

Anxiety and stress among youth during COVID-19 global pandemic

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ABSTRACT

'Youth' is defined as the period by the end of adolescence and beginning of adulthood is a phase of transition. This phase of transition is very crucial in development of an Individual and is characterized by anxiety and stress. This is so because this transition encompasses developmental changes which determine the individual's competencies during adulthood- the longest period of the life cycle. The acquisition and consolidation of values, competencies, emotional and social capital, and attitudes are of paramount importance in ensuring youths experience of a successful transition. This stress and anxiety in Youth is getting multiplied due to COVID-19 pandemic which is marked by an environment of fear and uncertainty, with cure yet to be discovered. This is taking toll on mental health and wellbeing of people. This Survey attempts to assess the awareness about COVID-19, appraisal of and attitude towards COVID-19 pandemic situations, experience of anxiety and stress, and perceived mental health care needs during the pandemic of the novel coronavirus in a sample of 500 youth (18 to 21 years of age).

Keywords: COVID-19, COVID-19 Pandemic, Youth, Mental Health, Stress, Anxiety

The COVID-19 outbreak, also known as the coronavirus outbreak, is an ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV 2). The COVID-19 outbreak was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization on 30 January 2020, declared the outbreak a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic in India is the part of worldwide pandemic. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales and the other person inhales it. These droplets land on different objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 when they come in contact with these objects or surfaces. This is why it is important to maintain social distance and wear a mask. Social distancing, also known as "physical distancing," means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practice social or physical

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distancing, one must stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people who are not from one's household in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

To prevent the spread of coronavirus and to make people follow the norms of social distancing, nationwide lockdown was announced by the Government of India. On 24 March 2020, the Prime Minister ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, affecting the entire 1.3 billion-person population of India. On 14 April 2020, India extended the nationwide lockdown till 3 May 2020 which was followed by two-week extensions starting 3 and 17 May 2020 with substantial relaxations. With all public places, including educational institutes and workplaces being closed, and severe restriction on movement of people outside their houses, people were left with no option but to stay at home 24×7.

Citizens in large parts of the world are locked down, with their lives disrupted, their livelihoods hurt or even destroyed, they stare at an uncertain future for themselves and their loved ones. Unsurprisingly, this has caused anxiety, fear, stress, and trauma. In short environment of fear and uncertainty that has been created by the worsening COVID-19 pandemic situation, with cure yet to be discovered, is taking toll on mental health and well-being of people across all age spans including children, Youth, Adults and old people.

This study tends to focus on effect of COVID-19 pandemic situation on people of age ranging from 18 to 21. Keniston (1970) recognised this life phase as 'youth'. Youth is essentially a period of 'studenthood', typically marked by undergraduate or post-graduate education.^[1] This age range is characterised by end of adolescence and beginning of adulthood. This period of transition is particularly very challenging in the life span of an individual. Some of these challenges are related to the acquisition of skills, bonds within family structure, friendships, and employment system.^[2]

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a vulnerable period when young people take their first definitive steps toward independence and begin to enter their new role as adults. If such crucial period of transition is marked by a global pandemic, it becomes very important to study the effect of 'pandemic situation' on mental health of youths, manifested in the form of anxiety and stress.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is a cross-sectional, observational study carried out in India. A Snowball sampling technique was used. An online questionnaire was developed by using google forms. This online self-reported questionnaire developed by the investigators contained the following four sections, namely section A, B, C and D, related to awareness about COVID-19, appraisal of and attitude towards COVID-19 pandemic situations, experience of anxiety and stress, and perceived mental health care needs during the pandemic of the novel coronavirus respectively. There were 4 multiple choice questions in section A (awareness about COVID-19). Section B (appraisal of and attitude towards COVID-19 pandemic situations) contained 6 items that were to be rated in the 5point Likert scale format. Section C (experience of anxiety and stress during COVID-19 pandemic) had 16 items that were supposed to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Section D (perceived mental health care needs during the pandemic of the novel coronavirus) contained 4 items.

