

Winning the War Against Coronavirus Using the Health Belief System (HBM) Model

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Abstract

As the fight against the novel coronavirus spread across nations, it is important to adopt better health practices to help minimize its spread. Hence, this paper on “winning the war against coronavirus using the health belief system (HBM) model” aimed at changing the views of local communities about health systems. If a community is not used to wearing mask, distancing themselves and using sanitizers, how can health practitioners convince and make communities adopt these new way of life before any possible attack? Allowing attacks before adjustments complicate issues, hence the need to make quick health belief change in advance. It was suggested that individuals must avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth; wash hands regularly and see a doctor if they experience fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

Keywords: Coronavirus, Health Belief System

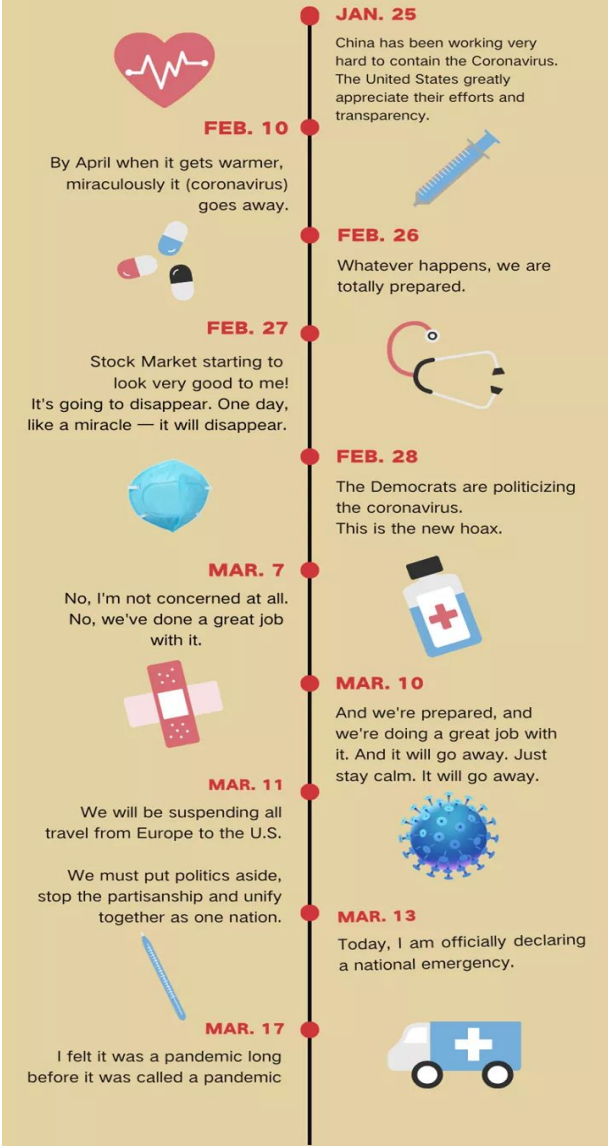
Introduction

The war against the novel Coronavirus has become more difficult for many nations to win as a result of late response behaviour where nationals were unable to respond quickly to circumstances until it has become virtually too late. According to various China renowned media platforms like the China Xinhua News and the China Daily, the Chinese believed that the Americans were a little bit slow to taking adequate actions in tackling the coronavirus. Trump was even accused of saying “one day, like a miracle – it will disappear”. Trump, it seems, did not believe that the pandemic would one day overwhelm the Americans.

Owing to the above circumstance, it has become overwhelmingly important that we change the health beliefs of our people on time before the pandemics strike. Although it is a little bit late as it has entered many countries already, community efforts at this level can help ward off the spread and assist federal and local health practitioners to contain the virus.

In this publication, let us use the health belief model to tackle the challenge of changing the

belief system of the public to quickly adopt new health beliefs on time to help contain the viral spread.



Health Belief Model by Hochbaum, Rosenstock and Kegel (1950)

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is a psychological model that attempts to explain and predict health behaviors. This is done by focusing on the attitudes and beliefs of individuals. The HBM was first developed in the 1950s by social psychologists Hochbaum, Rosenstock and Kegels working in the U.S. Public Health Services. The model was developed in response to the failure of a free tuberculosis (TB) health screening program. Since then, the HBM has been adapted to explore a variety of long- and short-term health behaviors, including sexual risk behaviors

and the transmission of HIV/AIDS (University of Twente, 2017). **Pic. 1 & 2 Source:** China Xinhua News

The health belief model was originally developed to explain why people did or did not take advantage of preventive services such as disease screening and immunizations. Its central thesis/assumption is that health behavior is determined by two interrelated factors: a person's perception both of the threat of a health problem and of his or her accompanying appraisal of a recommended behavior for preventing or managing the problem. The model works well,

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especially for early detection or for some conditions, such as infectious diseases, that people might find frightening, especially if they are uncertain about the effects of treatment methods (Medical Encyclopaedia, 2017).

