

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COVID-19 VIRUS?

First of all, there are no COVID-19 cases on St Helena and we and everyone within the Health Directorate are working hard to keep it that way.

Some information you should know. Please consider the following data:

The number of deaths in the world in the two months before summer (May/June) 2020:

- 1,177,141 - Cancer
- 716,498 - Smoking
- 358,471 - Alcohol
- 240,950 - HIV - AIDS
- 193,479 - Road Accidents
- 153,696 - Suicide
- 140,584 - Malaria
- 69,602 - Common Cold
- 14,687 - Corona Virus COVID-19

Do not listen to fake news on Social Media. Do not panic and don't kill yourself with unnecessary fear.

Do you panic if you have a beer, a cigarette, unprotected sex, drive a car or have a common cold with the usual annual flu? I don't think so - but many more people die because of those reasons if compared to COVID-19. Compare the death rates with the COVID-19 death toll.

There is no reason to be scared by the daily news regarding the developments of COVID-19 around the world. We have to take this very, very seriously and do everything that can be done to protect ourselves and our families and follow every possible infection control precaution that makes sense. But we have to stay reasonable and rational - there is no reason for any panic.

One more thought, even if you (just theoretically) do contract the COVID-19 virus, this is still not a cause for uncontrolled panic because:

- 81% of the cases are MILD
- 14% of the cases are MODERATE
- Only 5% of the cases are CRITICAL

Which means that even if you do get the virus, you have a very good chance of recovering from it.



Some reports have said: “. . . but this is worse than SARS!” SARS had a fatality rate of 10% while COVID-19 has a fatality rate of 2%. Moreover, looking at the ages of those who are dying of this virus, the death rate is only 0.2%.

Let's take one of the worst days - 10 February 2020 - when 108 people in China died of COVID-19. On the same day in China:

- 26,283 people died of Cancer
- 24,641 people died of Heart Disease
- 4,300 people died of Diabetes
- Suicide took 28 times more lives than the virus did

Also:

- Mosquitoes kill 2,740 people everyday
- Humans kill 1,300 fellow humans everyday
- Snakes kill 137 people everyday
- Sharks kill only 2 people a year

All of these numbers do not mean that COVID-19 is not a frightening event. Frightening - because we cannot see or feel it, we do not know much about it, we have not experienced something like this before, and we are showered with numerous rumours and gossip. We have to be prepared and take this very seriously. But we also have to realise that worldwide mass hysteria and the damage being caused by this might be bigger than the virus itself.

And one last word - all the other diseases are not disappearing, have stopped making us sick or have taken a break trying to take our lives because the COVID-19 crisis has captured our attention. Our other patients still need and depend on us.

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21 October 2020