Sample comprised of a total number of 500 respondents. All the participants were college students, above 18 years of age and Indian residents. The lowest educational level in the study was observed to be first year of Under graduation and the highest educational level to

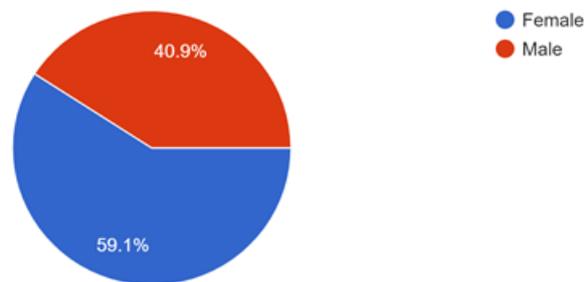
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be final of Post-graduation. The study included only those participants who understood English and had access to internet. The mean age of participants was 19.5 years, with highest of 21 and lowest of 18 years of age. Among all the participants, 40.9% were males and 59.1% were females. Almost 80% of the participants belonged from urban area. Descriptive statistics have been used in the study to analyse the findings. Mean and standard deviation and proportions have been used to estimate the results of the study.

RESULTS

Among all the participants, 40.9% were males and 59.1% were females.

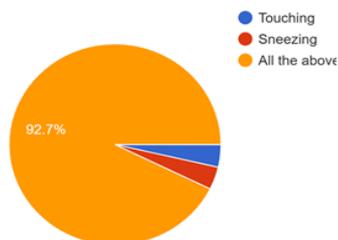
Gender



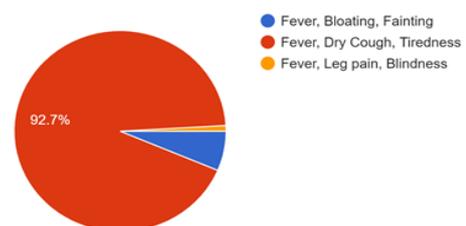
Awareness about COVID-19

A considerable number of participants were aware of the symptoms, means of spread and method of prevention of COVID-19. Out of total number of participants, 92.7% participants responded that coronavirus spreads from touching and sneezing, 92.7% participants regarded fever, dry cough and tiredness as major symptoms, and 85.5% participants acknowledged loss of taste or smell and sore throat to be some other symptoms of COVID-19. 96.4% of the total responders, answered that using alcohol-based sanitizers and washing hand frequently are some of the ways to prevent coronavirus spread.

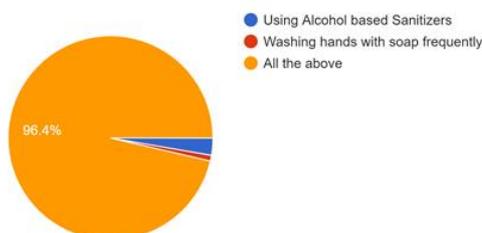
How does Corona virus spread?



Which of the following are the symptoms of COVID-19

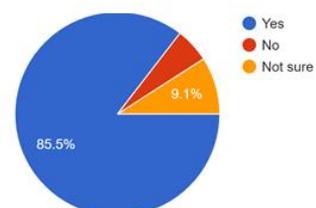


Which the following can prevent corona virus spread?



Are the following symptoms of COVID-19?

Loss of taste or smell, Sore throat, difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath

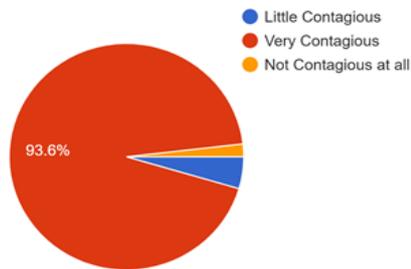


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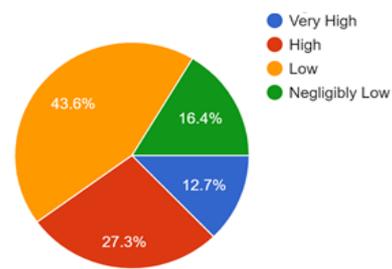
Appraisal of and attitude towards COVID-19 pandemic situations

Out of total number of participants, 93.6% regarded COVID-19 as ‘very contagious’ and 4.5% participants regarded it as ‘little contagious’. On being asked about their level of proneness to get infected from corona virus- 12.7% participants responded, ‘very high’, 27.3% participants responded ‘high’, 27.3% participants responded ‘low’, while 16.4% participants responded ‘very low’.

