

# Depression Assured? Maybe (Swine Flu)

Wednesday, August 19, 2009

Posted by [Karl Denninger](#) in [Editorial](#) at 11:00

*The Centers for Disease Control has predicted a 2.1 percent to 3.3 percent death rate among those who come down with swine flu this fall, which translates into an additional 52,000 to 86,000 deaths in the city over a three-month period, Kasdan said.*

Has the CDC actually predicted a 2.1-3.3% death rate for those who come down with the swine flu?

(This is known as the "CFR", or "clinical fatality rate", among those in the field.)

I have been trying to source this statement - so far without success. But if it is accurate then there are two things you need to take away from this right here and now:

First, **we will have an economic depression.** If the CAR, or "attack rate" (the percentage of people in the population) who get the flu is in the typical range of 40-60% of the population, then a CFR of 2-3% means **one million or more dead Americans this fall and winter**, or more succinctly, somewhere around one in a hundred. If your kid goes to school with 1,000 other people, 10 of them will die (on average.)

This sort of disruption in the economy, given where it is now, **guarantees** a contraction of GDP of 10% or more from the top, which is the definition of economic depression. We can argue about "how bad of a depression" later.

Second, if these numbers are **anywhere close** to reality the entire US medical care system will effectively collapse. We do not have 10% of the medical infrastructure necessary to treat 1 million Americans presenting to hospitals over a 2-3 month time frame with critical (and ultimately terminal!) symptoms, nor can we possibly treat the ten times greater count of people who will present to a hospital with what look to be critical symptoms but ultimately survive.

**If these numbers are anywhere close to accurate the quality of medical care available in The United States will almost instant return to 1950s-style medicine - that is, little more than aspirin and perhaps some antibiotics for secondary bacterial infections, plus careful observation.**

You will be BEST OFF if you get the flu under such circumstances attempting to tough it out at home, as if you present to the hospital not only will there be no advanced treatment available (simply due to lack of beds) but in addition you will expose yourself to secondary infections that you would otherwise not risk.

Again folks: These numbers portend a catastrophic outcome for the economy over the next year *if they are accurate*. There is absolutely nothing we can do about that outcome if this is in fact an accurate estimate of the CFR for swine flu this fall and winter.

I therefore strongly recommend that you consider laying in sufficient supplies to be able to "shelter in place" in your home - not due to a "zombie invasion" or the "breakdown of society", but rather as a self-defense mechanism against acquiring secondary infections that could literally kill you, assuming the flu does not directly do so. You must assume, given these numbers (if they are accurate) that you **will** get sick and that once one member of your family does, or you start to see cases pop up in your local community, your **best defense** will be to "cocoon" until you have either recovered or that particular wave of infections in your local community has passed - a period of time that is likely to be somewhere between two weeks and two months in duration.

Note that with **most** viruses once you've been infected with a particular strain and have recovered you obtain at least partial (and sometimes complete) immunity to that particular strain infecting you again. As such if you or a member of your family get ill **and then recover**, you should consider yourself the "designated gatherer" and be the one to venture out to restock supplies and such, since you should have at least limited immunity against re-infection. The trick, of course, will be knowing if you were in fact sick with swine flu (and not the more-common normal seasonal variety!) as it is likely both will be circulating at the same time.

If you have children in school start thinking about how you will deal with this **now**, as the odds of school administrators doing the right thing and closing schools is quite close to zero, especially if the so-called "response" of administrators this last spring is any guide.