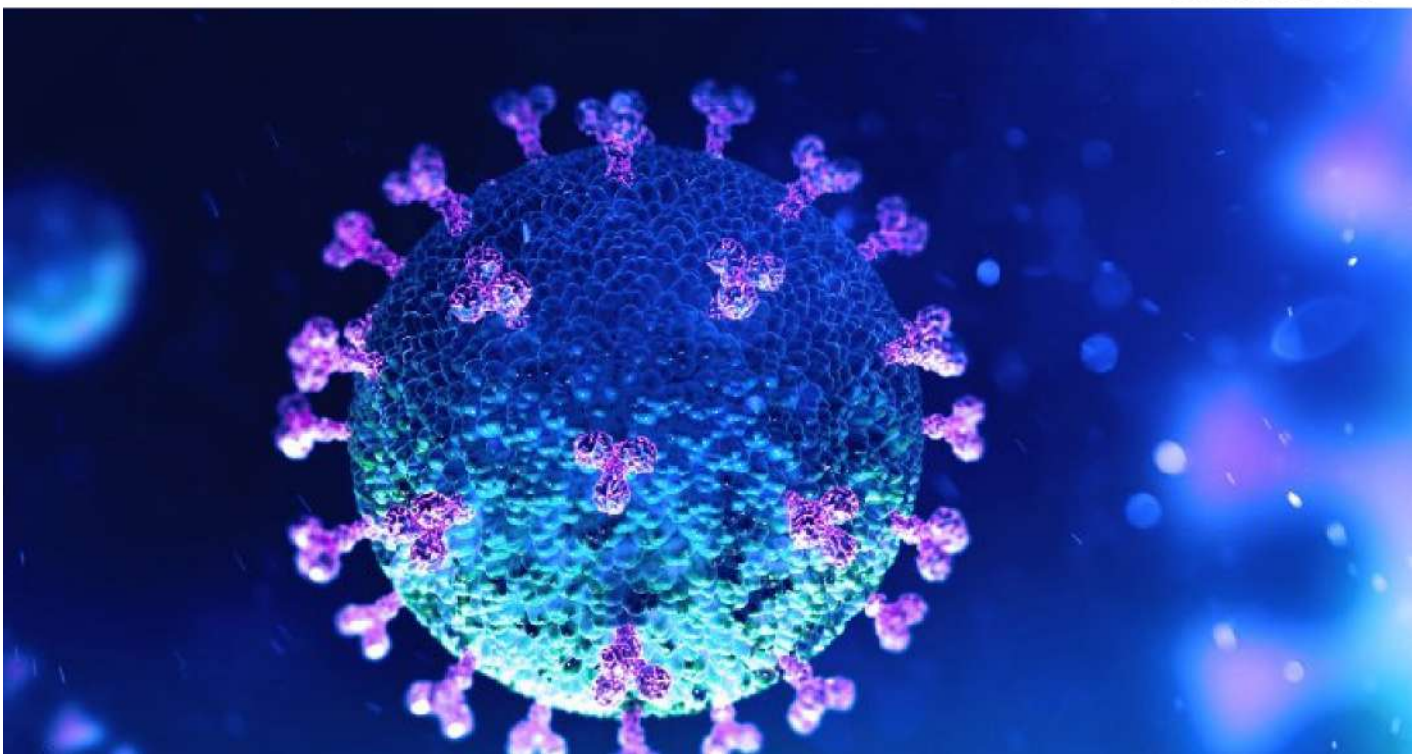


COVID-19 GLOBAL IMPACT INCREASING NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