What do you think of Corona virus?

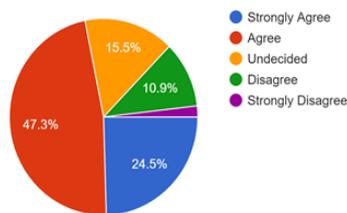


How much prone you are to get infected from Corona virus?

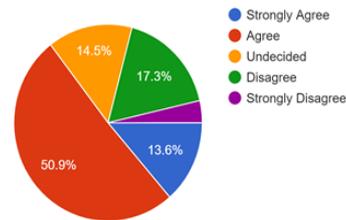


Out of total number of participants, 71.8% participants agreed that being at home during lockdown had made people more sad and depressed, 64.5% participants agreed that people have moved away from their loved ones during pandemic situations, 79.1% participants agreed that family members have come closer to each other during lockdown as they have got a lot of time to spend together, while 62.7% participants affirmed that everyone together at home during lockdown leaves no space for individual privacy or ‘me time’.

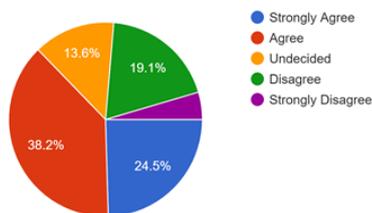
Being at home during lockdown has made people more sad and depressed.



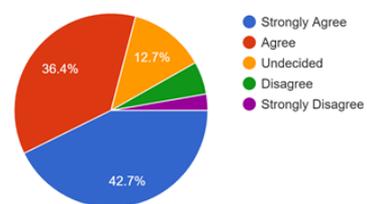
People have moved away from their loved ones during pandemic situations, because of inability to meet them.



Everyone together at home leaves no space for individual privacy or ‘me time’.



Family members have come closer to each other as they have got to spend a lot of time together.



Experience of stress due to COVID-19 pandemic situations

Out of total number of participants involved in the study, 27.3% participants reported that they have often felt that they were unable to control important things in their life, while 45.5% often felt unable to manage their tasks/work. 27.3% participants often felt nervous and stressed due to COVID-19 pandemic, while 47.3% participants affirmed to have felt it sometimes during the last one month. 40% participants often have felt irritated because of things that happened were out of your control. During last one month, 29.1% participants

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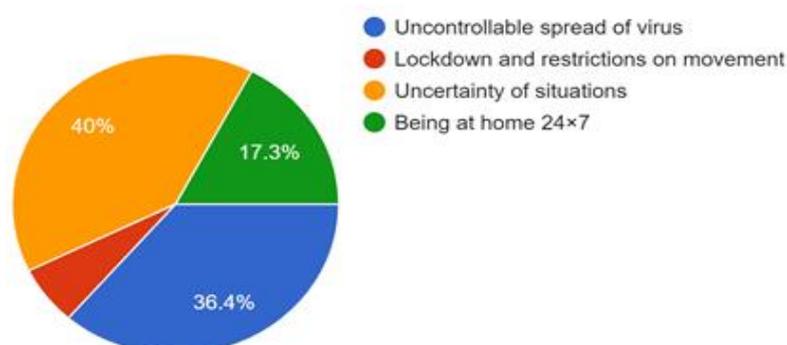
reported often have felt a lack of escape, while 36.4% participants often felt a lack of personal space. Out of total number of participants, 39% participants often found themselves stressed due to uncertainty of situations, while 27.3% often have felt confident about their abilities to handle arising problems.

