

「New Year 2021: How COVID-19 has changed the world」

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Goodbye 2020, a year of arguably too many challenges for the world. Looking forward to a new year 2021, we're seeing light at the end of the tunnel, but vaccine distribution will be a long, arduous process. Bill Gates, citing health care forecasts, predicts that the next four to six months might be the worst yet of the pandemic. Meanwhile, our post-Covid world may have been changed forever. Here we summarize some Covid-19 -related changes or trends for 2021.

Antibodies on your CV or passport

The jury's still out on whether natural immunity is more powerful against the Sars-Cov-2 virus than vaccination. Already, CVs are cropping up for blue collar jobs such as drivers and delivery personnel with the 'antibody positive' badge—which means low liability and low risk for the company. As studies make it clearer how long these antibodies will last (latest research says they could be around for decades), this stamp of survival may give you that (mildly dystopian) edge for employment or travel. [1]

Drone deliveries

Global tech market advisory firm, ABI Research, predicts strong growth of drone delivery industry worth US\$92 billion by 2030. While the pandemic has dented consumer shipments and hindered commercial rollout, this has been mitigated by increased use of drones for public service responses and surveillance by both local and national police forces. For the future, drone delivery companies must implement holistic approaches to drone service approvals that balance the risks against the benefits to society. [1]

Anxiety and depression

The pandemic took a serious toll on people's mental health in 2020. One study published in August by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that levels of anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts skyrocketed amid the pandemic. Another insidious side effect of the pandemic was increases in alcohol consumption. A study published in October in the journal JAMA Network Open found that alcohol consumption in the United States rose 14% during pandemic shutdowns. Women in particular reported worrying increases in heavy drinking during the spring of 2020, according to the study. These studies show that factors relating to the pandemic, such as social isolation, school closures, unemployment and other financial worries, as well as the threat of the disease itself, may play a role. We must face this problem squarely so as not to become a more serious social problem in the future. [2]

The rise of online learning and open access for information

The COVID-19 has resulted in schools shut all across the world. Globally, over 1.2 billion children are out of the classroom. As a result, education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning,

whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. Research suggests that online learning has been shown to increase retention of information, and take less time, meaning the changes coronavirus have caused might be here to stay. Moreover, the pandemic also accelerated the equality and timeliness of information acquisition in various countries. The Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) of Johns Hopkins University in the United States established a platform for real-time integration of global cases and became the information adopted by various countries; it was established by many Nobel Prize winners and top scientists in the world. The "Global Shared Influenza Data Initiative" (GISAID) open platform also analyzes virus gene sequences uploaded by countries in real time, providing materials for cross-border research and analysis. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has opened up 138,000 academic papers on COVID-19. Through resource sharing and calling on scientists from all over the world to use AI analysis, it hopes to accelerate the analysis of COVID-19. Elsevier, the world's largest academic publisher, also provides more than 31,000 journal articles for free. [2-3]

Lowered emissions

Last, Coronavirus lockdowns, which slowed the normal hustle and bustle of cities to a near halt, also appeared to dramatically lower emissions of carbon dioxide around the world. A study published May 19 in the journal *Nature Climate Change* found that daily global carbon dioxide emissions dropped by 17% in early 2020, compared with levels in 2019. That appears to be one of the biggest drops in recorded history. But this temporary drop is far from enough to undo the harmful effects of man-made climate change. "Although this is likely to lead to the largest cut in emissions since World War II, it will make barely a dent in the ongoing build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere," Richard Betts, Head of Climate Impacts Research at the Met Office Hadley Centre in England. In the face of increasingly extreme climate change, we still hope that there are any ways to improve it. [2, 4]

Reference:

1. KATHAKALI CHANDA and PANKTI MEHTA KADAKIA. 28 Dec 2020. "New Year 2021: How the post-Covid-19 world will have altered indefinitely" *Forbes News*
2. Rachael Rettner. 31 Dec 2020. "10 ways COVID-19 changed the world" *LiveScience News Release*
3. "Open access to facilitate research and information on COVID-19" *UNESCO*
4. Brandon Specktor. 20 May 2020. "Global carbon emissions dropped an unprecedented 17% during the coronavirus lockdown - and it changes nothing" *LiveScience News Release*

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