

# Socio-economic Instability and Attempts to Exit the "Coronavirus" Labyrinth: Russian and Foreign Experience

Alexander Vladimirovich Grigoriev<sup>a</sup>

*Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University), Moscow, Russian Federation*

**Keywords:** Coronavirus Infection, Socio-economic Instability, Crisis, Social Distancing, QR Code.

**Abstract:** The world was practically paralyzed in March of 2020 when the WHO declared a global coronavirus pandemic and the public realized that COVID-19 is not a distant threat shown in the news, but a real deadly virus. In modern conditions, the high rates of development of the COVID-19 pandemic have a negative impact on all aspects of social life and economic order, from the welfare of households and individual consumers to the economy of individual states. In this regard, given the lack of accurate forecasts for the future, researchers are trying to find tools and methods to reduce social tension, exchange experiences and analyze the shortcomings of certain measures. The presented study analyzes the causes and conditions for the formation of factors of socio-economic instability, and also examines the options for getting out of the so-called "coronavirus" labyrinth offered by both Russian and foreign authors.

## 1 INTRODUCTION


On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern and a global pandemic. On March 11, 2020, WHO called on countries to quarantine, establish social distancing rules, and take other measures to prevent the spread of the virus and protect public health. Despite efforts by all countries to contain the spread of infection, SARS-CoV2 has spread to 213 countries, resulting in more than 248 million cases of disease worldwide since its official detection in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December of 2019, and the number of deaths exceeded 5 million cases.

At the very beginning of the development of the pandemic, borders between states were closed, and this caused a number of problems in various sectors of the economy. Tourism has been seriously affected, and the volume of international traffic has practically fallen to its minimum values. Against the backdrop of declining production and sales in large companies, even the oil industry experienced significant difficulties, as the world saw a record decline in fuel demand.

All of the above factors could not but affect the well-being of citizens of different countries, who were at the epicenter of events. The negative impact of various restraining measures led to an increase in unemployment, a reduction in wages, a decrease in the effect of social programs in individual countries (although the volume of government injections into the social sphere has grown significantly), as well as a decrease in the birth rate. In addition, it shall be noted that medicine all over the world, despite the constant development and introduction of high technologies and implementation of innovative developments, was not ready to fight the disease under consideration: throughout the world in the first months of the development of the pandemic there was an acute shortage of personal protective equipment, devices mechanical ventilation, and medical protocols for treating coronavirus infection were imperfect and ineffective.

Later, some of the problems in the field of medicine were solved, in addition, the largest pharmaceutical organizations in the world have created various vaccine options against the new coronavirus infection. More than 20 of these vaccines are already actively used today. However, the undulating development of the disease under consideration continues to cause various crisis

---

<sup>a</sup> <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0871-2304>

phenomena both in medicine and in the economy as a whole. Namely, in Russia today, during the 4th wave of the development of infection, there is a sharp increase in cases of the disease, which entails a shortage of places in specialized medical institutions, an increase in the time of medical care at home, as a result, a decrease in the number of employees at enterprises of various fields due to their being on sick leave and a decrease in labor productivity in various companies.

The pandemic and social constraints have affected the delivery of medicines to pharmacies and individual patients. In many countries, drug shortages in pharmacies have been monitored, restrictions have been imposed on the purchase of certain essential drugs and subsidized prices for them, and the system of online sales and delivery of drugs to patients has been improved (Durnov, Grigoriev, Sorgutov, Halimzyanova, Mikhailovna, Volyanskay, 2021).

The introduced social restrictions, the use of the QR code system to check whether citizens have a vaccination certificate, which acts as a factor restricting the freedom of unvaccinated citizens to exercise their individual rights, the rise in prices for food and non-food products caused by the "container" crisis and other negative factors, and the prohibition or significant restrictions on the work of a number of enterprises, especially in the field of small and medium-sized businesses – all these are factors that form the actual socio-economic instability in society.

Since the influence of these factors is increasing every day, it is necessary to intensify the search for ways out of the so-called "coronavirus labyrinth", both for the economy and for individual citizens, otherwise the current situation may have fatal consequences in the future.

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the process of writing the study, an analysis was carried out of individual publications by Russian and foreign authors published from the 3rd quarter of 2020 to the 3rd quarter of 2021 and covering the socio-economic and medical problems associated with the spread of coronavirus infection in the world. The opinions and data presented in the articles were summarized and analyzed using the comparative method. In addition, the author's point of view on the problem under study was formulated.

## 3 RESULTS

Socio-economic instability has become widespread in the world since the outbreak of the pandemic. The global impact of the pandemic on the world economy was reflected in almost all sectors of the economy.

