



SCU IN QUARANTINE

Our Pandemic Stories

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The Global Pandemic is Still Global

Pedro Hernandez-Ramos
Associate Professor of Education

[As heard on KQED, Northern California's public radio.](#)

Californians feel an understandable sense of relief as the economy is reopened and more normal life resumes. But COVID-19 is still killing hundreds if not thousands of people around the country, and many, many more in countries where vaccine supplies are far less available or not at all. Less than 10 percent of the world's population has been fully vaccinated, most of them in rich industrialized nations like ours. In other countries like Mexico, where I grew up and still have a large family, only about 12 percent of the population of about 130 million has been fully vaccinated and the total number of deaths is estimated at around 600,000.

These numbers are abstractions until they touch you personally. Through all of 2020 no one in my family got sick with COVID-19, but that changed quickly this year: first my mother got it, then one of my sisters, then two of my brothers along with members of their families. My younger brother, Paco, died after three weeks in intensive care, while Luis miraculously survived after being unconscious in the ICU for almost two months. Paco's death has shaken our family on both sides of the border in unimaginable ways, and I feel deep sorrow and empathy for the millions here with relatives all around the world suffering terrible losses who can't practice the rituals for the dead because of the pandemic.

It is easy to focus on our immediate surroundings and ignore the great pain and suffering that many parts of our one world are still experiencing. This is a worldwide pandemic and no one is completely safe until everyone is safe from this terrible disease. Solidarity with our local neighbors who lost relatives and friends in distant places is a good way for me to remember my brother Paco and for all of us to honor our common humanity.



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