

COVID- 19 and mental health

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ABSTRACT

The novel Corona virus started spreading at the end of 2019 and has threatened the health, life style and lives of millions of people in the whole world. It is highly contagious leading to respiratory, renal and multiple has brought impact on the health system of many nations. Hence it has been declared as pandemic. As a result, all possible and extraordinary measures by the governments have been taken to prevent the spread, control the mobility and improve sanitization and hygienic practices. The aim of this article is to compile and analyse the articles published as a result of spread of virus and the impact it has caused on various aspects of human life. The analysis not only reveals the physical but also the individual, familial and interpersonal coping with this emergency situation. The articles on social isolation, psychological burden, anxiety, depression and behavioral and life style have been compiled in the paper. The author also has concluded suggesting interventions and researches on the impact of the disease.

Keywords: COVID- 19, Mental Health

Just like the side effects of other diseases on psyche, extensive outbreaks of infectious diseases in almost the whole world, such as COVID-19, are associated with symptoms of psychological distress and mental illnesses as well. Preliminary evidence suggests that the symptoms of anxiety and depression (16 to 28%) and self-reported stress (8%) are common psychological responses to the COVID-19 epidemic and may also be associated with restless sleep. In order to avoid these, preventive guidelines must be kept in mind.

The recent articles and papers published in this view were reviewed, have been classified and analysed according to their general and summarized themes. Finally, sub-syndromic impact has been observed as the mental health problems that are a common response to the COVID-19 epidemic. There is a need for more representative researches from other affected countries too which will be added to the pool of knowledge, especially in vulnerable populations. Emergency has been declared or officially designated as COVID-19 by the World Health Organization - has reached epidemic levels that has affected almost all the countries around the world.

It is not clear, but, however, till date (April 30, 2020), there have been more than 2,001,649 live cases 1,941,645 (97%) in Mild Condition, 60,004 (3%) Serious or Critical), 1,239,846

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(1,010,962 (82%) Recovered / Discharged, 228,884 (18%) Deaths) due to the disease in the world.

After this global health crisis, stringent public health measures were implemented by all the governments to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Adhikari et al., 2020) and sooner or later, extensive outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, shall also be declared associated with psychological distress and symptoms of mental illness (Bao et al., 2020). Psychiatrists around the world need to be aware of these manifestations, and establish its correlation to mental illnesses and to develop strategies to manage them essentially to fulfil the immediate needs of specific populations (Yang et al., 2020), to provide solutions to the problems and to prevent the spread of impacts of COVID-19, although, precautionary measures have to be included (Liu et al., 2020a).

Just like the side effects of other diseases on psyche extensive outbreaks of infectious diseases in almost the whole world such as COVID –19 is associated with symptoms of psychological distress and mental illnesses as well. Many researches reveal the results that the symptoms of anxiety and depression have been found to be 16 to 28% and self-reported stress was 8%, common psychological responses to the COVID -19 epidemic and may also be associated with restless sleep syndrome. In order to avoid these, preventive measures need to be kept in mind. The recent articles and papers published in this view were reviewed, have been classified and analysed as per their general and summarized themes. Finally, sub- syndromic impact has been observed as the mental health problems that are a common response to the COVID- 19 epidemic. There is a need of more rigorous researches from the other affected countries too, which will add to the pool of knowledge, especially in vulnerable populations. Emergency has been declared or officially designated as a result of COVID- 19 by the World Health Organization that states that the spread has reached epidemic levels that has affected almost all the countries around the world.

After this world health crisis, harsh public health measures have been implemented by all the governments, to prevent the spread of COVID- 19 (Adhikari et al 2020) and sooner or later, extensive outbreaks of COVID- 19 shall also be declared to be associated with psychological distress and symptoms of mental illnesses (Bao et al., 2020). Mental Health Professionals around the world need to be aware of these consequences and establish its correlation to mental illnesses and to develop strategies to manage them essentially to fulfil the immediate needs of specific populations (Yang et al., 2020) to provide solutions to the problems and to prevent the spread of impacts of COVID- 19 although precautionary measures have to be included (Liu et al., 2020a). They should now be aware and keep measuring the gaps in the existing literature, which may hopefully be filled over time through more extensive clinical research trials and experience with time.

With the above objectives to search for the psychological aspects related to COVID -19 in mind, the currently available literature was explored and summarized so as to addresses mental health concerns that are actually related to the COVID -19 epidemic.