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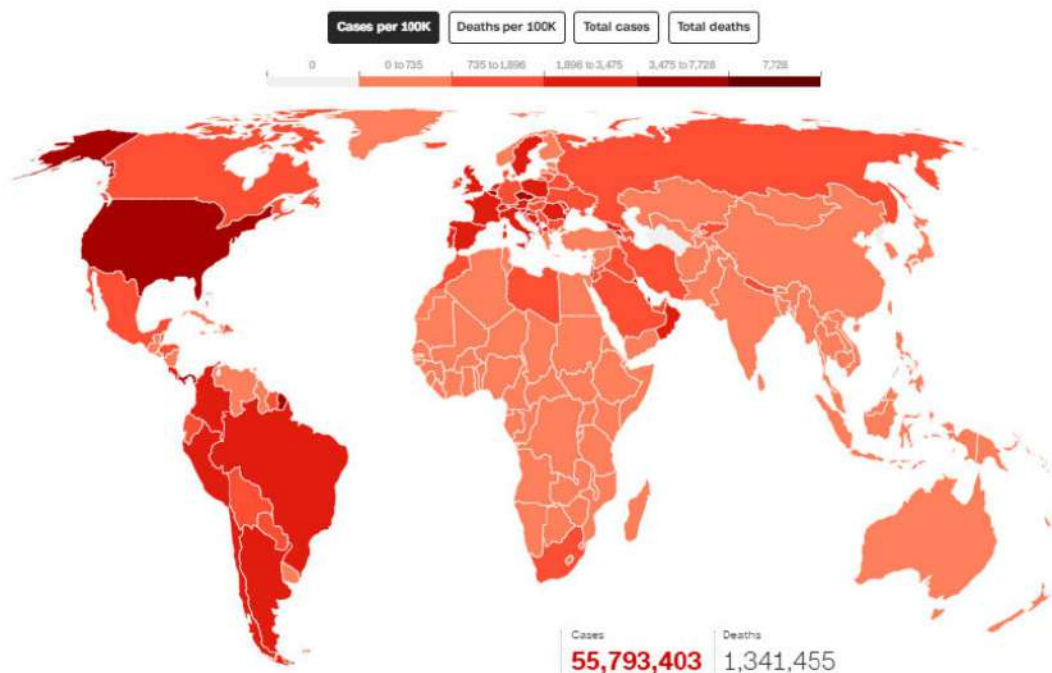
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ABOUT 18.4 MILLION PEOPLE COULD GET DISABILITIES BECAUSE OF COVID-19

During November 2020, authorities in 217 countries and territories have reported about 55.7 million Covid-19 cases and 1.3 million deaths since China reported its first cases to the World Health Organization (WHO) in December 2019 [1] 33,9 of them got a disability due to pulmonary fibrosis as a consequence of COVID-19, that is to say about 18.4 million people could get disabilities because of COVID-19.



Map of coronavirus' global spread. Source CNN

METHODOLOGY

A literature search was conducted to identify relevant articles related to COVID-19, casualty rates, pulmonary fibrosis on COVID-19 survivors, using a combination of standardized search terms. This research covers from November 2019 to December 18th 2020

DIMENSION OF THE PROBLEM

There are 54,4 million survivors of COVID- 19, around 33,9 of them got a disability due to pulmonary fibrosis as a consequence of COVID-19 18.4 million people could get disabilities because of the above- mentioned factors.

