

# Review of: "When a Cluster Is a Cluster"

Travis Williams<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rutgers University

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

This paper discusses clustering as it relates to infectious diseases and the traditional view of what determines a cluster vs the application of a cluster regarding situations like the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The author furthers this discussion by giving examples from China and advocating for broader definitions that encompass these situations, offering solutions from statistical clustering methods for more accurate classification of said clusters.

There are pros and cons to this paper.

Pros:

- 1.) This paper starts and continues a much-needed discussion of what constitutes a cluster for infectious diseases and pushes the boundaries of understanding, offering reasonings from the recent COVID pandemic (where some clusters were not from parties or intimate gatherings, but still were clusters that allowed the virus to spread from that initial stronghold).
- 2.) This paper asks questions in light of this pandemic to spur the scientific community to figure out more dynamic methods for cluster identification, suggesting spatial clustering as a starting point.

Cons:

- 1.) It is unclear what category of research paper this is. Survey? Essay?
- 2.) Regardless of categorization, the paper fails to follow the standard structure of a research paper (of any variety except an opinion piece).
- 3.) The major idea and concern is good, but the paper does not connect the ideas well. They are disjointed and sparse by themselves.
- 4.) There is no reasonable conclusion or ending to this paper. It draws the reader in with the introduction, keeps some attention with the two body categories, and then ends abruptly.

The premise and idea behind this paper is reasonable and should be pursued. But this paper seems incomplete (even if it's meant to be a shortform paper or essay). It needs better structuring and should include figures, graphs, and some sort of study or observation that yields results.