METHODOLOGY

Selection of the articles

The articles were searched on PubMed using various words i.e. Corona Virus, COVID- 19, Mental Health, Depression, Isolation, Psychology, psychiatry, social psychology, fear, and anxiety in different combinations.

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A careful review and analysis of selected articles related to COVID -19, few were not found to be relevant as they could not add to the material relevant to the mental health, while many citations were recovered and analysed. The articles in Chinese language and that dealt with other aspects of the COVID- 19 outbreak such as drug therapy were excluded.

Analysis of the articles

After the selection the articles were included in this review paper. Out of these articles the available papers were categorized into five broad themes -

1. Observational studies reporting specifically on mental health symptoms in the population
2. Comments and correspondence comprehensively address the psychological impact of COVID- 19 on the population
3. comment and correspondence on the impact of COVID 19 on health professionals.
4. comment and correspondence specifically related to high risk or vulnerable population and comment methods of providing mental health care during
5. Comments and correspondence related to the COVID 19 outbreak

Initially Wang et al., 2020; Xiao et al., 2020a and Li et al., 2020 mentioned the outbreak of COVID -19 in China. A study examined the frequency of specific variables related to mental health in individuals affected by the disease (Xiao Et al 2020b). A study stated that anxiety was the most common symptom observed in population. Xiao et al., 2020a, found that impaired sleep was associated with the anxiety. A gender comparison study by Wang et al 2020, found that higher rate of COVID- 19 mental health symptoms i.e. anxiety and depression were observed in them, while accurate information and the use of specific preventive measures such as hand washing seemed to moderate these effects.

As China was the first to trace COVID- 19, it was the first to describe Corona. Eight publications also mentioned the effects of Corona on the mental health of in the general population based on the literature of previous population outbreaks or on theoretical models given by the previous researches. It addressed only the possible effects of it on the mental health.

There was another group of studies originating from the countries other than China i.e. Canada, Iran, Japan, Singapore and Brazil. Two of the papers from these countries investigated the potential impact of the COVID -19 epidemic in specific countries. For example, a study from Iran by Zandifer and Badrafam (2020), highlighted the problems and role of unpredictability, uncertainty and severity of the disease. It stated that the misinformation related to the disease and social isolation as a result, contributes to stress and mental morbidity. The author highlighted the need for both mental health services particularly for vulnerable populations and to strengthen social capital, to minimize the adverse psychological effects of the outbreak. Another study from Japan by Shigemura et al., (2020) emphasized the economic impact of COVID -19 and its effects on well-being adding to high levels of fear and panic behavior such as accumulation and storage of resources required for daily living.

This study raises important concerns about the adequacy of knowledge of medical staff in psychiatric hospitals about COVID-19 during the epidemic. There is a clear need for training programs to improve understanding of risks and prevention strategies among intensive care physicians. This, in turn, should strengthen doctors' confidence in providing good care and protection for their patients (Shi, Yudong et al., 2020). An article identified populations at

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higher risk of adverse impact on mental health outcomes including patients with COVID 19 and their families, individuals with existing physical or psychiatric morbidity and health professionals. Another study from Japan Shigemura et al 2020 emphasized the economic impact of COVID 19 and its effects on well-being in addition to high levels of fear and panic behavior such as accumulation and storage of resources. It also highlighted the services that were already being provided in China and also provided a list of strategies for the general public, to reduce stress related to the outbreak, the strategies being, Accuracy of the information and Assessment, Increased social support, Reduced stigma associated with the disease, Maintenance of normal life, Following safeguards and Psychosocial services available when needed, especially online use of services. These methods as he suggested, would enable society to deal with the COVID -19 outbreak and problems associated with it. Similar strategies were replicated in an article from Singapore by Ho et al., 2020 including the role of improved screening for mental disorders that improves the link between community and hospital services and reducing distorted information for ordinary people. The perception of information was found to be vague. The provision of accurate information was discussed as reactions like "panic" and paranoia about the disease and its transmission.

Individual measures during the outbreak of severe corona virus have had far-reaching negative mental health consequences. Prevention and intervention methods to reduce the psychological impact should be an integral part of responding to an epidemic crisis (Susanne Röhr et al., 2020).