As a result of the global collapse in demand in hotels and restaurants, prices for agricultural products fell by 20 %, which negatively affected the development of agriculture. Companies producing agricultural products suffered significant losses due to the closure of points of sale in the markets and the need to dispose of perishable products. Problems with product imports and staff shortages have become key problems for enterprises due to supply chain disruptions and self-isolation policies.

COVID-19 has affected all levels of the education system from preschool to higher one. More than 100 countries have introduced school closures across the country. According to UNESCO estimates, the closure of educational institutions affected about 900 million students.

Beyond the impact on higher education, there is a significant impact on the postgraduate research community as research on many non-COVID topics is suspended. In the United Kingdom, the national health research funding organization has suspended all non-COVID research to allow clinically trained personnel who are primarily involved in research to return to the front lines. In the United States, similar actions have been taken by the National Institutes of Health to free up staff and resources for "critical" research. In addition to medical research, scientific institutions have suspended research in areas such as the humanities and social sciences, for example, Harvard University closed all laboratories in the Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences.

In addition, concerns have been raised about the number of canceled or postponed scientific conferences. These conferences are the key to research across many disciplines, allowing the dissemination of research results as well as networking opportunities for collaboration and job search. Many conferences have moved to the Internet, but these "virtual conferences" are often not so convenient for informal means of scientific communication (Impey, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has become an unprecedented challenge to health systems around the world. Namely, the risk to healthcare workers is one of the most serious vulnerabilities in healthcare systems worldwide. High health care costs, a shortage of protective equipment, including respirators, and a

small number of beds and ventilators ultimately highlighted weaknesses in patient care.

In the light of all of the above, it was important, first of all, to reduce the rate of spread of the virus among the population as much as possible. Since the beginning of the spread of the pandemic, measures of social isolation have become one of the main ways of limiting social contacts, contributing to an increase in the level of infection of the population.

Many studies have confirmed the infectiousness of SARS-CoV-2 in the pre-symptomatic stage. Therefore, social distancing is essential for gaining control over the pandemic. The governments of different countries have suspended all types of religious, cultural, social, scientific, sports and political mass events in different parts of the world. It was determined that limiting mass gatherings could serve as the basis for the prevention of COVID-19.

The governments of most countries of the world have adopted the relevant regulatory documents restricting the work of enterprises, organizations and institutions and prescribing restrictions on the movement of citizens. Namely, in Russia, such documents were the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of March 25, 2020 "On the Announcement of Non-Working Days in the Russian Federation", as well as Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of April 2, 2020 No. 239 "On Measures to Ensure the Sanitary and Epidemiological Well-Being of the Population in the Territory of the Russian Federation in Connection with the Spread of a New Coronavirus Infection (COVID- 19)".

Restrictions on social contacts minimized the rapid spread of infection at the considered time stage, but such restrictions also had a number of negative consequences, for example, in the field of the emotional state of people. Whole families were forced to spend 24 hours a day alone with each other in confined spaces, often quite cramped, since everyone's living conditions are different. In addition, part of the world's population live alone, and they had to be left alone with themselves for an indefinite period of time.

The need for physical isolation, especially of people in quarantine, has contributed to the wider use of social networks on the Internet, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Odnoklassniki, etc., to keep in touch with family members living separately, as well as with friends. A. Depoux and his co-authors noted that this type of communication for people in the period under review became the practical only possible way of communication (Depoux, A., Martin, S., Karafillakis, E., Bsd, R.P., Wilder-Smith, A. and Larson, H., 2020). G. Pennycook and his team of

authors noted that the population also used social media to get updated information on the current situation with COVID-19 (Pennycook, G., McPhetres, J., Zhang, Y., Lu, J.G., Rand, D.G., 2020). However, it has been determined that intensive use of social networks can contribute to the development of the need to constantly remain in the social network (Twenge, J.M., Campbell, W.K., 2019). However, social distancing has brought not only a threat to the emotional state of people, their immunity is also endangered (Marino, C., Gini, G., Vieno, A., Spada, M.M., 2018).

Therefore, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the increase in stress makes questions regarding the proper functioning of the immune system even more pressing. A stressor is defined as a threat or perceived threat to the body's homeostasis. The body responds to stressors by activating conservative behavioral and physiological responses to stress in an attempt to restore homeostasis (Bonanno, G.A., Brewin, C.R., Kaniasty, K., La Greca, A.M., 2010). Social stress is defined as the feeling of discomfort or anxiety people may experience in social situations and the associated tendency to avoid potentially stressful social situations. Some researchers point out that breaking social ties is a powerful emotional stress.

