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Epidemic Spread of COVID-19

World Civilizations I

Recently, our world has been shifted and changed drastically due to the COVID-19 epidemic. The term “COVID-19” was created as a shortened version of the scientific name for the disease, SARS-CoV-2. The origin of COVID-19 had a moment of questioning, however, according to John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health “a natural spillover emergence from a seafood wholesale market in Wuhan was the early epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic.” John Hopkins further explains that when COVID-19 first began, there were two “lineages” of SARS-CoV-2. One of the variants of COVID-19 turned into the world-wide pandemic that we all know, and the other variant died out.

Similar to many other viruses and diseases, the various strains of COVID-19 stem from different animals. The original strain of coronavirus originated from bats carrying the virus. John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health also contests that “[Scientists] got down to the exact stall of where one of the positive environmental samples had come from. There had been a picture taken a couple of months prior where a raccoon dog had been sitting in said stall. [...] We think it’s a bat virus that spilled over into an animal population. This is a very permissive virus, what they call a ‘generalist virus,’ that’s able to infect lots of different animals.” From animals, the virus spread from Wuhan, China to the rest of China into Europe and the United States. Since the virus is transmittable through air droplets, it quickly spread through people during travel and trade.

This evidence directly correlates to the textbook, *Frameworks of World History: Networks, Hierarchies, Culture, Volume One: To 1550* by Stephen Morillo. In Chapter 2 of the text, Morillo displays how the beginning and shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture plays into the spread of deadly diseases. On page 50, it states, “Domestication of animals therefore established regional populations that slowly accumulated diseases. [...] Epidemics often broke out when unusually large crowds gather for periods of time [...]” (Morillo). However, the difference between the spread of COVID-19 and the first diseases from when animals started to become domesticated is the speed of how it spreads. Since in our modern world we have access to travel and trade faster between continents and countries, diseases can spread faster. When animals first started to become domesticated and large groups of people would start to gather, diseases spread only among those groups of people and took longer to spread out into different towns and villages. Page 51 of the text states, “The final consequence of regional development of crowd diseases was a pattern in which major epidemics struck when different regions came in contact through trade, migration, or the movement of armies.” (Morillo) As trade and travel increased and became quicker to do, diseases also began to spread quicker as well.

Citations

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2022/origins-of-sars-cov-2>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>