Are we 'Waiting for Godot?' A metaphor for COVID-19

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"Waiting for Godot," a play by Samuel Beckett, one of the greatest works of the Theater of the Absurd, is used to illustrate the dystopic nature of our approach to COVID-19. The continued use of a lab test to inappropriately define a 'case' and the use of that measure to define the health impacts of the pandemic is discussed.

Given the broad variability in COVID-19 tests and their characteristics, coupled with the estimated prevalence of the disease further clouds the validity of conclusions drawn from testing to date. The continued unqualified reporting of this statistic does little to guide appropriate intervention policies but does continue to fuel the levels of public fear. Much of the conflict over appropriate policies revolves around waiting for a vaccine that, like Godot, may never arrive. The contribution of Herd Immunity in decreasing the transmission rate is also addressed as is the concept of individual risk.

Going forward we not only have to accept the fact that we are war with the virus but also the fact that war generates casualties. The most prevalent casualties of this conflict have become the 55 million K-12 school children who are, ironically, essentially immune. To continue this travesty on what might be an illusion of hope is akin to systematic child abuse.

  More information: Are we "Waiting for Godot"- A Metaphor for Covid-19, *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness* (2020). DOI: 10.1017/dmp.2020.280

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