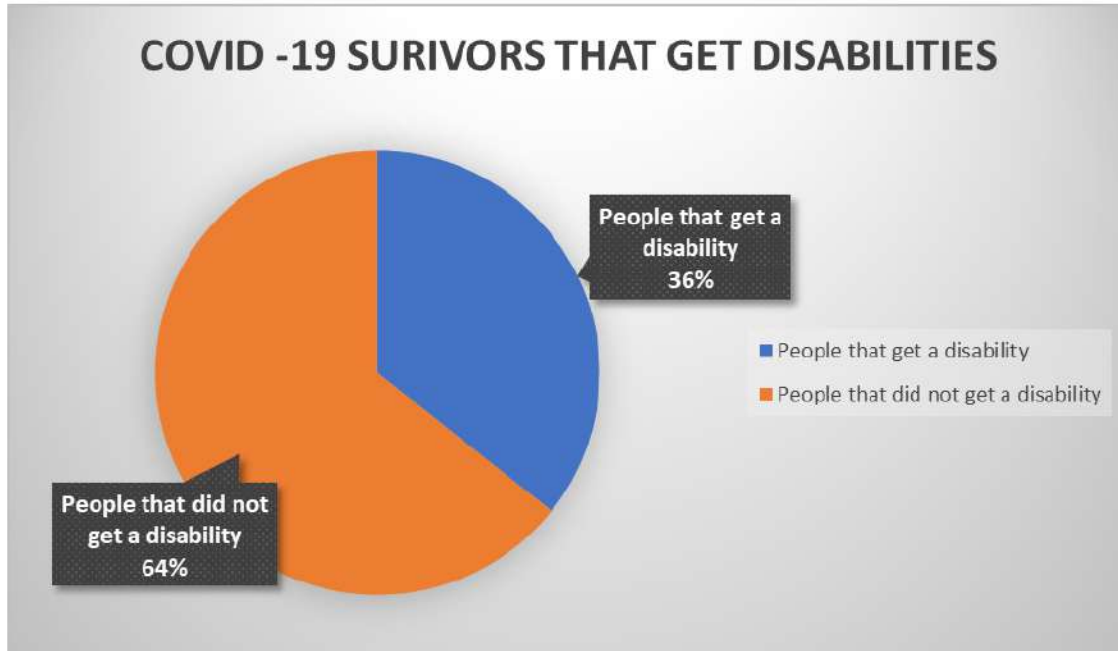


Chart 1: COVID-19 survivors that get disabilities.

If we use current data about global prevalence of people with disabilities as 15% of global population [2], and we assume that of all of the survivors of COVID-19 affected with pulmonary fibrosis were all people without disabilities, this pandemic alone would increase global disability prevalence 1.8%

PULMONARY FIBROSIS AND COVID- 19 SURVIVORS

According to "Pulmonary Fibrosis in COVID-19 Survivors: Predictive Factors and Risk Reduction Strategies" [3], "Emerging Clinical Evidence of Pulmonary Fibrosis following SARS-CoV-2 Infection... Acute lung injury, attempt at repair by fibroproliferation, and lung remodelling occur in COVID-19 disease, much like it does in other coronavirus infections. This leads to a potential increase in the risk of pulmonary fibrosis occurring as a sequela of COVID-19 [4]. Fibrotic changes have been found on chest CT scans in COVID-19 patients. In a study of 62 patients by Zhou et al., fibrotic changes were seen in (33.9%) patients"

PULMONARY FIBROSIS AND DISABILITIES

The problem is that pulmonary fibrosis is "a lung disease that occurs when lung tissue becomes damaged and scarred. This thickened, stiff tissue makes it more difficult for your lungs to work properly. As pulmonary fibrosis worsens, you become progressively short of breath" [5].

Pulmonary fibrosis cause disabilities. "Those who have the condition known as pulmonary fibrosis have lungs with scar tissue. That scar tissue then interferes with the ability of the lungs to provide enough oxygen. This causes the person with this condition to have difficulty in breathing which then leads to chronic tiredness and coughing as well as a lack of appetite. This condition is one that is highly likely to get worse as time goes on" [6].

CONCLUSIONS

1. there is a global lack of hard data about what is happening to people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries that sign the Sendai Framework were supposed, but not obligated to, have data desegregated by disability during disasters.
2. If we use current data about global prevalence of people with disabilities as 15% of global population (First Global Report on Disabilities, WHO 2011), and we assume that of all of the survivors of COVID-19 affected with pulmonary fibrosis were all people without disabilities, this pandemic alone would increase global disability prevalence 1.8%. The Pandemic is far from over and this number could increase.
3. COVID- 19 will have impacts on disability related services, due to increasing numbers of people with disabilities. It will also have negative impacts on economy and labour.
4. The impact of having more people with disabilities will persist after vaccines and the world needs to be prepared to address this applying lessons learned from previous pandemics such as Polio outbreaks

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