

Transcript of Interview with Isabel Vara by Grace Griffin

Interviewee: Isabel Vara
Interviewer: Grace Griffin
Date: 12/09/2021
Location (Interviewee):
Location (Interviewer):
Transcriber: Lily Crigler

Abstract: In this interview, Isabel Vara shares her perspective on COVID-19 after taking a class on past pandemics.

Grace Griffin 00:00

Hi, my name is Grace Griffin. Um, I'll be interviewing Isabel. Do you give consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 Archive Project?

Isabel Vara 00:08

Yes, I do.

Grace Griffin 00:09

Could you state the date and time please.

Isabel Vara 00:11

Today is December 9th, and it is 1:36pm.

Grace Griffin 00:15

Okay. Um, for my first question, have you heard of all the pandemics we discussed in class previously and how much or how little did you know,

Isabel Vara 00:25

Um, I definitely heard of all the pandemics we discussed prior to taking the class, but I did not know any details about them. I'd say I knew probably the most about the flu and the least about the Black Death, and I knew nothing about how humans responded to each pandemic.

Grace Griffin 00:42

What is something that shocked you to learn about?

Isabel Vara 00:45

I think it was most shocking to learn about how much pandemics affected societies in the world. I've never really thought about the individual people and communities that were affected during these pandemics. I just always recognized that they sort of happened, and with that, I also found it so interesting that each of the responses and mistakes continued to grow more and more similar with each and every pandemic.

Grace Griffin 01:09

What is something you want to learn more about?

Isabel Vara 01:12

Um, I'd say probably the science behind each of the pandemics. I'm kind of a science person more so than a history person, so specifically, the ways the pandemic spread through the human body and how they eventually grew to kill people.

Grace Griffin 01:29

And what would be your biggest takeaway from the class?

Isabel Vara 01:32

Um, my biggest takeaway is probably that the world is in dire need of public health reform. I think every time we learned about a different pandemic, there was a way for humans to stop the spread or prevent it from happening at all, but I also think with that realization comes the obvious recognition that the world has definitely grown due to pandemics as they highlighted the areas in need of reform during their time periods.

Grace Griffin 01:58

Having learned about these previous pandemics, in what ways has your perception of the COVID-19 pandemic changed? Have your feelings or emotions changed as well?

Isabel Vara 02:09

Um, I've grown to appreciate the reforms that COVID-19 has put in place. Definitely before taking this class I knew wearing a mask was important, but now I genuinely want to wear one because I noticed protecting us all as humans, not just protecting me. But I've also developed a hatred towards politics in a way, because without politics throughout COVID-19, especially, I think things would have been dealt with in a much more different and definitely cleaner way too.

Grace Griffin 02:42

Do you see more similarities or differences between previous pandemics and COVID-19?

Isabel Vara 02:48

I definitely found myself noticing a few similarities here and there when learning about each pandemic, with that sort of realization, like Oh, that kind of sounds familiar when learning about specific things. But overall, I think it is difficult to compare and contrast past pandemics with our current one because one, the diseases or viruses themselves differ drastically in current, in their variants, and two, they all exist in, uh they all existed during different time periods with different technological and scientific advancements. However, I definitely think it is interesting to compare them and can be helpful to learn from past mistakes.

Grace Griffin 03:28

Do you think the way in which COVID-19 pandemic has been handled does or does not demonstrate that humans have learned and grown in response to previous disease outbreaks?

Isabel Vara 03:37

I think the beginning of the way COVID-19 was handled was a little shaky and could have been confronted earlier. But the fact that quarantines were put into place so early and vaccines were created so fast shows how we have had experience with these situations before.

Grace Griffin 03:53

Do you think future pandemics will be handled differently?

Isabel Vara 03:57

Um, not really. I mean, we've seen time and time again that the same regulations are put into place and the same techniques are used. If anything, I think the handling of pandemics will only continue to get better as we learn from past pandemics and also easier as technico-, technological and scientific advancements continue to increase.

Grace Griffin 04:18

Thank you.