



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on March 25, 2021

Pandemic of Fear: Calm Down if You Want to Live

Health experts are raising an alarm about the “excess deaths” that are happening because people are too afraid to go to an emergency room, even for serious health issues unrelated to the COVID pandemic.

Today, more people are dying from heart and respiratory conditions that don’t usually lead to death, and it is likely due to the fact they are avoiding medical care. Dr. Joseph S. Alpert, editor-in-chief of *The American Journal of Medicine*, [says](#) the cause is simple — fear. His findings reveal more patients with serious illnesses are avoiding urgently needed care over concerns they’ll contract COVID-19 in hospitals.



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A pandemic doesn’t cancel all other diseases — heart attacks, strokes, serious falls, and seizures — yet many people who would normally visit a doctor to check what could be serious symptoms are choosing not to seek help. “Patients were avoiding hospitals as much as possible because they feared acquiring a lethal COVID infection on top of their chronic illness,” writes Dr. Alpert. “For the same reason, many hospitalized patients refused post-discharge physical therapy or inpatient hospice transfer following acute care.” The toll of the fear pandemic is quite shocking.

A [study](#) of the American College of Cardiology finds that COVID-19 has reduced the diagnosis of cardiovascular disease, sharply increasing mortality rates from heart disease. “Although the direct toll of COVID-19 has been devastating, many of us in the medical community have also worried about the indirect toll of the pandemic on patients with other medical conditions, like cardiovascular disease,” notes lead study author, Dr. Rishi K. Wadhwa, a cardiologist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and assistant professor at Harvard Medical School.

A similar trend is true for cancer. One of the nation’s leading voices on oncology [predicts](#) the number of people who will die from breast or colorectal cancer in the United States will increase by nearly 10,000 over the next decade because of COVID-19’s impact on oncology care. “There can be no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing delayed diagnosis and suboptimal care for people with cancer,” wrote Norman “Ned” Sharpless, director of the National Cancer Institute, in an [editorial](#) published in the journal *Science*.

Then, there are the latest reports, showing an increase of untreated [type 1](#) and [type 2](#) diabetes, even in children and young adults, as well as increased [substance abuse](#), [suicides](#), and a rise in [domestic violence](#).

Where does the fear come from? Doctors [say](#) that different threats push different psychological buttons. Novel, exotic threats such as Ebola, avian or swine flu, or coronavirus raise anxiety levels higher than more familiar threats do. This reaction may have to do with our amygdala, which research suggests plays a role in detecting novelty as well as processing fear. In one study, for example, Nicholas



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Balderston and colleagues at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee found that activity in the amygdala increased when participants looked at unfamiliar flowers right after seeing pictures of snakes. What and who irritates your amygdala? The answer is obvious. Please recall how many times you heard of a “novel” virus that “we know nothing about,” but we are certain that it is “deadly,” and “millions will die.” Think about the “death toll” and then “case” counts that ran in real-time in the corner of any news channel. In the spirit of “accentuate the negative and eliminate the positive,” the number of people who tested negative for COVID-19, or the number who recovered, were seldom announced. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the media face of science, was on the news 24/7, speculating on the nature of the virus, and justifying the harshest lockdown measures.

Policies also contributed to the public anxiety. Think about the Democrat lawmakers and governors who demanded more mask mandates, more lockdowns, and restrictions. They kept people of faith out of churches, athletes out of gyms and sport venues, children out of schools, and parents out of work. They’d recommend you not to visit family members. Not go outside. Not travel. To make sure that the fear of the virus was here to stay, Joe Biden [announced](#) that “the darkest days of COVID are ahead of us,” even though the vaccines had already arrived and statistics clearly showed a nationwide drop in cases.

The media sensationalism, political irresponsibility, and hatred for President Trump created a real pandemic of fear that likely claimed more lives than the COVID virus itself.



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