

COVID-19: Interdependence and U.S.-Mexico Cooperation

On March 20th, the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies in partnership with Alianza UC Mexico and the UC San Francisco Institute for Global Health Sciences hosted a webinar on essential questions on managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document summarizes the key takeaways of our meeting. In the next days we will announce our next webinar. [Follow us @USMEXUCSD @IGHSatUCSF](#)

Global Response

- The celerity with which it was possible to isolate, sequence the genome of the virus, and share the information was crucial in quickly developing tests both in China and the rest of the world.
- The World Health Organization was late in declaring a global public health emergency.
- Despite this delay, in the Americas we have been able to buy some time to prepare and we should use it wisely.
- In areas without any social distance measures, cases are duplicated every three days. Whereas locations that implement strict social distance measures such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan have managed to “flatten the curve” or slow the rate of infection which allows health services to operate within capacity.

Contagion

- On average, 1 infected person can infect 2 or 3 additional people.
- Unlike SARS and MERS, COVID-19 [or SARS-CoV-2] can be transmitted BEFORE the individual shows any symptoms. An individual could be infected and be asymptomatic for up to 14 days.
- Data from Europe and the U.S. show young people can also experience severe infections from COVID-19.
- Preliminary evidence shows it is possible that COVID-19 to spread through the fecal-oral route. This could have serious implications for Mexico where contagion could increase significantly.

Testing

- Both Mexico and the U.S. have serious challenges in testing for COVID-19. Neither country is conducting the number of tests that it would require to really estimate the virus' prevalence.
- Both countries need to move to quick validation of tests and implementation in their territories. This can include using certified private laboratories in order to conduct testing at a massive scale.
- Currently, both countries are only testing individuals exhibiting severe symptoms.

Treatment

- We can no longer contain, but we can mitigate the effects of the pandemic.
- There are 94 clinical trials currently registered with the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- 420 clinical trials at a global level.
- Remdesivir is one of the drugs currently in clinical trial but it is not available in Mexico.
- It is likely Mexico will require assistance from other countries insofar it does not have the supplies to provide services to the population that will get infected.
- Still too early to know which drugs are effective in treating COVID-19.