

Short story: threats imposed by Covid-19 on mental health

Abstract

The Corona Virus Disease 2019 (CoViD-19) along with many symptoms of physical illness has also been associated with many mental health problems. These mental health problems may arise in response to preventive and quarantine measures of isolation and controlled life activities.

Keywords: CoViD-19, pandemic, mental health

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Introduction

The Corona Virus Disease 2019 (CoViD-19) caused by a novel coronavirus strain, Severe Acquired Respiratory Syndrome-CoV-2, originated in 2019 in China and was declared as a global health emergency by the World Health Organization on January 30, 2020.¹ As the summer of 2020 arrived, it related with the reduced effect of global infectious ailments. However, viruses mutate, resulting in the emergence of more deadly and infectious variants. Worldwide, the public health suffered due to CoViD-19 is much greater than many of us intended.² Along with threats of physical illness in populations, it has also affected health and social systems globally. In order to control the spread of coronavirus, preventive and quarantine measures are taken involving the closure of public places like schools, colleges etc. and limiting the daily life activities of people. Such preventive measures may impose psychological threats on prone and vulnerable individuals and affect the associated communities. Different age, gender and social groups may show variable levels of mental distress. Experts have said that specific attention is required for certain groups being at more risk, like pregnant women, preexistent psychological disorders and international workers and students. In different studies, original research was carried out on the general population, healthcare workers and patients with CoViD-19.¹ In the pandemic, health-care professionals have been at risk of undergoing mental-instability more than any other professional group, as they are far away from their loved-ones so that not to infect them, longer duty-shifts and, as unusually, see people suffering and dying due to CoViD-19.² Healthcare workers are at more risk of being negatively psychologically affected. A variety of negative psychological behaviors are found, ranging from mild to severe anxiety, stress and depression. Several emotional outcomes are revealed, including irritation, boredom, anger, confusion and frustration. People got confused and worried about their own health and family, being at socio-economic-risk. Frontline healthcare workers are at more risk of stressful events and mental health trauma. They may show higher rates of stress, anxiety and insomnia.^{1,3} People, who are infected with CoViD-19 stay isolated from their relatives and hospitalized with severe respiratory illness, may be admitted to ICU. Patients recovering from CoViD-19 may also experience post-traumatic stress disorders, respiratory illness and cardiovascular diseases.⁴ The huge psychological impact of CoViD-19 on the patient population could be due to physical

isolation, side effects of medication or disease progression.¹ Due to the pandemic, people having mental sickness are more vulnerable to dementia, eating and autism spectrum disorders.⁴ People may show insomnia and domestic violence, increased substance intake and suicidal thoughts.³ People with preexisting mental illness are more vulnerable due to little awareness of risks and self-protection. Such patients face more barriers and problems in accessing health care and are more susceptible to stress.¹

Conclusion

The CoViD-19 Pandemic affected all age-groups either because of infection or because of socio-economic impacts.² In light of these, there is a need for an associated work plan for the mental and physical health of the public in an emergency arising from a pandemic. Mental health care organizations should work in collaboration with public health organizations.¹ Interventions should be adapted based on the risk factors that may lead to psychological issues, such as injury to self or family members, infringement on self-freedom, low income or economic losses, panic and isolation from family.^{1,3}

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare there are no conflicts of interest.

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