

Coronavirus COVID-19: the psychiatrists view

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Editorial

The last few days the whole world is experiencing the invasion of a new virus, the coronavirus COVID-19. The coronavirus disease 2019, first observed in China, has now spread all over the world, since Europe and United States of America. It is a pandemic that happened suddenly and massively. Doctors, politicians and other officials are trying to find the best way to win this battle, which has proven itself to be hard. All experts advise people to wash their hands and stay home, while in some countries social distancing and quarantine are enforced by the governments. This whole situation is extremely stressful. Indeed, stress levels have risen acutely among the population, and this is why psychiatrists tend to be the second most popular specialists among doctors these days- pneumonologists and pathologists are the most wanted, what-so-ever. Unfortunately, nowadays most people feel as if the phantom of death is hanging upon them. Fear leads to anxiety and depressive symptoms come as a result. Panic attacks are so often, as if they were “normal”. People have difficulty in sleeping or concentrating. Somatic symptoms, such as headaches, pains all over the body, high blood pressure, weakness and irritability are quite often. Feelings of sadness can be overwhelming and cause the mental disease that is called depression. It is important to notice that elderly people suffer the most, fear the most and get more anxious and depressed, since they are supposed to be most vulnerable to this virus than younger people.

It is essential to help people go through this period, as smoother as possible. First of all, it is utterly important to realize that “we will survive” this infection. The thought that “we will all going to die” is a false, non-realistic though, that does not hold truth. Of course, we do have to stay home, in order to impede the virus’s spreading, and protect other people from being infected. This is all an altruistic behavior, even if it is imposed by force. Restoring the feeling of security is the first thing we have to do. Secondly, given that we do feel safe inside our home, it is up to us to get the best out of it. Actually,

we could have some good time, while staying in our houses. This is our opportunity to “get to know each other once more”, to “meet again with our family”, to find funny things to do together, to spend valuable time with the persons we love. What is more, this is a great opportunity to finally spend time for ourselves, to do all the things we never “had the time” to do, to get an insight into ourselves. Finally, this is the time to re-evaluate our lives, our philosophy, our way of living. “Stop and think” is the message. We are forced to stop for a while. We could make the difference and think as well! We would come up with priceless wisdom... In the case that none of this works, people are advised to turn towards physicians in mental health and get the help they need. Summing up, “do not be afraid”, “stay home”, “wash your hands”, “have fun with your family”, “enjoy spending time with yourself”, “ask for help”. Simple steps to make our lives easier, to make ourselves better...

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