

# Themes and issues of COVID-19: What is prolonging the pandemic?

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare authorities and experts believed that the modern-time healthcare system was ready to face a global health crisis, but with over 5 hundred million cases, and 6 million deaths, the pandemic is still going on. This study aims to identify and classify factors into broad categories that had recurrent mentions as the reason for the prolonging pandemic. **Materials and methods:** A systematic review of 168 studies published between January and June 2022 available in PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar database is being conducted. The search terms were 'COVID', 'issues', 'challenges', 'impact', and 'response'. Factors identified as homogenous were grouped together. **Results and conclusion:** The preliminary results showed that the factors for the continued pandemic can be classified into three broad categories: the characteristics of the virus, the adequate response of health authorities, and population attitude. All three identified categories had time-related variability throughout the pandemic. The success in controlling the pandemic relies on the harmony of the identified categories. The characteristics of the virus include virulence, pathogenicity, transmissibility, and variants of mutations. The second category concerns how international and local health authorities reacted to the early COVID infection by devising strategies to prevent the spread of the disease, cure the infected, and protect the population from the virus. Currently, global vaccination coverage is considered as one of the important factors in the end of the pandemic. Perhaps the most important factor is the attitude of the population. This includes compliance with local mandates and following appropriate hygiene practices. The pandemic is projected to transition into an endemic in the next few months where COVID-19 becomes less of an issue. The success of transition into an endemic lies in addressing the deficiencies of the identified categories.