

THE LONG WINDING ROAD OF PANDEMICS

BY KITTY LIU

WHAT IS A PANDEMIC?

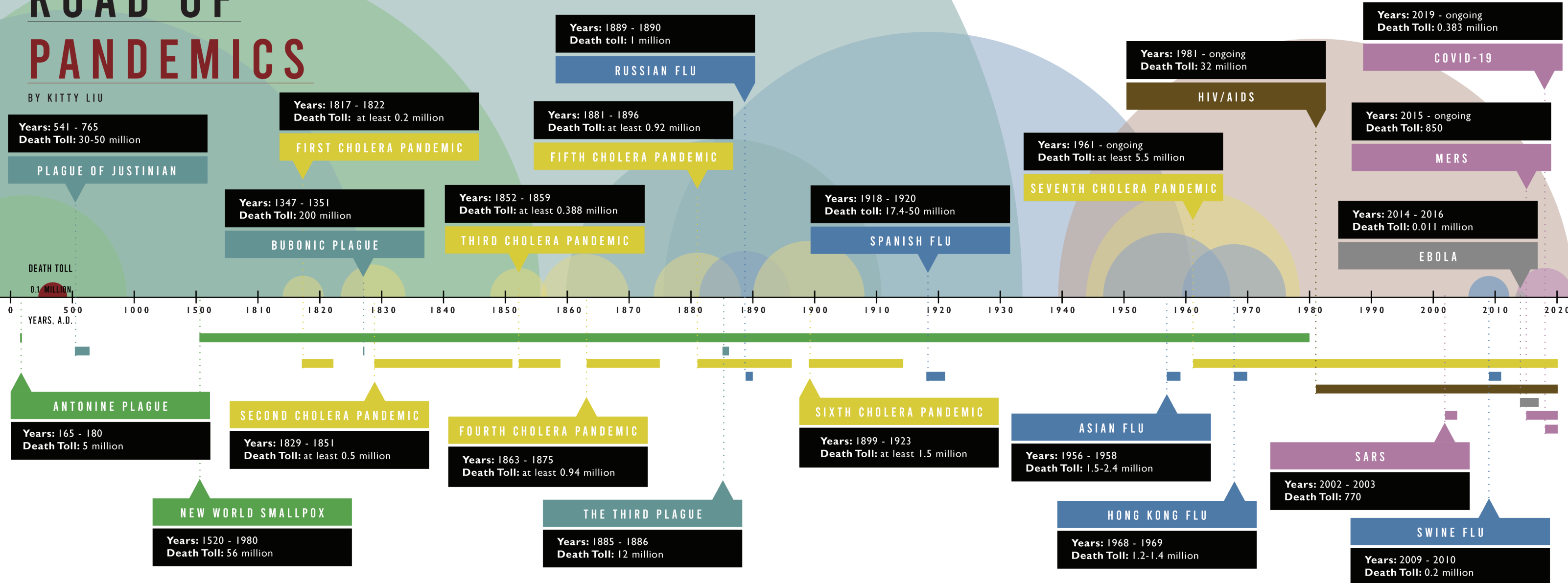
A pandemic occurs when an epidemic (an initial outbreak) has extended across geographical areas, affecting individuals worldwide. It is derived from the Greek *pándēmos*, which means "common, public."

HOW ARE THEY NAMED?

Previous pandemics and diseases were named after geographical location, people's names, and animals. These conventions led to harmful stigmatization. The World Health Organization (WHO) proposed a better naming system for diseases by the use of neutral language such as descriptive terms and the causative pathogen.

HOW TO READ

Start of Pandemic
Duration
Death Toll



CAUSES OF THE PANDEMICS

- SMALLPOX (VARIOLA MAJOR VIRUS)** transmitted via respiratory droplets and contact with material from smallpox pustules or crusted scabs
- INFLUENZA VIRUS** transmitted via respiratory droplets
- YERSINIA PESTIS BACTERIA** transmitted via bites from infected flea and respiratory droplets
- HIV (HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS)** transmitted via certain body fluids (i.e. blood, semen)
- VIBRIO CHOLERAEE BACTERIA** transmitted via contaminated water
- CORONAVIRUS** transmitted via respiratory droplets (studies still being conducted)
- ZAIRE EBOLAVIRUS** transmitted via body fluids

BEYOND THE BIOLOGY

"Bioarchaeology and other social sciences have repeatedly demonstrated that [pandemics] play out along the preexisting fault lines of each society."
- Gwen Robbin Schug, a bioarchaeologist at Appalachian State University

Unfavourable social factors can put an individual at a higher risk of getting infected, and once infected, of more severe disease.

