

Pandemic

The impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt over the next decade as it resets expectations of freedom of movement, government-citizen relationships and international politics. For sport and recreation, it will continue to impact international events, but could increase the focus on physical fitness and healthy communities.

What we're seeing

Policy uncertainty set to remain

The pandemic's capacity to exacerbate VUCA conditions will continue in all policy areas. There is significant uncertainty regarding the cascading effects that may arise directly from the disease and responses to it, and how these will interact across multiple interconnected systems over the coming months and years

Mass global vaccination 2-3 years away

An EIU report concludes that most poor nations will take until at least 2024 to achieve mass immunisation. The economic impacts of this will be most keenly felt in the Asia-Pacific region.

A re-evaluation of work

The impact of the pandemic on work has led to what has been dubbed 'The Great Resignation' as workers react to pandemic pressure.

Continuing pandemic waves will occur

The longest global flu outbreak lasted five years, with two to four waves of infection over an average of two or three years. Covid is already among the more severe pandemics, as its second year concludes with the world in the middle of a third wave – and no end in sight.

Treatment innovations move beyond vaccination

New antiviral medications could significantly lessen the pandemics impact by reducing the chances of dying or being hospitalized for those most at risk.

Long-term emphasis on healthy living

This is borne out by research suggesting individuals are placing a greater emphasis on two key aspects of life; workplace flexibility and a focus on broader wellbeing.

New variants will emerge and potentially foil vaccination

The UK Government's 'SAGE' notes: "As eradication of SARS-CoV-2 will be unlikely, we have high confidence in stating that there will always be variants. The number of variants will depend on control measures." They have outlined four scenarios; only one of which has the virus reducing in virulence.

Individual privacy under pressure

Global identity solution vendors see the roll-out of digital 'vaccination passports' as a precursor to widespread adoption of digital ID's. The reliance on remote working has also changed the privacy and trust dynamic with increasing use of 'tattleware' software to monitor workers' online activity and assessing their productivity.

Implications

Create

- Expansion of investment in pharmaceutical and technological barriers to maintaining individual and population health.

Relate

- Individual isolation negatively impacting mental health.
- Increased appreciation of opportunities to connect in person to communities.

Consume

- Increased demand for services, products and entertainment experiences that can be accessed remotely.

Degrade

- Pre-pandemic ease of mobility does not return.
- Trust of individuals eroded by government and workplace enforcing compliant measures.

Connect

- Ongoing pandemic responses will further entrench remote working.
- Popularity of eSports boosted as isolated individuals connect online.

Define

- A potential redefinition of what individual and community wellbeing entails.
- Greater focus on health over economic outcomes.

More information (links)

- [High-Performance Sports In A VUCA World](#)
- [OECD \(2020\). Strategic foresight for the COVID-19 crisis and beyond: Using futures thinking to design better public policies.](#)
- [Here's what the next six months of the pandemic will bring.](#)
- [SAGE. \(2021\). Long term evolution of SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [Demarais, A. \(2021\). Delayed vaccination timelines will cost the global economy US\\$2.3trn \(p. 10\). Economist Intelligence Unit.](#)
- [Merck pill seen as 'a huge advance', raises hope of preventing COVID-19 deaths](#)