

Natural Disaster and Human-Made Damage to the Environment Makes the Pandemic Worse

Mariko Takeda

BEFORE YOU READ: What are some examples of “natural” disasters vs. “human-made” disasters? Can you think of natural disasters that were made worse by the mistakes of humans?

The coronavirus pandemic is both a natural disaster and a human-made one. It is natural because viruses are part of nature. We will probably always have viruses that make us sick. They are just part of life. But the coronavirus is worse because of what people have done to the environment.

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Thanks to the development of industry, our lives are more convenient.

Cars, electricity, and plastic goods make our lives better in many ways. But industry destroys nature. When humans build roads and destroy forests, animals have to live in crowded conditions. Also, they live closer to humans. It is easier for humans to pick up more viruses.¹ Industry

gives us many conveniences, but we are making ourselves suffer for that now.

Air pollution is another way that people made the virus worse for ourselves. According to a study from Harvard University, if you have Covid-19 and you live in an area with a lot of air pollution, you are more likely to die from the disease. If you live in a less polluted area, you are less likely to die.² The study says that breathing “fine particulate matter” in the air, means you may have inflammation in your lungs, and your immune system might be weaker.

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If people had taken better care of the environment, animals would not transmit their viruses to us so easily. If we controlled air pollution, fewer people would die from viruses. Our top priority right now is to stop the coronavirus. But after the coronavirus ends, we have to reconsider our lifestyle. Nothing is more important than life.



Sources: 1. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/destroyed-habitat-creates-the-perfect-conditions-for-coronavirus-to-emerge/>; 2. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/air-pollution-linked-with-higher-Covid-19-death-rates/>

Take It Further

The author discusses two ways that humans have contributed to the coronavirus pandemic. What are they?

Describe in your own words how the Covid-19 pandemic is both natural and human-made.

Read the article on the next page. What is similar about how Mariko and Sterlin describe the pandemic? What is different?

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