

Critical Analysis Of Bubonic Plague

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Plague

Plague is a disease caused by the bacteria named *Yersinia Pestis*. There are three types of plague that resulted in millions of deaths across the Globe which are:

1. Bubonic Plague (which is the most common)
2. Septicaemic Plague
3. Pneumonic Plague ('Pneumonic Plague', 2020).

Bubonic Plague

Throughout history, many names have been awarded to the bubonic plague, such as the Pestilence, The Great Mortality, the Plague, or The Black Death. The Black Death or bubonic plague was one of the most fatal and lethal epidemics recorded in history, killing almost 75-200 million people in the Eastern and North African continent, starting from the period of 1347 to 1351 ('Pneumonic Plague', 2020),

In the past, the World has witnessed the deadliest stages of different kinds of plague, the black death (second plague pandemic) being the most fatal among them, which destroyed the cultures, refinement of human development throughout East Asia, Pacific Islands, Africa, Australia and many more (Power, 1995).

Symptoms Of The Disease:

The symptoms of the disease are as follows, and if left untreated, it could result in the death of the person within 7 to 8 days.

1. Fever of 38-41
2. Headaches
3. Pain in joints of the body
4. Nausea and vomiting
5. The emergence of buboes on different parts of the body
6. Spots on the skin turned black when they dried up (Middle Age people then named the bubonic plague as Black Death) ('Black Death', 2020)

Causes Of Bubonic Plague:

Many theories and concepts started to rise with the bubonic plague. Among them, the most favourable theory was the “miasma theory”, which was caused by miasmas as being invisible smoke or elements in the air that arose from polluted water, air, or any dirty matter. These toxic elements or mist would then remain in the air, through which individuals inhale them and become affected by the plague (‘Miasma Theory’, 2020).

The second most famous theory regarding the cause of the bubonic plague was fleas and rats. The bacteria named *Yersinia pestis* was the major reason behind the plague; many scientists came up with the theory that this bacterium lives in the intestines of fleas, from where they are transferred to the rats (*The Evolution of Epidemiologic Thinking*, n.d.). These rats die, and their flea parasite could transfer to humans and infect them with the disease. Paul-Louis Simond was the scientist who proved this theory through his Simond infection model,

Rat flea rat

Humans

Black rat

However, in recent research, archaeologist Barney Sloane discovered that there is inadequate verification or confirmation about the infected rats in the archaeological records found in London that could have supported the *Y. pestis* thesis. Further, the rapid spread of the disease also rejects the thesis that claims that flea parasites are the main cause of the bubonic plague (‘Black Death’, 2020).

Some scientists think that the bubonic plague was spread either through individual-to-individual contact, being too exposed to the sun, or by deliberately poisoning the person (*The Evolution of Epidemiologic Thinking*, n.d.). However, during the 14th century, many European healers found themselves at a loss to find the real cause behind the plague and, therefore, started to associate the Black Death with supernatural forces, earthquakes, punishments by God, or God’s anger (‘Consequences of the Black Death, 2020).

Consequences Of Black Death:

The ramifications of the black death were devastating socially, economically, and biologically to the civilizations around the world, especially in Europe (‘Black Death’, 2020).

The world’s population was adversely affected. It took about 80 years to recover from all the damages, and in some areas of Europe, it took about 150 years to reestablish (‘Consequences of the Black Death, 2020).

Medications:

Early medications for the Black Death included raw medicines like theriac, but many natural herbs, smoke, and other unrefined natural remedies failed to cure the disease. Doctors used to cover their whole bodies with clothing and face with masks to defend themselves from the miasmas that caused the plague. The idea of quarantine came with the cause of the black death, in which travellers and those who seemed to be infected by the disease were quarantined for a period of 40 days to make sure that they were infected-(*The Evolution of Epidemiologic Thinking* n.d.).

Summary

However, there are no single explanations or cure for the black death as many argue that *Y.pestis* is the major cause of the disease while some argue that the plague is the combination of different diseases that resulted in the formation of its two further types resulting in extending the period of pandemic ('Consequences of the Black Death, 2020). The reason for not reaching the core causes and remedies of the plague lies in the inability of humans to develop an environment in which they can study human groups to find more about the causal factors of the disease (*The Evolution of Epidemiologic Thinking*, n.d.).

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