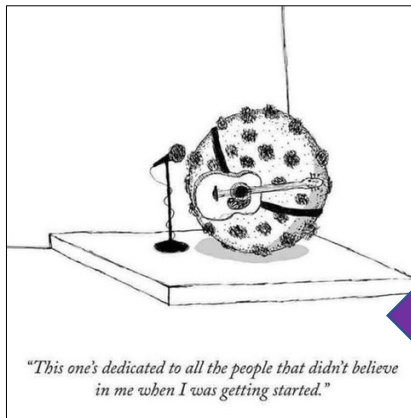


☀ Spanish Flu Flashback → Three Waves

In 2011, Harvard University published a summary of the [Spanish Influenza in North America, 1918–1919](#): “The Spanish [flu], which began in 1918, caught every nation by surprise. It infected an estimated 500 million people and killed 50 to 100 million of them in three waves. Governments around the world responded in ways that were reactive and almost ineffective before the pandemic ended in 1919 just as suddenly as it began one year earlier. [...] The Spanish [flu] differed from previous influenza pandemics in its unprecedented virulence. Its unique characteristics included unusually high case fatality, especially among 20- to 40-year-olds.”

☀ Spanish Flu Facts



“Spanish influenza” is a misnomer as the disease had no association with Spain, other than claiming victims.

Initial complacency, incredulity and claims of exaggeration.

More people died from the Spanish flu than combatants killed in WWI, in less than half the time.

The first North American cases were reported in March 1918 at military base Fort Riley, KS where 100+ servicemen were stationed. Some were sent home and carried the contagion with them. Others without acute symptoms and apparently healthy were shipped overseas to fight.

In May 1918, 10,000+ sailors from the British fleet were ill with the disease.

In Canada, the pandemic first appeared at a college in Victoriaville, QC. While WWI claimed 60,000 soldiers, 50,000 Canadian civilians believing to be safe at home from the war succumbed to the Spanish flu.

Victims included the elderly, the vulnerable, and many able-bodied adults aged 20-50; entire families died and many children were orphaned. Overworked hospital staff fell ill. Telephone calls were restricted to emergency use, as fewer telephone operators were available. Streetcars were re-purposed into hearses.

☀ So, what’s new?

☀ Military reinforcement

[Canadian Armed Forces](#), including lay and medical personnel, were deployed to long-term care facilities in Quebec and Ontario; Canadian Rangers serviced northern communities from coast to coast to coast.

[The US Navy’s two hospital ships – Mercy and Comfort](#) – came to the rescue in Spring 2020. Mercy, the largest of its kind in the world, dropped anchor in Los Angeles harbour, Comfort in NYC harbour. Tasked with providing non-Covid-related patient care to relieve pressure on the overstretched healthcare system, one medic noted: “We’re told this mission is over, but it doesn’t mean the mission is over.”

☀ Excess food

The American Psychological Association published results of their research in which 42% of the adult respondents reported an unwanted Covid-19 [average weight gain of 29 lbs.](#), a statistic most likely replicated in many other countries.

☀ Insufficient food

Food Banks Canada’s [HungerCount 2021](#) estimates that food bank visits increased 20% nationally since the onset of Covid-19; 25% of locations experienced a 50% increase in demand.

☀ \$ gain among the financially vulnerable

A [Statistics Canada](#) study found that fewer households were financially “extremely vulnerable” during the pandemic (June 2021 @ 16.5%) versus immediately prior to Covid-19 onset (February 2020 @ 23.3%). The financial stability is reportedly due to many factors, including changes in households’ consumer and financial behaviours amid lockdowns.

☀ Covid-19 lingo & calculator crash

[Coronavirus Corpus](#), launched in May 2020, tracks the use of language related to the pandemic. In January 2020, “vaccine” had occurred 301.35 times per million words; in January 2021, 2,520.72 per million; in December 2021, the count is 974,614 with a disclaimer “500,000+ times in the corpus is too frequent to compute as “Keyword in Context””. **FF**