

NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

Press Release

For immediate release

Contact: Craig Lewis
2861 Duke Street, Suite 36
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703.370.9510 / Fax: 703.370.9514
media@npg.org / www.NPG.org



New NPG Forum Paper Examines Past Pandemics in Relation to the Current COVID-19 Crisis

Smaller Human Population and Social Distancing May Be the Best Way to Fight Infectious Disease

Alexandria, VA, (June 23, 2020): The coronavirus pandemic continues to wreak havoc nationwide as states individually direct their citizens towards a safe and functional re-opening process. A new Forum paper, released by Negative Population Growth, Inc., titled [*Coronavirus and Human Population Growth*](#), asks readers to consider an alternative perspective on why the virus transferred from wildlife to humans. Author Edwin S. Rubenstein suggests that COVID-19 was caused by human activity. Rubenstein begins his work stating: “The coronavirus pandemic is a human tragedy that could kill millions before running its course.” He quickly discusses the widely accepted belief that the virus was transmitted to humans by wild animals, specifically, bats, drawing on the history of other deadly viruses that were also triggered by human-animal contact to zero-in on the true cause of the virus: human activity. Rubenstein posits that COVID-19 has anthropogenic origins and delivers some shocking numbers to relay his point, saying: “There are now more than 7.8 billion people on the planet; the U.N. predicts the population will reach 9.8 billion by 2050 and 11.2 billion by 2100 at the current growth rates. The unchecked expansion into new habitats is bringing humans into contact with wildlife pathogens against which we have no immunity.”

In discussing the slow disorganized response to the coronavirus by world leaders, Rubenstein touches on the lack of action following the September 2019 report on pandemic preparedness issued by The World Bank and World Health Organization. Covering the varied levels of response by countries around the world, Rubenstein surmises: “There is no single reason why some places are hit hard and others missed. A country’s average age, racial composition, culture, climate, testing rate – and luck – all influence the number of deaths from this virus. But the one overarching factor is population size and density.”

Rubenstein then spotlights population density in connection to the spread of disease, noting: “Humans rarely come into contact with wildlife, so, in theory, such pathogens should not pose much danger to people. But the pathogens can leap from wildlife to humans by first infecting animals that humans do come into contact with, like domestic pigs. The link requires that humans, their domesticated food animals, and wildlife, all live in close proximity, such as occurs when burgeoning populations push people into areas where humans rarely, if ever, ventured.” Another factor is the impact of genetically modifying livestock. Highlighting the issue, Rubenstein explains: “To make matters worse, selection for specific genes in farmed animals (for desirable traits like large chicken breasts) makes these animals genetically identical. That makes it easy for a virus to spread from animal

to animal without encountering any genetic variants that might stop it in its tracks.”

Distinguishing what makes COVID-19 stand out in comparison to previous infectious diseases that have plagued humans in recent generations, Rubenstein states: “Prior to COVID-19, most of us assumed mankind had triumphed over infectious diseases, thanks to vaccines, antibiotics, and antiviral drugs... Turns out we weren’t paying attention. Hundreds of new infectious diseases emerged in the late 20th century, most caused by viruses or bacteria that spread from animals to people.” Adding to that, he says: “Human population growth enables this transfer by increasing the likelihood that humans encounter new viruses for which they have no immunity.”

Rubenstein ends his work delivering a somber truth: “A desperate rush for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments is on. Over the long run, the increased social distancing that accompanies a smaller human population may be our only reliable way of containing future pandemics.”

Founded in 1972, NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to educating the American public and political leaders regarding the damaging effects of population growth. We believe that our nation is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long-range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. NPG advocates the adoption of its [Proposed National Population Policy](#), with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today’s. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at NPG.org, follow us on Facebook [@NegativePopulationGrowth](#) or follow us on Twitter [@npg_org](#).