

## Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/planning-for-the-wrong-pandemic/>

This video is a reflection by a cultural anthropologist on pandemic preparedness and response, particularly in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The speaker discusses their previous work from 2017, where they published a book titled "Unprepared: Global Health in a Time of Emergency," which addressed the history of pandemic preparedness and the limitations of existing planning techniques, such as scenario-based exercises.

As the COVID-19 outbreak began in early 2020, many commentators referenced the book's title, interpreting it as prophetic. However, the author clarifies that the title was not meant as a diagnosis but as a call to action regarding an ethos of preparedness. They comment on the significant investments made in biological preparedness over the past two decades and observed that despite initial chaos in responding to the pandemic, many preparedness plans were implemented.

The author notes that while certain measures, like the Strategic National Stockpile, were intended for biological threats, they fell short when faced with the specific challenges of COVID-19, particularly regarding medical supplies. They also emphasize the importance of flexible planning, as different health crises present unique challenges.

Furthermore, they critique the governmental response under the Trump administration, which was characterized by a distrust of expertise. This video situation was compounded by inherent "blind spots" in pandemic planning that did not adequately account for the unique challenges posed by COVID-19 compared to previous health crises.

The author reflects on the need for transparent communication and humility from public health authorities to rebuild trust with the public, particularly in times of uncertainty. They suggest that investing in robust public health systems and biomedical research would be beneficial for both emergencies and ongoing health issues. Lastly, the speaker indicates a shift in focus toward climate change and water management issues, highlighting the need for experts to prepare for future uncertainties.