

**Rapid Response:
CoViD-19 and Spanish flu, 100 years make the difference!**

Dear Editor,

One century, exactly 100 years, separate the CoViD-19 pandemic from "Spanish flu", the dramatic influenza pandemic which most likely caused a death toll of no less than 50 million people between 1918 and 1919.

While this is almost undeniable, many of the parallels and comparisons recently made between the two aforementioned pandemics and their respective causal agents (SARS-CoV-2 and IAV-H1N1 viruses) appear to be much less supported by evidence.

In this regard, I would like to emphasize a largely neglected "comparative feature" -- namely, the secondary microbial (bacterial) infections complicating -- not infrequently -- the primary SARS-CoV-2- and IAV-H1N1-induced/related/associated pneumonic lesions.

Noteworthy, a time interval close to 30 years separates, at its turn, the Spanish flu from the "antibiotic era", given that only in 1946 did Alexander Fleming discover penicillin, the first antibiotic made available to mankind (as well as to animals). This necessarily implies that the Spanish flu forms with secondary bacterial complications had a much worse prognostic evaluation as compared to CoViD-19-affected patients, developing secondary bacterial infections for which a wide spectrum of antibacterial drugs is nowadays available.

Nevertheless, it would be of crucial relevance to gain proper insight into the pathogenic and pathogenetic roles played by microbial complications in the course of SARS-CoV-2 infection, with special emphasis on the prevalence of such conditions among the 900,000 individuals who have officially succumbed to CoViD-19 worldwide. This would be of great interest also in relation to the alarming increase of human (and animal) infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, with an estimated 33,000 and 700,000 deaths being caused by such micro-organisms in Europe and across the entire globe, respectively.

Competing interests: No competing interests

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