

A Note about the Statistics

Estimates of the number of people who were sick and died from influenza during the 1918 pandemic are crude at best. There is a great deal of uncertainty about the accuracy of these counts and the mortality rates derived from them. In many places, systems for recording deaths were poor or non-existent. Influenza was easily confused with other respiratory diseases and most people who fell ill or died from the disease were not attended by doctors. In many parts of the world, including Canada, the pandemic continued into 1920. This uncertainty about the toll taken by the 'Spanish flu' inspires scholars to keep digging for new information to make it possible to develop more reliable estimates of the toll taken during the pandemic.