

Dr. Fauci's recurring disease 'nightmares' often don't materialize

Dr. Anthony Fauci says Covid-19 is "his worst nightmare."

It might be his worst, but it's certainly not his first. He has spent his professional career warning of nightmare scenarios, many which never materialized.

Nobody did more to kick off the U.S. AIDS alarm than Fauci, who was sole author of a 1983 piece in the prestigious JAMA in which he declared the disease might be transmissible by "routine close contact, as within a family household." Fauci shortly thereafter ascended to the position he holds to this day as the head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Fauci continued to raise the AIDS alarm. In 1987, columnist George Will asserted on TV that the heterosexual AIDS threat was overstated. "That's not correct," Fauci protested, followed by a prediction that the percentage of AIDS cases contracted via heterosexual transmission (then at 4%) would rise to 10% by 1991. That rate never rose above 4%.

Fauci repeated the pattern during successive disease panics, such as when he declared 16 years ago that we're "due" for "massive person-to-person" spread of Avian flu H5N1. How massive? While Fauci didn't define "massive," according to one estimate by a CDC modeler "even in the best-case scenarios" it would "cause 2 to 7 million deaths" worldwide. British epidemiologist Neil Ferguson (whose prediction of 500,000 coronavirus deaths in Britain and 2 million in the U.S. would lead to economically ruinous nationwide lockdowns in both countries) scaled that back to "only" 200,000. As it turned out, the disease killed 440 worldwide.

More recently, Fauci sounded the threat of the Zika virus, demanding billions more in taxpayer funds. It barely touched two U.S. states before burning out on its own.

Fauci's current "nightmare" was expounded upon during a taped interview at the

Biotechnology Innovation Organization's annual conference. According to The Hill, Fauci said the virus met all four criteria for a nightmare scenario: It is new, respiratory-borne, easily transmissible, and has a significant degree of illness or mortality.

Fauci also said the virus surprised him with "how rapidly it just took over the planet." However, it appears to spread with the same speed as seasonal flu, which covers the world map annually. And, of course, seasonal flu is also respiratory and has significant mortality.

An inarguable nightmare would have been the original World Health Organization mortality estimate of 3.4%, as opposed to the recent CDC "best guess" estimate of about 0.26%. Or it might be the top range of the model showing 100,000-240,000 U.S. Covid-19 deaths Fauci was using in late March, before slashing it literally just days later.

"When is it going to end?" Fauci asked in the taped interview, answering himself, "We're still at the beginning of it." Yet, according to the Worldometer Web site, Covid-19 worldwide deaths peaked way back on April 17 and are now several thousand a day below that apex.

In the U.S., cases peaked on April 24 and deaths on April 21.

That doesn't give us an "end" to Covid-19 as a disease, which picked up new life when the Southern Hemisphere turned cooler. But it signals that like all epidemics before it, it is indeed following the essentially symmetrical curve of "Farr's Law" and will continue downward until it reaches its "endemic" phase.

Meanwhile, since 1900 we have had three flu pandemics more lethal than coronavirus. At age 79, Dr. Fauci has personally lived through two.

The "Asian flu" of 1957-1958 (H2N2) had a death rate of about 0.67%, well over twice that the CDC estimates for Covid-19. Asian Flu killed an estimated 116,000 Americans and 1.1 million worldwide, according to the CDC. That's 223,000 Americans and 3 million worldwide adjusted to today's populations. To date, the deaths of 115,000 Americans and 415,000 people worldwide are attributed to Covid-19.

The "Hong Kong flu" of 1968-1969 (H3N2) killed an estimated 100,000 Americans

and 1 million worldwide, or 165,000 Americans and 2.1 million people worldwide adjusted to today's populations.

Those estimates are not for deaths "with" the virus or suspected as having been caused by the virus even without a test, as the CDC explicitly allows in its COVID-19 guidelines. They indicate death directly from the flu.

Yet life in those times continued essentially as normal. For neither flu pandemic were there mandatory facemasks in the U.S., no "social distancing," no quarantining of the healthy.

Those prior pandemics without panic caused no recessions, much less the possibility of a worldwide depression. Running their courses without months-long quarantines of the healthy, those pandemics didn't trigger rises in alcohol and other drug abuse, domestic violence, depression, and suicide, or what Fauci himself describes as potentially "irreparable damage."

Vastly worse was the "Spanish flu" of 1918-1919, during the lifetime of Fauci's parents and even a few people still alive today. It killed about 50 million worldwide, including 675,000 Americans, equivalent to 209 million globally and 2.1 million Americans today. And that was during a horrific world war with violent carnage our generation cannot begin to imagine. In fact, it's quite possible that the war turned a bad flu into the horror it became by packing men together in camps, boxcars, trenches, hospitals, and elsewhere.

Now that's a nightmare — and they faced it without any hope of a flu vaccine (the first would be decades later), without pneumonia vaccines, without antibiotics for secondary infections, without respirators, and even without intravenous feeding that has saved countless millions of lives with nourishment and hydration.

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