Table 1: Items and % of participant responses for each choice

Items	Very often	Fairly often	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
During last one month, how often you have felt that you were unable to control important things in your life?	10%	12.7%	50.9%	12.7%	13.6
During last one month, how often you have felt nervous and stressed due to COVID-19 pandemic?	8.2%	19.1%	47.3%	12.7%	12.7%
During last one month, how often you have felt irritated because of things that happened were out of your control?	13.6%	26.4%	34.5%	12.7%	12.7%
During last one month, how often you have felt a lack of escape?	16.4%	12.7%	34.5%	19.1%	17.3%
During last one month, how often you felt a lack of personal space?	15.5%	20.9%	31.8%	16.4%	15.5%
During last one month, how often found yourself stressed due to uncertainty of situations?	14.5%	24.5%	41.8%	10%	9.1%
During last one month, how often you felt unable to manage your tasks/work?	20%	25.5%	45.5%	3.6%	5.5%
During last one month, how often you have felt confident about your abilities to handle arising problems?	10%	17.3%	41.8%	18.2%	12.7%

On being asked about biggest stress creating factor during COVID-19 pandemic situation, 40% participants attributed uncertainty of situations to be the biggest factor, while 36.4% voted for uncontrollable spread of virus. 17.3% and 6.4% participants attributed being at home 27×7, and lockdown and restrictions on movement to be biggest factor respectively.

Which of the following is the biggest stress creating factor in your opinion?



Experience of anxiety due to COVID-19 pandemic situations

Out of total number of participants, 21.9% participants often felt paranoid about catching the coronavirus infection, while 35.5% participants experienced it sometimes. 49.1% participants reported that they often thought of COVID-19 pandemic and 40.9% participants

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reported to be preoccupied with this thought sometimes. 9.1 % of the total participants affirmed that they have often felt difficulty sleeping because of being worried about coronavirus pandemic and 27.3% participants reported to have faced such difficulty sometimes. 19.1% participants reported to have often felt alienated. 39.1% participants often felt to have lost touch of friends and loved ones. 45.5% participants often felt headaches or muscle tension. 28.2% participants often felt anxious by the posts on social media about novel coronavirus and 50.9% participants felt anxious by updates of increasing COVID-19 cases.

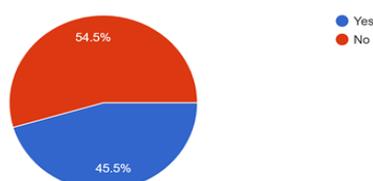
Table 2: Items and % of participant responses for each choice

Items	Very often	Fairly often	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
During last one month, how often you felt paranoid about catching the coronavirus infection?	5.5%	16.4%	35.5%	21.8%	20.9%
During last one month, how often you have had difficulty sleeping by being worried about Coronavirus pandemic?	1.8%	7.3%	27.3%	19.1%	44.5%
During last one month, how often you felt anxious by the posts on social media about coronavirus infection?	8.2%	20%	34.5%	18.2%	19.1%
During last one month, how often you have felt anxious by updates of increasing coronavirus cases?	20%	30.9%	30.9%	4.5%	13.6%
During last one month, how often do you think about coronavirus pandemic?	20%	29.1%	40.9%	4.5%	5.5%
During last one month, how often you felt alienated?	2.7%	16.4%	47.3%	11.8%	21.8%
During last one month, how often you felt a loss of touch of your friends and loved ones?	18.2%	20.9%	29.1%	14.5%	17.3%
During last one month, how often you felt headaches and muscle tension?	20%	25.5%	45.5%	3.6%	5.5%

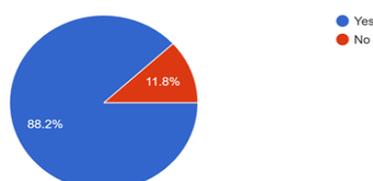
Perceived mental health care needs in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic

On being asked about that if the participants need someone to help them to help them in coping with anxiety arising due to pandemic situations, 45.5% participants answered in a 'yes'. 88.2% participants affirmed that its necessary to seek mental health help if someone panics in the lieu of COVID-19 pandemic. 92.7% participants accepted the fact mental health issues are one of the biggest concerns in present pandemic situations, and 88.2% participants affirmed that they would suggest people who experience any serious mental health issue during pandemic to seek professional help.

