

A MESSAGE CALLED “COVID-19”

An NPG Commentary

by Greeley G. (“Gregg”) Miklashek, MD

I am a retired physician and COVID-19 survivor, and I am here to deliver a message contained in the heart of this pandemic. I am also the author of *Stress R Us*, a PDF of which is contained in the MAHB.stanford.edu e-library, and also a Cassandra, sounding the clarion call initially delivered by Paul R. Ehrlich in his prescient 1968 book, *THE POPULATION BOMB*. We are now at the confluence of all three in our current pandemic: COVID-19, the medical consequences of human overpopulation, and the rapidly increasing worldwide consequences of our continued overproduction of 206,000 new innocent souls daily. No one, with any medical training and experience can possibly deny that COVID-19 is dangerous and spreads rapidly in unprotected, crowded human populations. We should all now be aware that those of us with pre-existing medical conditions are at the greatest risk of a fatal outcome, even with heroic, exhausting, expensive medical intervention. So, how many of us in the US have these pre-existing medical conditions? Just a handful of oldsters tucked away out of sight in nursing homes?

Numerous medical sources state that 55% of adult Americans have at least one serious, chronic medical condition (hypertension, heart disease, cancer, lung disease, obesity/type II diabetes, impaired immune system, etc.), and 80% of those with these conditions are over the age of 50. Why are we so sick, and vulnerable to COVID-19? The answer to that rarely-asked question should be all the more evident in this pandemic: Population Density Stress is Killing Us Now! (the title of a previous NPG Forum paper and also a blog post of mine on the MAHB library). What is “population density stress”? I have gathered the following activators of the well-known “stress response” under this heading: crowding in urban centers packed with strangers, the loss of our long-established secure and reassuring social order – the clan/band, exposure to a constant barrage of stressful environmental stimuli (noise, movement, fearful images, violence, food/water insecurity, etc.), estrangement from the soothing rhythms of the intact natural world, and, now, fear of contagion (COVID-19). The details of how this set of modern “stressors” is causing our “diseases of civilization” can be found in my book, referenced earlier here. Our over-active stress response results in blood and tissue elevations of the stress hormone cortisol, which is known to destroy the very T-lymphocytes critical to our immune response and necessary to participate in the destruction of viruses like COVID-19. Thus, COVID-19 and our vulnerability to its potentially fatal infection can be thought of as a direct consequence of population density stress.

So, what proof of this theory do I have? Well, again, the extensive details of a massive research effort and long clinical medical career treating 25,000 patients and writing 1,000,000 Rxs are to be

found in my book, *Stress R Us*. However, there exists a massive amount of supporting information to be found in published medical reports by physicians treating isolated clans/bands of contemporary Hunter-Gatherers throughout the 20th century. Did you know that 600,000 of these shy, retreating, rarely encountered fellows are still living as all of our pre-agricultural revolution H-G ancestors did 6,000-10,000 years ago? To summarize, NONE of our "diseases of civilization" are found in these populations. Furthermore, you and I and all of our fellow humans share essentially the same genes, 99.5% identical. Only one other mammal on the planet has this degree of genetic identity, and that's the oh, so homely blind mole rat. So, if you're following here, and we all have essentially the same genes, doesn't that mean our modern man-made environment is what's killing us through all of these myriad and rapidly increasing stress diseases, the "diseases of civilization"? If you can find a better answer than "population density stress is killing us now", then do please share it with MAHB readers in your comments on the book.

In the meantime, this old doc strongly suggests that you wear your face masks when appropriate (inside buildings or outside when social distancing is not possible), maintain social distance (6-10 feet) inside and out, wash your hands frequently (better chapped hands than a ventilator), avoid anyone coughing (chief symptom of COVID-19), stay home for 14 days if you know you've been exposed to someone with the virus, and, for God's sake, stay home for at least a week after all of your COVID-19 symptoms clear. Didn't your dear mother tell you to listen to the doctor and mind his suggestions to protect your health and that of everyone around you?

Thank you for your time and interest and stay well. I can tell you from experience that infection and illness from COVID-19 is no joke, in spite of what some may say.



Dr. Greeley G. Miklashek is the author of the book, *Stress R Us*, available as a free PDF on Paul Ehrlich's MAHB website in their e-library, or as a paperback on Amazon Books. Dr. Miklashek is a retired neuropsychiatrist who practiced clinical psychiatry for 42 years and retired to write 7 years ago. He has done numerous presentations on stress and population density stress to professional and lay audiences. He graduated from Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, and the University of Wisconsin Medical School, followed by a Psychiatry Residency at the same school. He has held a number of academic and clinical positions, including the University of Rochester (NY) School of Medicine, Upstate Medical School (Binghamton campus), and Michigan State Medical School. His email address is: gmiklashek950@gmail.com.



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