The theory on Health Belief Model can be operational in school oriented programmes and assert that if people are educated about their personal susceptibility to health problems, they will be motivated to become more involved in self-management of their conditions. This theory has been published to aid community leaders and health workers understand the need to enlighten their community members to be conscious of safety measures against the novel coronavirus pandemic.

A Conceptual Framework

The Health Belief Model

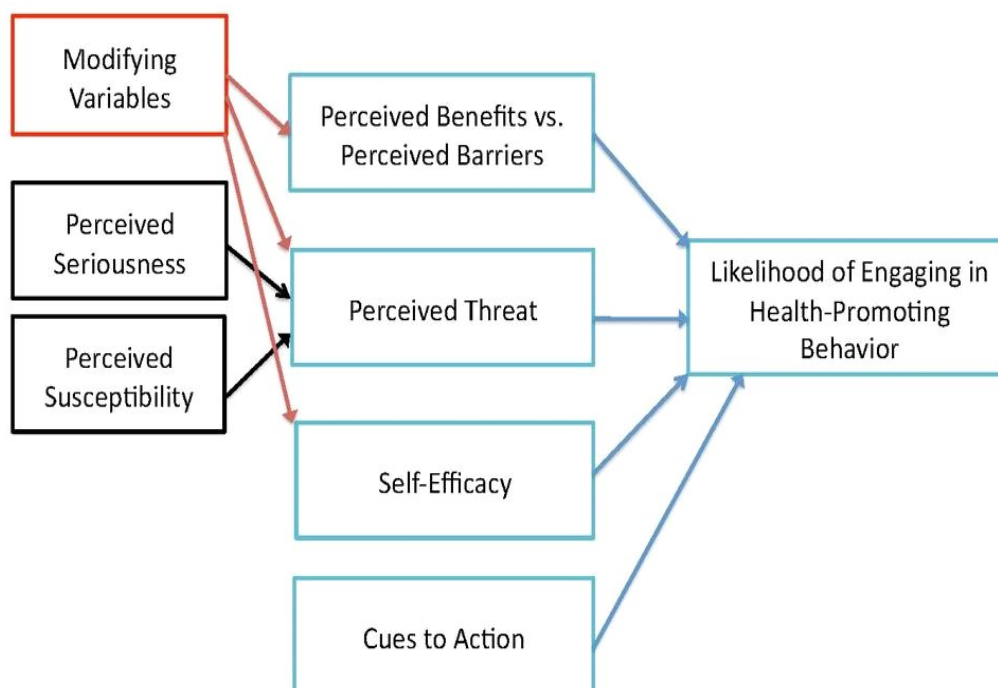


Fig. 1: Health Belief Model (Wikipedia, 2017)

The Health Belief Model and Coronavirus Education

The Health Belief Model (HBM) has been applied to a variety of health education topics including sexuality education and in this case, the novel coronavirus. Since the HBM is based on motivating people to take action, (like using face mask, alcohol-based sanitizers, and maintaining personal hygiene) it can be a good fit for coronavirus education programs that focus on:

- Primary prevention — for example, programs that aimed to prevent close contact, encourage social distancing, and changing belief systems that had hitherto overwhelmed communal practice.
- Secondary prevention — for example, programs that aim to increase early detection of coronavirus to reduce its spread via physical/spittle contacts and to ensure the early treatment of the conditions.

Applying the health belief system to the coronavirus pandemics will help communities across all African states to protect themselves. Health practitioners have to change the narrative and make people believe that without the use of face mask, sanitizers, hand washing practices, good hygiene and social distancing, it will be difficult to win the war against the novel Covid-19. Consequently, healthy practices must be tied to become part of the community's daily affairs.

Conclusion

It will be very easy to overcome the novel coronavirus if proper belief systems are adopted by the majority of the communities and protect themselves. Belief are central to human development, control and governance. Once a proper hygiene practice is adopted, the containment of the pandemic will become easier for health practitioners.

Suggestions for Local Communities

This is the time for community leaders to take the safety of their community into their hands. This is the time for actionable, responsive and implementable policies to save the local communities.

1. No face mask, no movement especially for areas where movement is still allowed.
2. Shop owners must provide hand washing platforms if they must sell.
3. Create public hand washing centres with adequate water and detergents
4. Community should endeavour to make free mask and possibly sanitizers available.
5. Maintain World Health Organization's social distancing limit of at least, 1 meter (1 meter equal three feet).
6. Avoid unnecessary movements
7. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
8. Practice respiratory hygiene
9. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early
10. Stay informed and follow advice given by your healthcare provider