D.P. Petrenko noted that people have to completely change their usual lifestyle, and this, undoubtedly, affects their psychological state. They experience uncertainty, panic, fear of getting infected themselves and fear of infecting their loved ones, a sense of hopelessness and many other feelings that relate to the so-called stressogens (Petrenko, D.P., 2021).

From social and economic changes, ambiguity, uncertainty, people accumulate tremendous fatigue. Uncertainty keeps people in a state of constant tension. It is necessary to relieve this tension so that it does not accumulate and does not lead to mental, spiritual and mental distress. We need to understand what specific pandemic challenges each of us with which we need to cope. Any crisis provides opportunities for changing ourselves for the better. Being deprived of your usual lifestyle and schedule and switching to a distance lifestyle is a difficult test, but it gives you the opportunity to discipline yourself and therefore you need to treat the crisis not as a tragedy, but as new opportunities for self-fulfillment and caring for others.

Another negative factor was the decrease in the physical activity of citizens. It is a well-known fact that regular physical activity affects the immune system, which is able to resist the spread of infection.

In addition, physical activity can be a powerful counterbalance to psychological stress (Seledcov, A.M., Akimenko, G.V. and Kirina, Yu.Yu., 2020). During the development of the pandemic, especially at the very beginning, severe depressive symptoms were associated with a decrease in physical activity. Even so, the researchers noted that short-term recovery to physical activity did not improve psychological health, highlighting the importance of maintaining continuous physical activity during the pandemic (Fedosenko, E.V., 2020).

However, it shall be noted that the global catastrophe caused by COVID-19 had a positive impact on the environment (Rume, T., Didar, S.M., 2020). Due to COVID-19, governments have imposed restrictions on movement of vehicles and people and there has been a decrease in industrial production. Movement restrictions have resulted in a significant decline in social and financial activity, and urban air quality has improved (Shakil, M.H., Munim, Z.H., Tasnia, M., Sarowar, S., 2020.). The decrease in tourist activity due to the pandemic has led to an improvement in the environmental situation on many sea coasts around the world. Social constraints have also helped to reduce environmental noise levels (Zambrano-Monserrate, M.A., Ruano, M.A., Sanchez-Alcalde, L., 2020). However, taking into account these positive effects, it cannot be denied that today the world is in a kind of "pandemic chaos", the search for a way out of which is a difficult task, the solution to which must be found in the near future.

## 4 DISCUSSION

At the moment, all over the world, vaccination promotion is deployed on a significant scale. To increase the motivation of citizens to obtain a vaccination certificate in different countries, measures have been taken to restrict access for unvaccinated citizens to various institutions, catering establishments, museums, concert halls, and etc. There have also been attempts at positive motivation (for example, the drawing of cash prizes according to the numbers of vaccination certificates in Russia with the posting of the results on the website of public services).

However, the work of governments of different countries to arrange a vaccination company is faced with obstacles associated with the rejection of compulsory vaccination by many citizens in different countries and the activity of opponents of vaccination in social networks and in the media. The activity of opponents of vaccination, as well as the possibility of

falsifying test results by purchasing a certificate on the Internet, reduce the rate of vaccination.

Understanding the degree of effectiveness and risks of vaccination is the most important factor that shall be taken into account when arranging the vaccination company. Lack of information on the safety and efficacy of new vaccines is not helping to increase the rate of vaccination. For this reason, it is very important, in our opinion, to conduct explanatory work among the population not only through social advertising, which encourages not to pay for an excursion to the hospital with your life, but also through the creation of accessible video reviews or conducting personal conversations at enterprises or in student audiences explaining mechanism of action of various vaccines. It is also important to pay attention to helping those people who experience adverse reactions from the vaccine, since the risks of side effects are very frightening for people. Many potential vaccinators refused to receive the vaccine because their acquaintances suffered the vaccine with side effects. All people wishing to be vaccinated shall have the opportunity to consult in detail with a specialist about the possible side effects of vaccination before they receive the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine. Any of us shall be fully informed of what we can do in the event of side effects from the vaccine.

Also, in our opinion, there shall be a hotline for those who have been vaccinated against coronavirus, so that such people have the opportunity to call a specialist at any time in case of certain symptoms and get the necessary help, either advisory, or, if necessary, help of a doctor who will be referred to the patient by the specialist of the support center. In this case, the priority of those vaccinated will also be indicated by the possibility of timely and prompt assistance from medical workers, which will also raise the credibility of the vaccination campaign.

In addition to vaccinations, there are other safety measures that every person shall take on board in a pandemic. COVID-19 has forced the vast majority of us to pay close attention to every available surface that can transmit infection; therefore, instead of touch screens, priority is now given to voice and machine vision interfaces.

