

Questão 24

Prescriptions for fighting epidemics



Epidemics have plagued humanity since the dawn of settled life. Yet, success in conquering them remains patchy. Experts predict that a global one that could kill more than 300 million people would come round in the next 20 to 40 years. What pathogen would cause it is anybody's guess. Chances are that it will be a virus that lurks in birds or mammals, or one that has not yet hatched. The scariest are both highly lethal and spread easily among humans. Thankfully, bugs that excel at the first tend to be weak at the other. But mutations – ordinary business for germs – can change that in a blink. Moreover, when humans get too close to beasts, either wild or packed in farms, an animal disease can become a human one.

A front-runner for global pandemics is the seasonal influenza virus, which mutates so much that a vaccine must be custom-made every year. The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, which killed 50 million to 100 million people, was a potent version of the "swine flu" that emerged in 2009. The H5N1 "avian flu" strain, deadly in 60% of cases, came about in the 1990s when a virus that sickened birds made the jump to a human. Ebola, HIV and Zika took a similar route.

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De acordo com o primeiro parágrafo,

- (A) há perspectivas de erradicar as epidemias nos próximos 40 anos.
- (B) as epidemias assolaram principalmente os povos ancestrais nômades.
- (C) as mutações que os germes sofrem geralmente atenuam a sua letalidade.
- (D) doenças presentes em animais e aves podem se transformar em doenças humanas.
- (E) as aves são as principais transmissoras de patógenos, devido à sua mobilidade.

ALTERNATIVA D

A questão pode ser respondida através da leitura e tradução de: “Chances are that it will be a vírus that lurks in birds or mamnuts”. Aqui fala da existência do vírus em aves e mamíferos – “When humans get too close to beasts, either wild or packed in farms, an animal disease can become a human one”. E nesse trecho fala sobre a doença se transformar (become) em doenças humanas.