A Different Take On Crisis Management of the Coronavirus

This might seem contrary, but more people testing positive for COVID-19 could improve how effectively science can control the pandemic.

May 8, 2020 By Vasil Kocevski

Probably the most talked-about topic nowadays is the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, for which we weren't ready as Bill Gates mentioned five years ago in his popular TED talk. Therefore, the right thing to do now would be to "learn on the job" to better manage the coronavirus crisis and better prepare for the future should something like this recurs.

The sole purpose of this essay is to address the role testing has as a crisis management tool and the validity of the targeted testing method. Please note that this post is not meant to serve as a medical guide or health advice.

One of the most common issues with testing for the coronavirus is public pressure to test more people or conduct mass testing. Obviously doing more testing is better, but it's also important to use the right testing tool.

As the title of this article suggests, when people test positive this presents health care providers with a great opportunity.

Of course, testing positive for the coronavirus is not a desirable goal for anyone. However, when individuals test positive this enables researchers to detect a source of the germ so they're able to isolate it.

To test an entire population would take a long time and the status of those who are tested might change during the process. This is why well-targeted testing is the way to go. For example, it is very unlikely that all carriers of the coronavirus will be detected in time.

Therefore, the next best thing would be to detect as many people carrying the virus as possible. Well-targeted testing should accomplish exactly that, meaning using a methodology to assess the most likely carriers of the coronavirus would increase the probability that more people would test positive, which would result in the detection of a larger number of individuals who had the virus.

Many people have demanded mass testing. But this noble and wonderful solution to discovering who has the coronavirus comes with vast implementation problems. As countries have limited

number of tests at their disposal and the testing process itself requires time, it is important to use the test correctly so positive results are accurate.

Less well-defined target testing would probably increase the number of negative test results, which translates into a waste of time, a strongly unfavorable outcome during a crisis. However, a negative test is of value primarily in the case of medical professionals or individuals whose work involves them in large-scale contact with others. These are interactions that cannot be avoided and are difficult to control.

In this exception, the negative test can be said to serve as a “fitness certificate,” meaning these first responders are able to continue their work, which helps to reduce the psychological stress they face by being exposed to danger.

Aside from these exceptions, tests that yield a negative outcome are a waste of time and resources. This is because there is no action that needs to be taken in cases where someone tests negative. In addition, at the same time, testing negative does not relieve the test taker from having to observe the preventive measures applied to everyone else. In fact, one could argue that testing negative is counter-productive as doing so might stimulate false confidence and decrease the precautions a person takes.

Realistically, then, it is impossible to be sure what the results of a coronavirus test will be; this is the rationale behind well-targeted testing. This type of testing increases the odds that a test will be positive, which would generate future leads for testing based on others with whom the individual who tested positive came into contact—a situation which can be likened to a chain composed of interactions with different people.

In summary, targeted testing is the right way to use testing as a tool for managing the coronavirus crisis in accordance with the realistic capacity of our health systems to implement this methodolgy. The popular demand for mass testing as a way to handle the crisis is both impractical and unrealistic. What’s more, the untargeted testing of everyone will not yield better results.

Targeted testing increases the chances to test someone positive and individuals testing positive allows medical professionals to detect a potential danger, which then allows health providers to take the appropriate measures.

Just think about how many lives might be saved from observing this strategy?

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/blog/different-take-crisis-management-coronavirus