Do you think you need someone to help you to cope up with stress and anxiety arising due to pandemic situations?

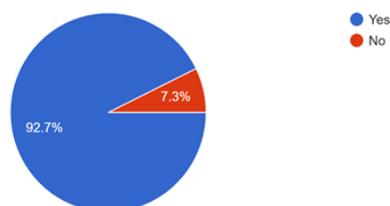


Do you think it's necessary to seek mental health help if someone panics in lieu of the pandemic situation?

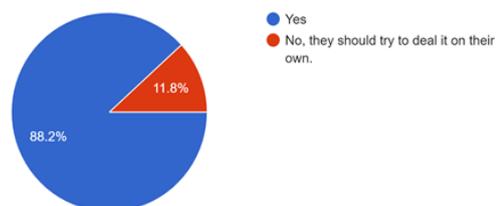


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Do you think mental health issues are one of the biggest concerns in present pandemic situations?



Will you suggest people obtain professional help if they experience any serious mental health issue during COVID19 pandemic



DISCUSSION

The ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic is unprecedented in many ways, both in terms of scale of its spread and the challenge that it brings. This global situation should not be seen only as a subject of health emergency, but also in combination with the events and other situations that have arisen out of it. This will help us to get a complete perception of the big picture and the threat that it poses to global mental health. There have been several reports and researches that have deepened the concerns related to mental health issues in the wake of global pandemic. A USA government hotline for people in emotional distress reported a 100% increase in traffic in April, compared to the same time last year. According to a report published by Institute of Fiscal Study (IFS), UK; Around 7.2 million people aged 16 and over have reported experiencing a mental health problem "much more than usual".^[3] Using a measure of overall mental health, women aged 16-24 had 16 percent worse than average mental health scores before the crisis; this differential rose to 27 percent in April 2020, despite the worsening trend in the overall average score, the IFS report stated.^[3] This is not the situation in only UK and USA, but also in all other countries that are affected by COVID-19 pandemic, including India. Therefore, it was deemed important to conduct this research.

The age range for the participants for research survey of this study was 18 to 21 years of age. The period from 18 to 21 years of age is marked by the end of adolescence and beginning of adulthood, i.e. a period of transition. Keniston (1970) recognised this life phase as 'youth'. Youth is essentially a period of 'studenthood', typically characterised by college life after senior secondary.^[1] Although hard times can occur during any stage of development, the most challenging period usually occurs during and at the end of adolescence (ages 18 - 23), when the job of managing a responsible independence usually begins. In addition, this transition involves loss of adolescent status and transformation into adulthood status. It is also a period when serious mental health issues can begin to manifest. This research survey firstly attempted to test the awareness among youth about COVID-19. The role of appraisal in emotion experience has been investigated in many experiments. Some of the best known of these experiments illustrated the relationship between felt emotion and appraisal of environmental situations (Spiesman et al. 1964).^[4] Awareness is primary to appraisal. A significant number of participants were aware of the symptoms, means of spread and prevention of COVID-19.

An individual response to a stressful situation largely depends upon perceived event and how they are interpreted or appraised (Lazarus 1984).^[5] 93.6% participants regarded COVID-19 as highly contagious. This reflects their perceived threat from coronavirus. The perception of threat not only formulates the behaviour pattern but also stimulates experience of stress. 12.7% participants considered themselves 'very highly prone' to get infected from novel coronavirus, while 27.3% found themselves to be 'highly prone'. 43.6% and 16.4%

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participants responded that their perceived proneness is 'low' and 'very low' respectively. 60% of the total participants have considered themselves to be at low risk of catching COVID-19 infection. This response could be because of three reasons- confidence in measures of prevention used, ignorance, and due to use of avoidance-oriented strategy of coping with stress and anxiety or defence mechanism to reduce anxiety. Denial and Rationalisation are some frequently used defence mechanism in such situations. People who are finding themselves to be highly prone may have high levels of anxiety.

