**NAME: JODA PRECIOUS OLUWAMAYOWA**

**DEPARTMENT: DENTISTRY**

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 **CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECTS OF LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT ON NIGERIANS**

**What is COVID-19?**

 Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. You can protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based sanitizer rubbed frequently and not touching your face.

**How is COVID-19 Transmitted?**

 The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it’s important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow). At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments. But WHO promises to provide updated information as soon as clinical findings become available.

**Brief History**

COVID-19 is said to have been first discovered or rediscovered as a mutant in China, in a seafood market, in the Province of Wuhan, in December, 2019. Due to its high infectious tendency, it spread to Europe by February 2020. The spread to other parts of the world was rapid and by March 2020, a case of COVID-19 was reported in Nigeria.

As at 16th April, 2020, the numbers of cases in Nigeria and in the World are;

Nigeria

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Confirmed407 | Recovered128 | Deaths12 |

Worldwide

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Confirmed2,072,228 | Recovered518,600 | Deaths137,666 |

**Lockdown, a way forward during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Coronavirus has now infected more than Two million people worldwide, but its impact extends far beyond just those who have had it. Even the frequency of use of the word "unprecedented" is unprecedented at the moment. According to Google Trends it's been used three times more over the last two weeks than the highest point recorded previously. As governments around the world have enacted new measures and given official advice, we take a look at the impact that it's had on people and the world around them. The approaches to dealing with coronavirus across the world have been wide-ranging to say the least. In Colombia the days that you're allowed to leave the house depend on the number of your national ID card; in Serbia a designated dog-walking hour was introduced; and in Belarus the president has gone against medical advice, recommending vodka and saunas as a way to stay safe. Some of the more common approaches have seen governments issue recommendations on social distancing for part or all of the country, while others have acted to restrict all non-essential internal movement. The latter is often called a lockdown.

 When the virus was first identified in China in late 2019, lockdown seemed extreme. But as the outbreak has spread around the world, it has become more difficult to manage. More countries have opted to take the strictest measures possible to contain it. Well over 100 countries worldwide had instituted either a full or partial lockdown by the end of March 2020, affecting billions of people. And many others had recommended restricted movement for some or all of their citizens.

**Lockdown in Nigeria**

 The first case of COVID-19 was recorded in Nigeria towards the end of March, 2020. With further increase in the number of cases the Federal Government ordered a Total lockdown of Abuja, Lagos and Ogun state. This action was followed suit by many Governors who ordered a partial or total lockdown of their respective States. Although the order of a total or partial lockdown can be seen as logical and reasonable, the lockdown has had a lot of effects on a large number of Nigerians especially the poor and vulnerable. Below are some of the effects of the lockdown and restriction of movements on Nigerians;

**Effects of Lockdown and Restriction of Movement in Nigeria**

 The recent order of a lockdown across Nigeria has a lot of negative effects onthe poor and daily earners, the employees, owners of small businesses and even the economy of our country, Nigeria, as a lot of these businesses have had to shut down. Daily earners and employees having to sit at home and a major fraction of Nigeria’s foreign trade shut down.

 A lot of neighborhoods have also turned crime centers as there has been a spike in the recent cases of armed robberies, rapes and gang clashes. Some communities have also reported cases of house to house robberies, especially from areas in Lagos, the epicentre of the pandemic in Nigeria. Even the educational and Health-sector has not been left out as all institutions of learning has been shut down and a number of examinations postponed till further notice, although some institutions have resulted to online learning which is very much commendable. The health-sector has also been affected as a lot of persons are now scared to visit the hospitals and even a number of health workers retired from duty in fear.

**Conclusion/Recommendation**

A lot has been done by the government in trying to distribute palliatives to the poor and vulnerable, but a lot more still has to be done as a lot of these palliatives have been diverted and hoarded. Also the lockdown can be relaxed a little with emphasis on social distancing and the use of face mask and alcohol-based hand sanitizers. A great deal of sensitization should also be carried out in the rural areas and not only states with recorded cases as knowledge is power, and there should be encouragement on the consumption of food and fruits that enhances the body’s immunity. A lot should also be put into finding a cure for COVID-19 and the production of ventilators, not waiting for other countries to do so. If all these are put in place I believe we will be able to effectively manage and win the fight against COVID-19 as a Nation.

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