ISSN : 2949 - 9100

International Journal of Health and Dentistry Care (IJHDC)

IJHDC : Health and Dental Publication

Available Online at: www.ijhdc.com

Volume – 3, Issue – 3, May - June - 2024, Page No. : 20 - 22

The Economics in Space: Costs, Trade, and Disease Avoidance Among Earth and Other Planets

[1]Jellstrom T, Department of Public Health, Environments, and Society, School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK

[2]Niveton D, Department of Public Health, Environments, and Society, School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK

Corresponding Author: Jellstrom T, Department of Public Health, Environments, and Society, School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK

Citation This Article: Jellstrom T, Niveton D, "The Economics in Space: Costs, Trade, and Disease Avoidance Among Earth and Other Planets", IJHDC – May – June - 2024, Volume. – 3, Issue - 3, P. No. 20 – 22.

Type of Publication: Original Research Article

Conflicts of Interest: Nil

Abstract

The space exploration and settlement require new economic models to manage the cost of goods, services, and infrastructure. With growing interest in interplanetary trade and resource extraction, the development of a sustainable economic framework becomes critical. This paper investigates the costs associated with space missions, analyzes the feasibility of interplanetary trade, and compares space economies with Earth's. Additionally, we explore methods to prevent diseases that originate on Earth from threatening human health during long-duration space missions. Drawing on insights from classical and modern economics, space policy literature, and health science, this paper provides actionable recommendations for resource allocation, trade governance, and health risk mitigation.

Keywords: Earth, Human Health, Harmful Conditions, Power Systems.

Introduction

The economics of space exploration has become a crucial subject of interest due to the increased involvement of governments, private companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin, and international collaborations. Projects such as the Artemis mission and ambitions to colonize Mars demand efficient economic models to minimize costs and ensure sustainability.

A parallel concern is human health in space, where limited resources and exposure to harmful conditions could threaten astronauts.

Economics of Space Exploration

Cost Analysis of Space Operations: The cost structure for space missions differs substantially from Earth-based operations. Key components include:

Launch Costs: The cost to send payloads into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) ranges from $10,000 to $40,000 per kilogram. Advances in reusable rocket technology, such as those developed by SpaceX, have begun to significantly reduce these costs, potentially leading to a more accessible space economy.

Operational Costs: Once in space, operational costs include maintaining life support systems, energy requirements, and communication infrastructure. These costs can escalate rapidly due to the harsh environment and need for redundancy in life-critical systems.

Infrastructure Investment: Establishing bases on other planets involves substantial upfront costs, including building habitats, power systems, and transportation networks. Initial estimates for a Mars base could reach tens of billions of dollars.

Economic Models for Space Operations

The economic models for space operations must account for various factors:

Resource Utilization: The concept of in-situ resource utilization (ISRU) is critical for reducing costs. Utilizing local materials (e.g., water, minerals) on the Moon or Mars can drastically decrease the need for Earth-based supplies.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborative ventures between government space agencies and private enterprises can enhance resource efficiency and innovation. By sharing risks and costs, these partnerships can stimulate growth in the space economy.

Insurance and Risk Management: Given the uncertainties of space travel, robust insurance models must be developed to cover potential failures and liabilities associated with missions.

Feasibility of Interplanetary Trade

Economic Theories in Interplanetary Context

Interplanetary trade poses unique challenges and opportunities. Drawing on classical trade theories, we can analyze potential trade routes and exchanges:

Comparative Advantage: Each celestial body may have unique resources (e.g., water ice on Mars, Helium-3 on the Moon) that could be traded based on comparative advantages.

Market Demand: Establishing demand for goods and services produced in space is crucial. Initial markets may focus on scientific research, manufacturing in microgravity, and resource extraction.

Barriers to Interplanetary Trade

Despite its potential, several barriers exist:

Transport Logistics: Developing efficient transportation systems capable of moving goods between planets remains a significant challenge.

Regulatory Frameworks: International laws governing space trade, such as the Outer Space Treaty, must evolve to accommodate new economic realities.

Market Infrastructure: A robust market infrastructure, including banking and trade agreements, is essential for facilitating transactions.

Disease Prevention in Space

Health Risks in Space Environments

Astronauts face numerous health risks, including exposure to radiation, microgravity effects, and psychological stress. Additionally, pathogens can pose severe threats in confined environments.

Strategies for Disease Mitigation

To ensure astronaut health during long-duration missions, the following strategies are proposed:

Pre-Flight Health Screening: Rigorous health assessments and quarantines before launch can minimize the risk of transmitting diseases to space habitats.

Onboard Medical Facilities: Developing advanced medical facilities capable of addressing a range of health issues, including isolation wards for infected crew members, is essential.

Telemedicine: Utilizing telemedicine for real-time consultations with Earth-based medical experts can enhance healthcare delivery during missions.

Biodefense Measures: Implementing stringent biodefense protocols to prevent the introduction and spread of pathogens in space habitats is crucial.

Conclusion

The economics of space exploration represents a frontier that intertwines costs, trade, and health management. As humanity moves towards establishing a presence beyond Earth, innovative economic models and health strategies will be essential for sustainable exploration and settlement.

Future research should focus on developing comprehensive frameworks that address the complexities of interplanetary trade and health prevention in space, ensuring that both economic and human factors are prioritized in this new era of exploration.

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