To reduce attendance at medical clinics and other healthcare facilities, many hospitals have started video consultations, and this is expected to continue in the future. Store owners, who were unable to sell their wares online prior to the pandemic, were forced to move to online sales to support their industry. An increase in dependence on robots is expected, which



can be used in any industry and will reduce the contact of sick people with healthy people.

Of course, social restrictions will exist for a long time, but they shall not be excessively tough, as this will negatively affect the development of the economy. In contrast to the previously applied stricter locks, which led to a complete halt of the global economy in various European countries, now a number of countries choose reasonable or selective social restrictions in those localities where the largest number of covid cases are detected.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The world will never be the same as it was before the pandemic – everyone without exception understands this, but it is also necessary to understand what strategy shall be followed in the future so that the economy can recover as quickly as possible, and people can work, communicate and move freely around the world. First of all, it is necessary for each of us to realize the importance of applying anti-epidemiological rules in the modern period and to observe them strictly. This shall include the creation of effective and safe vaccines, effective treatments for covid, increased attention to hygiene, use of personal protective equipment, and etc.

Further, national governments need to implement a policy of optimal restrictions on the operation of large, medium and small enterprises, which suffer significant losses during a pandemic. These enterprises play a significant role in the formation of the GDP of any country, therefore, a decrease in their activity will have a negative impact on the economy.

In general, understanding and awareness of any negative situation is already the beginning of the search for a way out of it. However, unfortunately, there are still people who believe that the coronavirus does not exist and that you can live as before. Unfortunately, this is not the case at all. How much more people must die in the world for such people to recognize the existence of the coronavirus remains unknown.

## REFERENCES

Durnov, N. G., Grigoriev, A.V., Sorgutov, I.V., Halimzyanova, M.S., Mikhailovna, K.M., Volyanskay, N., 2021. Features and Ways to Ensure the Availability of Vital Pharmaceuticals for Pharmacy Organizations in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Journal of*

*Pharmaceutical Research International*, 33(49A): 201-207.

Impey, C., 2020. Coronavirus: social distancing is delaying vital scientific research, <http://theconversation.com/>.

Depoux, A., Martin, S., Karafillakis, E., Bsd, R.P., Wilder-Smith, A., Larson, H., 2020. The pandemic of social media panic travels faster than the COVID-19 outbreak. *J. Travel. Med.*, 27: 1-2.

Pennycook, G., McPhetres, J., Zhang, Y., Lu, J.G., R., D.G., 2020. Fighting COVID-19 misinformation on social media: experimental evidence for a scalable accuracy-nudge intervention. *Psychol. Sci.*, 31: 770-780.

Twenge, J.M., Campbell, W.K., 2019. Media use is linked to lower psychological well-being: evidence from three datasets. *Psychiatr. Q.*, 90: 311-331.

Marino, C., Gini, G., Vieno, A., Spada, M.M., 2018. A comprehensive meta-analysis on Problematic Facebook Use *Comput. Hum. Behav.*, 83: 262-277.

Bonanno, G.A., Brewin, C.R., Kaniasty, K., La Greca, A.M., 2010. Weighing the costs of disaster: consequences, risks, and resilience in individuals, families, and communities. *Psychol. Sci. Public Interest*, 11: 1-49.

Petrenko, D.P., 2021. Stressy v period pandemii COVID-19 i posle nee. *Forum molodyozhnoj nauki*, 2.

Seledcov, A.M., Akimenko, G.V., Kirina, Yu.Yu., 2020. Vazhnye aspekty psihologii neopredelennosti v usloviyah COVID-19. *International journal of professional science*, 8.

Fedosenko, E.V., 2020. ZHizn' posle karantina: psihologiya smyslov i koronavirus COVID-19. *Psihologicheskie problemy smysla zhizni i acme*, 25.

Rume, T., Didar, S.M., 2020. Environmental effects of COVID-19 pandemic and potential strategies of sustainability. *Heliyon*, 6: e04965.

Shakil, M.H., Munim, Z.H., Tasnia, M., Sarowar, S., 2020. COVID-19 and the environment: a critical review and research agenda. *Sci Total Environ*, 745: 141022.

Zambrano-Monserrate, M.A., Ruano, M.A., Sanchez-Alcalde, L., 2020. Indirect effects of COVID-19 on the environment. *Sci Total Environ*, 728: 138813.

Al-Jazeera. Smart lockdown' in Pakistan to target 500 coronavirus hotspots (2020), <https://www.aljazeera.com/>.