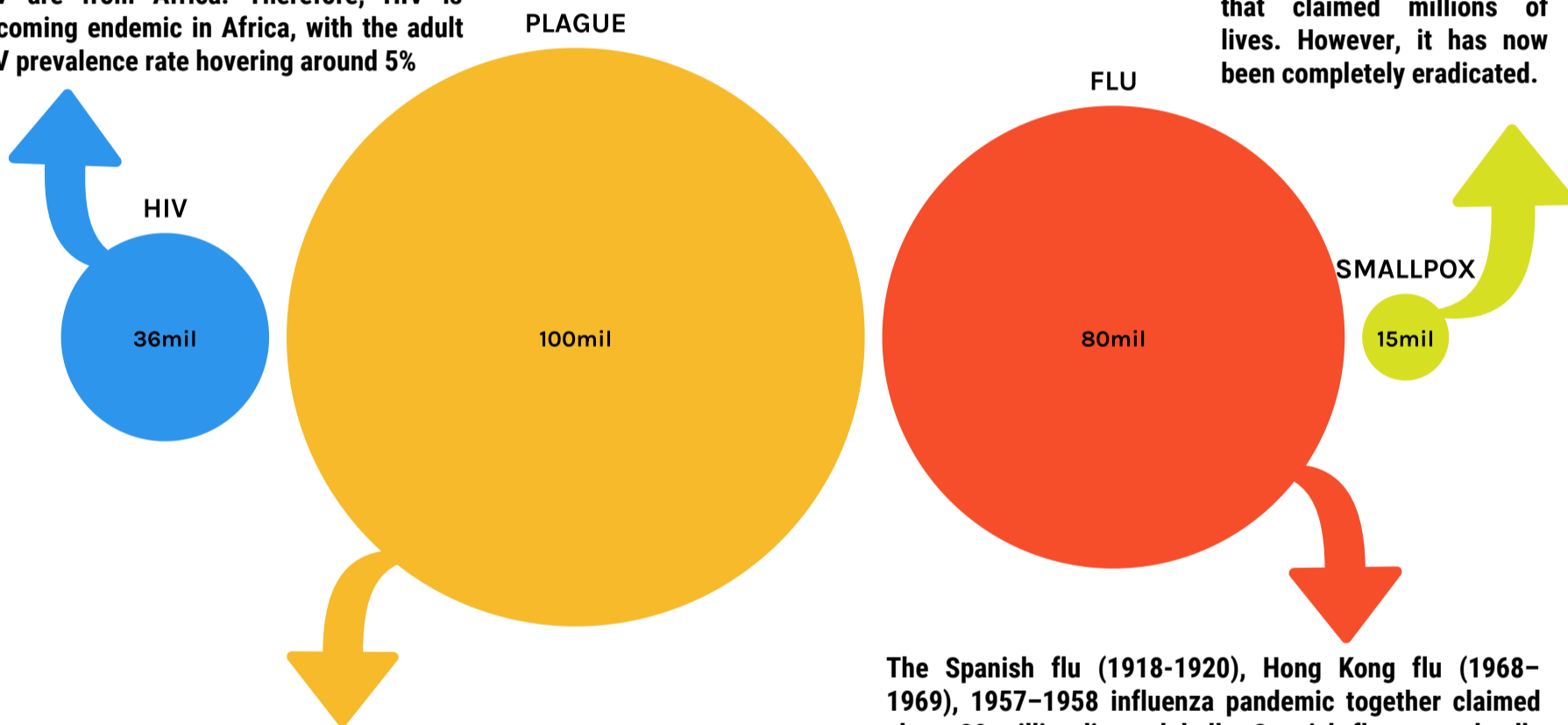


DEADLIEST PANDEMICS IN HISTORY

A new virus named 'coronavirus' was detected in December 2019 and began spreading incredibly fast through people. Within no time, the world witnessed millions of new infections and the WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic in March 2020. While advancements in medical science have ensured that we do not face dire consequences, this deadly outbreak killed millions of people and brought all nations down to their knees, including the wealthy ones. Let's take a look at some of the deadliest pandemics in the history of civilization.

The WHO terms HIV to be a global epidemic. As of 2020, more than 40 million people were infected globally. Despite being home to just over 12% of the world's population, 66% of all people infected with HIV are from Africa. Therefore, HIV is becoming endemic in Africa, with the adult HIV prevalence rate hovering around 5%



The 3 large plague epidemics from 541 to ~750, ~1331 to ~1855 and 1855 to 1960 have jointly claimed more than a hundred million lives. Bubonic plague is an infectious disease mainly spread by infected fleas from small animals like rats, rabbits and hares. Without treatment, death rate of plague is 30% to 90% and death usually occurs within 10 days. Plague is considered to be endemic in 26 countries and most cases are found in remote parts of Africa. Globally about 600 cases are reported every year. In 2019, the countries with the most cases include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, and Peru.

The Spanish flu (1918-1920), Hong Kong flu (1968-1969), 1957-1958 influenza pandemic together claimed about 80 million lives globally. Spanish flu was a deadly global influenza pandemic caused by the influenza A virus subtype H1N1. The first wave of the flu lasted for the first quarter of 1918 and was relatively mild. The second wave, much deadlier than the first, began in August 1918, spreading to Boston and Sierra Leone by ships from Brest, where it had arrived with American troops or French recruits for naval training. In January 1919, a third wave hit Australia and quickly spread through Europe and the United States. In spring 1920, a fourth wave occurred in New York City, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and some South American islands.

The 1957-1958 Asian flu pandemic was another catastrophic global pandemic of influenza A H2N2 virus that originated in Guizhou in southern China. A decade later, another viral variant H3N2 caused the Hong Kong flu pandemic (1968-1969).

Sources:

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