

Coronavirus Testing: Why it is not appropriate at this time.

Testing for a disease is usually done to guide therapy and identify the infective agent so that containment can be achieved. As I mentioned elsewhere, at this stage of the game, containment is no longer an option nor is it possible. The designation of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the WHO (World Health Organization) reinforces the fact that containment is no longer possible.

Testing makes absolute sense early in the course of any infection to facilitate identification and containment, but we are past that stage here in WA and in the US. Even in states where cases of infection are low there are likely too many asymptomatic carriers that once discovered will still be impossible to contain

There remains however a few countries around the world, those with very few cases and regulated borders, that will better manage their infection rate going forward if testing is done early and rigorously. This article explains how testing can be effectively used to contain a virus in the early stages of emergence.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2762689>

Testing, although available to special populations, e.g. hospital workers, cruise ships, etc, is not yet available for everyone at this time and may not be for the next few weeks. There are reports that test kits sent to local jurisdictions by the CDC are incomplete so they are not even able to be processed even when a sample is collected. Many samples after being collected are expiring before being processed as there are not enough of the reagents needed to run tests or even make up the test kits.

Testing of hospital workers is necessary and critical so that we do not have “Typhoid Marys”, more applicable, “Corona Carriers”, floating around the hospital or care facilities inadvertently infecting everyone.

Testing on enclosed communities like cruise ships is also important so that isolation of those infected can be done in a timely manner, so that everyone else is not infected.

While it is understandable that everyone with respiratory symptoms have a desire to be tested, at this stage of the game, what is the value of being tested, and why further risk your life and health to be tested?

I would like you to consider the following before you insist on getting tested.

1. The WHO and CDC are emphasizing that everyone should be tested, which to me is contradictory on a few fronts as nothing but numbers/information will be garnered by testing:
 - a. It is contradictory to identify social distancing as the most important step to take to help decrease spread of the virus while simultaneously encouraging everyone to be tested and facilitating this by offering free tests and drive through testing.
 - i. If you have symptoms you should isolate to prevent infecting others and worsening your condition.
 - ii. **Testing for a disease is primarily done to guide therapy:**
 1. **There is currently no therapy or treatment available for this virus.**
 2. **A positive nor a negative test result will not provide any additional recommendations that will either**
 - a. **Change the course of the disease**
 - b. **Nor change the current recommendations for self care.**

