Corona Virus Pandemic and the effect of Lockdown on Nigerians

According to World Health Organization, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious and respiratory disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Viruses have varying abilities to infect people.

COVID-19 is more infectious than other coronaviruses such as SARS or MERS-CoV. The “case fatality rate” (CFR), or risk of dying from the new coronavirus, is about 4.4%, (although this risk varies by geography, and also can change over the course of a pandemic) is also less deadly than SARS (10%) or MERS-CoV (34%).

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or exhales. so it’s important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow). These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air, and quickly fall on floors or surfaces. You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are within close proximity of someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then your eyes, nose or mouth.The COVID-19 virus affects different people in different ways. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

To prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19,the following are important:

* Wash your hands regularly with soap and water and apply sanitizers or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub.
* Maintain at least 1 metre distance between you and people coughing or sneezing.
* Avoid touching your face.
* Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
* Stay home if you feel unwell.
* Refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs.
* Practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of people.

Common symptoms include: fever, tiredness, dry cough while other symptoms include: shortness of breath, aches and pains, sore throat and very few people will report diarrhoea, nausea or a runny nose.

People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should self-isolate and contact their medical provider or a COVID-19 information line for advice on testing and referral. People with fever, cough or difficulty breathing should call their doctor and seek medical attention.

The first confirmed case of the pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 in Nigeria was announced on 27 February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for the virus, caused by SARS-CoV-2 . On 31 January 2020, following the developments of COVID-19 pandemic in mainland China and other countries worldwide, the federal government of Nigeria set up a Coronavirus Preparedness Group to mitigate the impact of the virus if it eventually spreads to the country. On the same day, the World Health Organization listed Nigeria among other 13 African countries identified as high-risk for the spread of the virus.

The ability of individuals who are asymptomatic or have mild symptoms, but can still spread the disease, explains why social distancing – limiting contact with others – in addition to other actions such as washing your hands and not touching your face, is so critical. The World Health Organization is starting to refer to it as physical distancing instead to emphasize the importance of being far away enough to avoid infection from the respiratory droplets that carry the virus. It is important that every single person adheres to this, whether or not they think they are sick.

LOCKDOWN IN THE COUNTRY AND ITS EFFECTS

### Life under lockdown brings many challenges, and there have been many instances of people flouting advice on social distancing or isolation. with people only being allowed to leave to get food or medicine, and to practise social distancing when they do leave their houses. The rationale is to ensure that people with serious illness can seek medical care, and those who are infectious but asymptomatic or have mild illness don’t pass it on.

### NECESSITY OF LOCKDOWN

### In the absence of treatment or a vaccine, ceasing most human contact is really the only way to stop the spread of the virus. Essentially, the less contact people have with each other, the less the virus can spread. Given the rapid spread of the virus, social lockdown is urgent to bring overall transmission down, and see whether testing followed by isolation could be effective , this is all in an attempt to ‘flatten the curve’ or reduce infections and spread cases out over a longer time frame to avoid overwhelming health systems..

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING LOCKDOWN

Challenges that most Nigerians encounter includes;

* Loss of income is the immediate concern for individuals who have been contributing to household consumption through their entrepreneurial activities and engaged in hand-to-mouth self-employment. It is hard for such individuals to participate in the lockdown when their households depend on them for consumption.
* Increase in crime rate in the country especially for the 1million gangs operating in states like Lagos.
* It has negative influence on the education of Nigerian as E-learning is not yet up to the standard though it is perfect in some tertiary institutions like Afe Babalola University among few others.
* It has also resulted into low productivity and income rate in the country.