Conversing About Coronavirus

As my previous article suggested, numbers are the currency of conversation when we talk about Coronavirus. Questions such as: How many people died? In what geographic area? What is the area's population?

by Brian Woolf (May 24, 2020)

To tie them all together, percentages were calculated to provide a common metric to let us compare individual states and countries.

It's likely in recent months, when reading articles about Coronavirus (CV-19), you will likely have come across the measurement Deaths per 10,000 or per 100,000 people, one often used by doctors (a byproduct of their medical school days.) For laymen like you and me who were taught percentages in elementary school, I prefer to converse in percentages because most people understand them.

So, before the next article, let's get up-to-date with percentages.

Consider the USA. Its population is 330 million. Currently, our newspapers and news channels are blasting out death figures as if Armageddon is near. But are the headlines significant? Here's a question: what percentage of the population dying from CV-19 would be a significant number to you -10%? 5%? 1%? 0.10% (one tenth of 1%)? 0.01% (one hundredth of 1%)? Or 0.001% (one thousandth of 1%)?

Let's tie those numbers and percentages together:

Percent	Population
100.00%	**330,000,000**
10.00%	33,000,000
5.00%	16,500,000
1.00%	3,300,000
0.1%	330,000
0.01%	**33,000**
0.001%	3,300

Note: there is only <u>one number</u> you need to remember when dealing with US CV-19 deaths. It's 33,000. Why 33,000? Because 33,000 is one <u>one-hundredth of 1%</u> of the total population (33,000 x100 = 3,300,000, which is 1% of our total population of 330,000,000.) It is a tiny percentage. Therefore, it's a tiny number. But it will grow throughout the year. All we need do is divide each day's headline death toll by 33,000 (or use a shortcut by dividing by the round number 30,000 to get an approx. result-a 10% difference from actual) to know what's the latest Death Rate (DR) %.

As I write this (at 3:30PM, US EDT, 24 May, 2020), I checked <u>www.worldometers.info</u> to find that the latest US coronavirus YTD death total is 99,047. Sounds big. But is it really? 99,000 / 33,000 = 3. In other words, today's YTD CV-19 death toll is <u>three one-hundredths of 1%</u> of our population (ie, 0.03%).

My question to you, dear reader, is when does that percentage become significant to you? This is a figure only you can answer. But before you answer it, let me provide some context. Did any of the following annual death numbers ever get you so riled up that you agreed to have our country economically crippled to minimize them?
· <u>Road deaths</u>. Last year, 36,120 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes.
· <u>The Flu</u>. The CDC announced that 80,000 people died of flu last winter in the US, the highest death toll in 40 years ...reported by Associated Press, Sep 26, 2018
· <u>Drugs & Opioids</u>. In the US, there were 67,367 drug overdose deaths reported in 2018. Opioids were involved in 46,802 of them-nearly 70% of the total ... ex google 5/19/20
· <u>Cancer</u>. In 2019, there will be an estimated 1,762,450 new cancer cases diagnosed and 606,880 cancer deaths in the United States ... ex google 5/19/20
· <u>Cardiovascular disease</u>. The leading cause of death in the US, responsible for 840,768 deaths (635,260 cardiac) in 2016 ... ex google 5/19/20
· <u>Hospital-acquired infections</u>. In American hospitals, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that Healthcare-Acquired Infections (HAIs) account for an estimated 1.7 million infections and 99,000 associated deaths each year (caused by viral, bacterial, and fungal pathogens, pneumonia (eg, ventilator-associated pneumonia [VAP]), urinary tract infection (UTI), and surgical site infection (SSI).)
· <u>Noble Words</u>. Or maybe the noble words of some politicians have resonated when they pontificated on television that all lives are sacred and must be saved at all costs. Such are truly noble words, but have you ever looked behind the politicians' words? Ask

yourself: are these politicians also fighting against life-killing abortion and euthanasia? If not, don't their words ring a tad hollow?

Please understand that the intent of this article is us having a dialogue; not me being a demagogue. I am not. This an exchange of ideas. I don't profess to have all the answers. I am a seeker of what's right. I am simply sharing with you some of the questions I wrestle with as I try to understand CV-19, its impact, and its implications.

Also, looking back, ever since my high school days, I have never forgotten Hamlet's reflection: *Nothing's right or wrong. Thinking only makes it so.*

Bottom line: we have to think CV-19 through ourselves, based on our own values. My goal is to simply to share some of my thoughts along the journey.

I'll share more in the next article.

About the author...

Besides a full business life in retailing, and later, loyalty marketing, the other part of Brian Woolf's life has been filled with diverse interests: particularly speaking (including Toastmasters), travel (including all seven continents), and reading (including history). And he has written seven books sharing what he has learned along the journey.

Ask him, two favorite trips? Antarctica and the Nile. Ask him, two favorite books? *The Lessons of History* (Will & Ariel Durant) and *Over the Edge of the World* (Laurence Bergreen).

He loves learning and sharing.

And there's more where this came from…

Visit Brian Woolf on the web for his complete collection of articles, speeches, insights and practical advice, at

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