Announcement of nationwide lockdown characterised COVID-19 pandemic situations in India, imposing severe restrictions on movement of people. Closure of all public places, including educational institutes and workplaces, have left youth with no option but to stay at home.

Data about general appraisal and perception of participants about this period of 24×7 home confinement provides significant data about their mental state and attitude. The attitude towards a situation not only sets up norms for behaviour but also influences perception, which is decisive in determining the quality of emotional experience and mental state. Out of total number of participants, 71.8% participants agreed that being at home during lockdown has made people sadder and more depressed. This data presents to us a general perception of participants, and also reflects upon their personal experience being at home. 64.5 % participants agreed to the fact that people have moved away from their loved ones during pandemic situation because of inability to meet them.

One of the tensions experienced by young people during their transition from adolescence to adulthood is social relationships. Peer group play an integral role during adolescence and does not loses its significance even during this period of transition. Hence, the perception of loss of peer groups and loved ones may result into severe anxiety and even identity crisis if the individual drives his/her identity from the peer group or loved ones. The feeling of being isolated can pose serious threat to mental health and might even result in depression. 79.1% participants have agreed that lockdown has left no personal space for individual or opportunity to enjoy 'me time' as all the family member are permanently present at home. The quality of bond with parents and family greatly influences development during adolescence and also during transition period. They not only have potential to efficiently smoothen this process by proving encouragement, positive affiliation and support, but also play an important role in realisation of responsibility and goal setting- which is crucial to the period of transition. 79.1 percent participants have agreed that lockdown that brought family member closer to each other as they have got a lot of time to spend together. This might facilitate the process of their development and cast positive impact on mental health also.

This phase of transition is very crucial in human development and is marked by a period of anxiety and stress. This is so because this transition encompasses developmental changes which determine the individual's competencies during adulthood- the longest period of the life cycle. Therefore, acquisition and consolidation of values, competencies, social capital, and attitudes serves paramount importance in ensuring youths experience a successful transition. Therefore, the diverse changes that occur lead to anxiety, whereas the overwhelming aspect of responsibilities can lead to stress. This stress and anxiety are getting multiplied due to COVID-19 pandemic and situations that characterise it.

Selye (1956) defines stress as "any external event or any internal drive which threatens the organism's equilibrium".^[6] Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person

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perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.^[4] Out of total number of participants, 27.3% participants reported that they felt nervous and stressed due to COVID-19 pandemic, while 47.3% participants reported to have sometimes felt the same. This tells us that there are significant number of people who are experiencing stress, and hence it becomes very important to know the biggest cause of that stress. On being asked about biggest stress creating factor, 40% of the participants attributed 'Uncertainty of situations' to be the biggest factor. With education system being totally disturbed with induced uncertainty about exams and promotion, continuous increment in the duration of lockdown, cure of COVID-19 remaining to be undiscovered yet, economic crisis, probability of anyone infected from the virus being significant and normal life being put to halt for uncertain duration, the factor of uncertainty is involved in every segment of life that has been influenced by global pandemic. Feeling of uncertainty can create a plethora of responses and can impact mental health adversely. It may also induce a feeling of loss of control over life events, which can result both in anxiety and stress. 50.9% of youth involved in the survey said that they sometimes experienced the loss of control over important things of their life during last one month in the wake of global pandemic, where 22.7% participants reported to have felt the same quite often. It may also manifest in the form of irritability and 40% participants affirmed that they often felt irritated because of things that happened were out of your control. Continuous failure to control life event and perception of loss of control may induce feeling of worthlessness and might manifest in the form of anxiety. This may also result in inactivity as it might seem wuseless to try to bring situation under control. It can potentially hamper the self-efficacy and self-esteem too of the individual. To attain skills, competences and to define one's career is the biggest developmental task during transition phase between adolescence and adulthood. The youth tend to strive for the attainment of the same, but as pandemic has put everything at halt this process is also disturbed. As reported, during last one month, 27.3% participants have often felt unable to manage their task or work and 41.8% participants have sometimes experienced this inability. There could be a wide range of reasons for this, like lack of resources due to lockdown, lack of personal space to work without disturbance, distress, scattered work schedule, feeling of listlessness, and anxiety due to pandemic, etc.

