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Question: Write a report, of not more than two pages, on the Corona virus pandemic and the effects of the lockdown and restriction of movement on Nigerians.

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 being well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face.

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. WHO will continue to provide updated information as soon as clinical findings become available.

It would be a catastrophe if the Covid-19 breaks out in Nigeria on the scale presently being witnessed in Europe and the US. Apart from the dire state of the healthcare system, 69 million Nigerians have no access to clean water. This invariably leads to water-borne diseases like cholera, which continue to break out as regular epidemics. Social distancing and self-isolation presuppose that people have enough space. In Lagos where we have over 100 slum areas, about 80 people can be found sharing a 10-room building with only two toilets and a bathroom being shared by all with no pipe-borne or treated water readily available.

Clearly the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) that started out as an epidemic in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and ended up as a pandemic (affecting the whole world) has thrown the whole world into a war-like situation. Scores of thousands of deaths have been recorded cumulatively for all countries across the world. Health systems in most countries are overwhelmed by the seriously sick patients in hospitals, many of whom are on ventilators and nursed in intensive care units (ICU). Global and local economies stand at their worst in decades; the world economy is now declared to be in recession by the World Bank/IMF, and could eventually lead to the deepest depression since 1929.

The price of crude oil (the mainstay of the Nigerian economy) tumbled like never before in the last 20 years. It went to as low as below $20 per barrel from above $60 just before the pandemic. It has never been this bad in the last two decades and this has made a mess of the Nigerian federal government’s budget estimates for 2020; making salaries payment, debt obligations and other projections uncertain. This is clearly so because the price of crude oil, which contributes over 90% of Nigeria’s externally-generated revenue, now hovers around $30 per barrel, which is far less than the budget’s benchmark of $57 per barrel, and this signifies tough times ahead.

Two Million Infections and Over a Hundred Thousand Deaths

By the early hours of 12 April 2020, the overall statistics of COVID-19 (Coronavirus infections) and associated deaths remain alarming and fearful. The viral infection continued to gallop; it is now over the 1.8million mark for all cases in 203 countries and territories across all continents of the world – Asia, North and South America, Europe, Australasia and Africa. The number of deaths related to coronavirus is now [at the time of writing] well over 120,000. The statistics are alarming because the rise to the 1.8 million confirmed cases took less than 4 months.

Political office holders and health officials in many countries are crying out that the capacity to hold down the death rates arising from the virus is very limited, and in places like Europe and America the ratio of cases to fatalities continues to rise unabatedly. Patients are left to die unattended because of lack of ventilators and other equipment, whilst health personnel are daily being faced with the painful option of saving the young ahead of the elderly.

On the other hand, Nigeria which is the most populous country on the continent with an estimated population of 200 million (15% of Africa’s 1.3billion people) has 323 confirmed cases of COVID-19 (2.5% of Africa’s) and 10 deaths as of 12 April 2020. These numbers are, however, far from the true reflection of the situation in Nigeria, based on the fact that testing is not being carried out on a large scale.

Nigerians under lockdown are very likely to develop a wide range of symptoms of psychological stress and disorder, including low mood, insomnia, stress, anxiety, anger, irritability, emotional exhaustion, depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Low mood and irritability specifically stand out as being very common, the study notes.

Reasons for stress abound in lockdown: there is risk of infection, fear of becoming sick or of losing loved ones, as well as the prospect of financial hardship. All these, and many more, are present in this current pandemic.

Due to the lockdown, people can’t go to work to earn money and their places of work don’t even have an online platform, so there’s no way to make money to provide for the family. Most parents due the fact that they are not used to staying at home for so long get easily irritated and angry when they see their children or their spouses on a daily basis. Not all schools have an online learning system and the ones that have, most parents complain about the cost of obtaining data to run the apps needed for the learning process.

Many people have lost their jobs and have no means of feeding their family members. Most people in Nigeria who work daily and depend on their daily income have no way to survive as they struggle to get provision for their family.