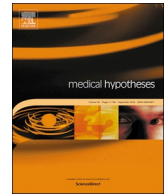




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Letter to Editors

Do not call it COVID-19, it might have been the second wave

The present pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2 is generally referred to as “COVID-19”. It is commonly thought to have started in the Wuhan area, China, in late 2019 and then spread, e.g., to Northern Italy in early 2020. However, a growing number of reports point to an earlier start of the outbreak and its global spread [1–3]. Given the current state of knowledge, it may be inappropriate to specify a year of origin. Therefore, we propose to replace the “-19” with “-2” in analogy to SARS-CoV-2 while the date of the outbreak remains uncertain. The pandemic we currently face(d) may well already represent the often more virulent “second wave” [4], while the first more benign (local or global) wave would have escaped detection amid the morbidity and mortality data reported as regular “flu” in previous years. Theoretically, a first wave could have been caused by a yet unknown SARS-CoV variant preceding the current lineages [5].

As long as uncertainties regarding the exact origin and the dynamics of the SARS-CoV2 infection exist, we propose out-of-the-box thinking also concerning its evolutionary timeline and subsequent classification. The unorthodox approach we propose by renaming this pandemic might help resolve some of the inconsistencies and gaps (e.g., transmission pattern, virulence, interaction with co-morbidities, degree of cross-immunity) and associated unconscious mental reservations of scientists, all stimulating directly or indirectly unempirical allegations. An open-minded approach may help promote more evidence-based science, desperately needed to tackle this most disruptive “COVID-2” pandemic.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial

interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Frank Rühli*

Institute of Evolutionary Medicine, University of Zurich, Switzerland

E-mail address: frank.ruehli@iem.uzh.ch

Patrick Eppenberger

Institute of Evolutionary Medicine, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Maciej Henneberg

Institute of Evolutionary Medicine, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Adelaide Medical School, The University of Adelaide, Australia

* Corresponding author at: Winterthurerstr. 190, 8057 Zürich, Switzerland.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2020.110285>

Received 24 July 2020; Accepted 14 September 2020

Available online 17 September 2020

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