

Appendix: Five Curves of a Pandemic

Some have described four curves of the pandemic, representing the infection itself, as well as impacts on non-COVID acute care, unmanaged chronic conditions, and mental health.¹ We also suggest a fifth curve representing inequities in the distribution and economic impacts of the pandemic.² Each curve creates substantial morbidity and mortality and contributes to compounded consequences; policymakers must manage them all. The fifth curve creates higher mortality because disadvantaged patients get less resources and suffer higher mortality rates.³ Effective management and tracking rely on access to different types of data – not just case counts and death rates, but rich information about population density, underlying health of the population, who gets the disease and its short and long-term consequences.

1. Tseng V. 4 waves of the pandemic. Twitter. Available: <http://pic.twitter.com/YF7bif5PeK> [Accessed October 20, 2021].
2. Rhee K. The need to flatten the 4 curves of COVID-19. IBM Watson Health Perspectives. Available: <https://www.ibm.com/blogs/watson-health/flatten-the-curves-of-covid-19/> [Accessed October 20, 2021].
3. [Riley AR, Chen Y-H, Matthay EC, et al. Excess mortality among Latino people in California during the COVID-19 pandemic. *SSM Popul Health* 2021;15:100860.](#)