

# COMPREHENSION

## SPANISH FLU

Read the information below and then answer the related questions.

It has been almost 100 years since the Spanish flu was caused by the H1N1 Influenza Virus. (The same virus responsible for the 2009 Swine Flu Pandemic). The possibility of a pandemic was first reported on 4 March 1918 by Dr. Loring Miner. He reported that USA army cook Albert Gitchell showed signs of acute illness and that within days 522 men at Camp Funston in Kansas were also sick. Although it had been reported this was a major soldier training camp and limited preventative measures were applied which led to the disease quickly spread throughout the army.

With the USA having entered World War 1 the disease spread rapidly to allied troops across Europe and France. By April 1918 it reached the Western Front and from there was taken by soldiers to Great Britain, Italy and finally to Spain. It did not reach Spain until mid 1919 but as Spain was a neutral country and their King Alfonso XIII fell gravely ill from the flu countries reported on this rather than their own or enemies cases of the disease. From Europe the virus spread through Germany to Russia and then on to North Africa, India and Japan by late 1919. The first wave of the pandemic did not reach Australia until July of 1920.

As this disease was rife during a time of war there are vastly differing estimates of how many people died from 17 million to 100 million but it is agreed that it was, and hopefully will remain, the deadliest pandemic in human history. By comparison the 2020 Coronavirus infected more than 100 million people but less than 3 million died from the disease. This may have been due to early detection, better information and increased sanitation, isolation and travel restriction along with improved medical support for those infected.

When and where did the Spanish flu start?

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How did it spread to Europe?

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Why was it called the Spanish flu even though it did not start in Spain?

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Why has the Corona virus pandemic killed so many less people than the Spanish flu?

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