Lockdown during COVID-19 pandemic has resulted into confinement of people in their houses with their family members. The situations arising out of it can be stress provoking. 36.4% participants often felt a lack of personal space. The level of stress experienced due to this depends upon the availability of 'me time', size of the house, number of family members and sibling and availability of personal room. The sense of freedom is a prized possession of youth, but with serious restriction on movement and perceived threat of catching COVID-19 on stepping out of the door, curtails all freedom. 29.1 % of the total youths involved in the study affirmed that they often felt a lack of escape during pandemic situations. This may not only result in stress but also in boredom and irritability.

Hans Selye (1956, 1976) termed the body's responses to stressors the general adaptive syndrome, which consists of three stages: the alarm reaction, the stage of resistance, and the stage of exhaustion. Continuous exposure to the same stressor or additional stressors drains the body of its resources lead to the exhaustion stage.^{[6][7]} In the stage of exhaustion, the body's capacity to respond to both continuous and new stressor is heavily reduced. The COVID-19 pandemic situations are a great stressor for youth and may lead to exhaustion the situations continue for longer enough.

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High self-efficacy was observed in participants 44.6 % participants affirmed that they often felt confident about their abilities to handle arising pandemic situations. This is a positive response which displays confidence on ability to fight new problems and tackle new situations.

Rising rates of anxiety is another issue that poses a serious threat to mental health. As reported in *Newsweek*, a recently generated report by *Express scripts Holding Pharmacy Company*, that sampled more than 21 million people showed that from February to the middle of March 2020, use of medication for anxiety increased by staggering 34%.^[8] Anxiety is usually defined as a diffuse, vague, very unpleasant feeling of fear and apprehension. It is characterised by tension, worried thoughts, nervousness, irritability, and physical symptoms like fatigue, trembling, trouble sleeping, rapid heartrate, shortness of breath, fainting, dizziness, sweating, diarrhoea, loss of appetite and frequent urination.

Talking about symptoms of anxiety in youths involved in the study, 21.9% participants often felt paranoid about catching the coronavirus infection, while 35.5% participants experienced it sometimes. Feeling of paranoia is often characterised by disturbance in normal thought process, fear and activation of sympathetic nervous system. Activation of sympathetic nervous system elicits several biological and physiological responses, which are common to anxious experiences. If the feeling of paranoia is related to some thought, then any stimulus that brings that thought in conscious may make the individual feel paranoid. If an individual is feeling paranoid with a thought of catching infection, then any stimulus that makes the person perceive increase in probability of getting infected may give rise to anxiety, for example, reports of increasing COVID-19 patients or information about different ways one may catch infection. Inability to control preoccupation with a specific idea or thought is also a feature of anxiety and related disorders. 49.1% participants reported that they often thought of COVID-19 pandemic and 40.9% participants reported to be preoccupied with this thought sometimes. Preoccupation with a thought about a particular situation and feeling paranoid about threat that it poses, gives rise to serious mental health concern and can potentially manifest in the form of some serious anxiety disorder like Obsessive-Compulsive disorder (OCD). This can be dysfunctional for normal functioning of daily life and can also disturb the sleep pattern. 9.1 % of the total participants affirmed that they have often felt difficulty sleeping because of being worried about coronavirus pandemic and 27.3% participants reported to have faced such difficulty sometimes. Difficulty sleeping for significant period of time may manifest in the form of insomnia. Deprivation of sleep may mark the oncoming of the stage of exhaustion. 45.5% participants often felt headaches or muscle tension which is a physical symptom of anxiety and even exhaustion at times.

