The Coronavirus and the Hepatitis C Virus

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The Coronavirus and the Hepatitis C Virus: Understanding the Enemy

There are many, many different forms of viruses living on the planet Earth. A large number have no damaging effects on humans and many billions live inside our bodies and do no harm at all. However, there are certain viruses that are deadly to humans. Amongst these dangerous viruses are the hepatitis C virus and the COVID-19 virus.

In 2014 I almost died because of a hepatitis C viral infection that was destroying my liver. Since 2014, along with about 100 million other people, I have been engaged in a global battle with the hepatitis C virus.

Until recently not many other people were particularly interested in viruses but with the arrival of the COVID-19 virus the world's attention has focused on the world of viruses like never before.

Since the hepatitis C virus was discovered back in 1989 it has killed more than 30 million humans. At the current point in time, 2020, about 100 million people are infected with hepatitis C and a little less than one million people will die from Hepatitis C in the next 12 months.

And that is not even mentioning the tens of millions of people who live in permanent sickness and suffering because of the effects the Hepatitis C virus has had on their liver. The arrival of the COVID-19 virus on the world stage has shone the light on the world's media on the world of viruses and as a result, everyone is talking about this new, deadly virus: this new coronavirus. At the time of writing, 10th April 2020, the confirmed number of infections for COVID-19 is approaching 2 million and the death rate is approaching 100,000. By this year's end, the number of deaths caused by COVID-19 might even reach the number of deaths that will be caused by the hepatitis C virus in the same 12-month period.

Hepatitis C and COVID-19: Similarities and Differences

The COVID-19 virus and the hepatitis C virus are similar and different, just as a lion and a tiger are similar and different.

Lions and tigers are both big cats that look very different and live in very different environments, but both have very long sharp teeth, strong jaws and are dangerous to humans.

COVID-19 and hep C are both viruses that are very dangerous to humans but they live and “feed” and “breed” in different environments, different parts of the human body.

The hepatitis C virus “lives” in the human liver and uses our liver cells to replicate itself. The COVID-19 virus lives in the tissues of our throat and lungs and uses the cells there to replicate itself.

Scientists do not use the word “reproduce” for viruses, they use the word “replicate”, but the effect is the same. The virus makes more of itself, it reproduces itself, very, very quickly. Possibly one hepatitis C virion (a virion is a complete virus particle that consists of an RNA or DNA core with a protein coat sometimes with external envelopes and that is the extracellular infectious form of a virus) could potentially produce an estimated 1,000,000,000,000 new virions in one day.

The COVID-19 virus also replicates very quickly and one infected lung cell could produce hundreds or even thousands of new COVID-19 virions.

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