

Trump did not ‘beat COVID’: Recovering from an illness is not a form of warfare

“Our president is strong and will beat the virus,” [said](#) House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy. “He’s a fighter,” [said](#) former press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders. He has the “strength and stamina” of someone decades younger, [said](#) a urologist.

Such rhetoric is not unique to Trump. In the Western world, bouts of illness are regularly described as “battles.”

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[Equating disease with warfare](#), and recovery with strength, means that death and disability are linked to failure and weakness. That “does such a disservice to all of the families who have lost loved ones, or who are facing long-term consequences,” says Megan Ranney, an emergency physician at Brown University.

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“The idea of fighting a disease creates this dyad between you and the illness” and distracts us from everything that affects that fight. Trump was born into wealth. He is white. He is the president of the United States. He had regular access to COVID-19 tests. He was given supplemental oxygen at the White House—his home—before being airlifted to Walter Reed, where he received dedicated medical care on taxpayer funds that [he himself contributed nothing to in 10 of the past 15 years](#).

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“He received a level of care that no patient has received in this country, and a combination of medications that has probably never been given to another patient,” [said emergency physician Uché] Blackstock.

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