All forms of media reporting and publishing updates and threats related to novel coronavirus, may result into an echo chamber effect of anxiety provoking stimuli keeping the mind preoccupied with dysfunctional thoughts and fear. Social media platforms largely use technique of provoking fear as clickbait. 28.2% participants often felt anxious by the posts on social media about novel coronavirus and 50.9% participants felt anxious by updates of increasing COVID-19 cases. Too much of fear and anxiety stimulating information pose a threat to mental health. This may also result in the wrong appraisal of the pandemic situation of being worse than actual and might make stress and anxiety to shoot up. Repetitive exposure to information related to COVID-19 may keep the mind preoccupied with the same thought and disturb normal functioning.

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Severe restriction on movement has distanced people socially and also induced a sense of alienation in some people due to perceived loss of social contacts during the prevalence of the norm of 'social distancing'. Out of total number of participants, 19.1% participants reported to have often felt alienated. Feeling of alienation can not only give rise to anxiety and depression, but also may induce a feeling of worthlessness. This effect it may have on individual may vary according to personality. It may affect more if the person is extrovert, high on need for affiliation and belongingness needs. 39.1% participants often felt to have lost touch of friends and loved ones. The warns us of serious effect of pandemic on social relationships. Positive and fulfilling social relationships are not only integral to the psychosocial development during period of transition from adolescence to adulthood, but also influence the whole development. The perceived loss of social relationship may result in anxiety and existential crisis if one derives identity from the social group one is part of.

Evaluation of level of anxiety and stress in youth in the wake of pandemic tells us that the pandemic situations have adversely affected their mental health and wellbeing, and these effects are potential enough to cause serious mental health issues. During the research, 45.5% urged that they need someone to help them in coping with anxiety and stress that this pandemic had brought with itself. There is another issue to be worried of, the results from NMHS point to the huge burden of **mental health problems**: while, nearly 150 million Indians need **mental health care** services, less than 30 million are **seeking care**; the **mental health** systems assessment indicate not just a lack of public **health** strategy but also several under-performing components.^[9] And this survey was conducted before pandemic situations while mental health issues have increased manifold in the wake of global pandemic. The stigma and lack of awareness in masses about mental health issues and treatment, adds guilt to injury. Such stigma was not observed in the participants, as 88.2% participants of the study and they affirmed that one must seek professional help if they panic and 88.2% participants affirmed that they would suggest to seek professional help to anyone who experiences mental health issues in the lieu of pandemic. 92.7% participants also affirmed that mental health issues are one of the biggest concerns in pandemic situations. This is a positive response as this tells us that participants are really aware about rising mental health issues and importance of seeking professional help.

Suggestions

The following ways can be used to reduce anxiety and stress:

1. Meditation and exercise regularly.
2. Minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19 that causes you to feel anxious or distressed.
3. Schedule your tasks and work.
4. Interact with yours friends and peer through electronic medium.
5. Spend quality time with your family.
6. Engage yourself in your hobbies and other pleasurable activities.
7. Watch, read or listen to positive and inspiring material.
8. Take nutritious diet and proper rest.
9. Reserve some 'me time' for yourself.
10. Seek professional help if you experience serious mental health issues or uncontrollable stress, anxiety or negative thoughts.

CONCLUSION

In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic most of the youth is aware about its symptoms, means of spread and preventions. Most of them regard COVID-19 as highly contagious and

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acknowledge the fact of being prone to get infected from it. Hence, they perceive COVID-19 as a major threat to their health and wellbeing. It can be concluded from the reported symptoms, that there are increased level of stress and anxiety among youth due to pandemic COVID-19 situations. Uncertainty of situations is one of the major causes for increase in stress among youth. There is a need to be aware of and address mental health issues, including increasing stress and anxiety during COVID-19 global pandemic. The youth acknowledges the fact that mental health issues are one of the biggest issues in lieu of ongoing pandemic and affirms the need to seek professional help in any serious mental health problem is faced.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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