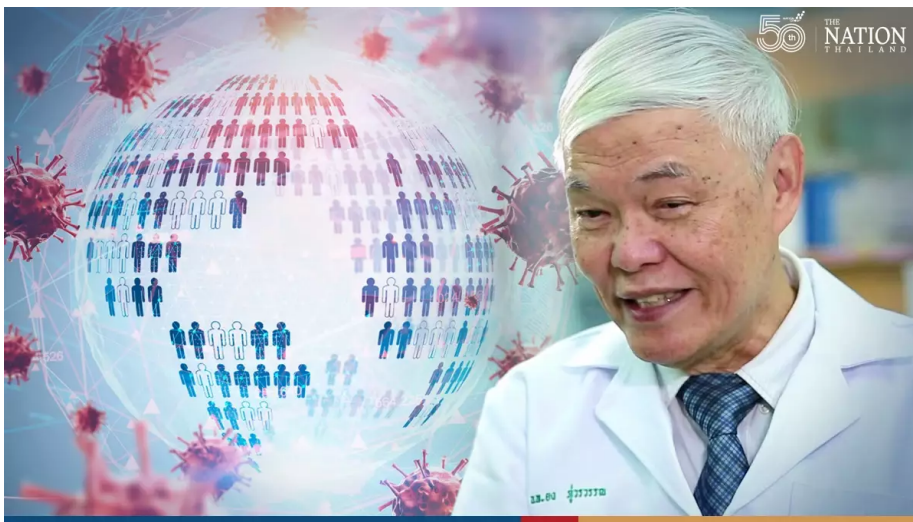


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COVID-19 is here to stay, top Thai virologist says

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| PHOTO: The Nation/Asia News Network

BANGKOK — A top virologist has said that human beings will have to live with Covid-19 forever, though the virus would be less severe as we would build immunity against it.

In a Facebook post on Thursday, Dr Yong Poovorawan of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Medicine, said it was a natural law, citing several diseases that had spread in the past, including smallpox and plague.

He said that the available knowledge and the medical field at that time were not modern as in the current era, but humanity could still survive until today as the pandemics did not last for a long time like Covid-19.

Explaining the survival instinct, Yong explained that once upon a time rabbits used to destroy a lot of crops so humans used a severe virus to kill rabbits and that became an epidemic for them.

A lot of rabbits died but some of them built immunity to the virus and

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per cent of the population, especially vulnerable groups.

He said that almost everyone is likely to get influenza once in three years and all three — influenza A (H1N1 and H3N2) and influenza B — within nine years.

Therefore, children aged under 9 who have not received any influenza vaccines should get the vaccine twice at one-month intervals, he suggested.

However, those aged over 9 who had been infected with influenza before should get a booster dose.

Yong said that it would be similar with Covid-19, as most people were likely to be infected in three years.

Currently, the medical field has improved a lot. Most people will be infected with the disease, like influenza. He added that most viral diseases in children are only severe in vulnerable groups.

As people have been fighting against Covid-19 for two and a half years, humans have developed, treated, and prevented the virus. People are aware that vaccination cannot stop the spread of the virus, but it will reduce the severity of the symptoms.

He added that a lot of people would be infected in later phases, which could be many tens of thousands of cases. Counting the number of those who had only mild or no symptoms and did not take a test, it could be a hundreds of thousands of cases.

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Therefore, the problem lies with vulnerable groups as the number of hospitalizations is around 2,000 to 3,000 with 20 to 30 deaths.

He concluded that Covid-19 will stay with us forever, but we will be able to live with it because it will be less severe while we would have better immunity due to vaccines, previous infections and better medicines.

Meanwhile, the number of fatalities will decrease and will be the same as

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