal stories by survivors. It can be accessed through this [link](#).

Cities throughout New York State were severely impacted by the Influenza of 1918-19. The University of Michigan Center for the History of Medicine and Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, has archived stories about its impact on five cities in the state: New York, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. These news stories can be downloaded from the following [link](#).

The New York Times has published a site with information and photographs from epidemics over the past century. It is available at this [link](#).

The Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center updates its global statistics on COVID-19 daily. The site includes numerous maps, charts and graphs as well as information and testing, tracking and efforts to discover an effective vaccine. The site is at this [link](#).



Thank you!

We hope you found this lesson comparing the pandemics interesting and informative. Visit our website below for more lesson plans and resources for educators, parents and students.

www.mentalhealthEDnys.org



@MHANYSinc



@MHAacrossNYS