A brief review article by Lima et al 2020 highlighted the role of anxiety as a major emotional response to the outbreak the appropriate training of health personnel and the excellent technological development to provide mental health assistance need for use. In contrast to the above literature on practical considerations two articles from Canada, Asmundsson and Taylor 2020a, discussed the mental health effects of COVID 19 from the point of view of health concerns that arise from the incorrect interpretation of perceived physical changes and sensations that can be protective in everyday life. However, during an outbreak of infectious disease, especially in the presence of inaccurate or exaggerated information from the media health problems can be excessive. At the individual level, it can manifest itself as incurable behavior. Repeated medical advice avoiding medical care even if really sick accumulating special items. At the broadest social level, it can cause distrust of public officials and the sacrifice of specific populations or groups. Literature addressing the mental health effects of COVID -19 on healthcare professionals, as they are at significant risk of adverse mental health outcomes during an outbreak of COVID -19. The reasons being prolonged work, risk of infection, lack of protective equipment, loneliness, physical fatigue and separation from families (Kang et al., 2020).

Around 75.3% of respondents reported that the two-week duration of workplace closure was moderate to very useful in preventing the spread of viruses (see Table 3). Around 63.9% of respondents reported that quarantine and strict blocking were beneficial to prevent the spread of the virus. Only 20.3% of respondents reported that there was a slight increase in workplace hygiene after the outbreak of COVID-19 or that they needed further improvement. At a lower level, 14.9% of respondents reported that returning to work was a moderate to very serious threat to life during the COVID-19 epidemic. Around 81.7% of respondents reported moderate to high service levels and company concern for their health. There were no significant differences between workers / technical staff and managers / executives in opinions about the use of strict quarantine and blocking, returning to work as a

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health threat, improving cleanliness at work and company problems ($p > 0.05$) (Tan, Wanqiu et al., 2020).

With the exception of observational studies three articles, all from Chinese centers addressed the subject, clearly illustrating the gap between the services employed in a given hospital and the real needs of health professionals (Chen et al 2020). With the exception of observational studies, three articles all from Chinese centers addressed the subject. One clearly illustrates the gap between the services employed in a given hospital and the real needs of health professionals (Chen et al., 2020). However, the program found health workers reluctant. After direct interaction with workers the program was expanded to include the provision of a rest area meeting basic physical needs such as food, training in caring for patients with COVID -19, information on protective measures, leisure activities and periodic visits. It was designed from rest area by a counsellor. This led to greater satisfaction among health workers and highlighted the need for continuous response and review of these programs if they were not acceptable by the workers themselves. Liu et al 2020b reported that mental health professionals may also have to work closely with people working in intensive care units to reduce stress levels and reduce the risk of depression ,while Kang et al., 2020b reported that mental health professionals may have to work closely with people working in intensive care units to reduce stress levels and reduce the risk of depression while Kang et al., 2020 observed the positive impact of the telephone line for health professionals specifically to solve mental health problems. Till date no literature related to health professionals from other countries has been published. Seven publications correspondence $n = 6$, comment $n = 1$ of the literature, related to COVID -19 mental health risks in vulnerable populations identified specific populations that may be more susceptible to the mental health effects of the COVID -19 epidemic and some of them gave suggestions on intervention and service provision. The sensitive groups identified by these authors include, the elderly (Yang et al., 2020), homeless (Tsai and Wilson 2020), migrant workers (Liam et al 2020), mentally ill (Yao et al., 2020) , pregnant women (Rashidi Fakari and Symbar 2020) and Chinese students studying abroad (Zhai and Du 2020) of particular interest to the practice of psychiatrists are two reports from China (Yao et al 2020; Zhu et al., 2020) about COVID -19 and patients with pre existing mental illness. To date a single outbreak of COVID -19 affecting approximately 50 patients and 30 employees has been reported in a psychiatric hospital and was under strict quarantine The reasons for this may include excessive congestion lack of general medical facilities in psychiatric hospitals lack of knowledge among mental health professionals and difficulty in obtaining patient support for preventive measures especially those suffering from mental disorders (Zhu et al., 2020) On the other hand patients with pre existing mental disorders with outbreaks of COVID 19 (Yao et al.,2020a) may be at increased risk for their disorder or a new episode due to stress. During this period, it is important for psychiatrists to become familiar with the screening and triage procedures and work closely with doctors and public health specialists to minimize the risks for these patients (Zhu et al., 2020). In relation to the other populations listed above, specific issues raised include high rates of pre existing depressive symptoms in the elderly and their lack of access to mental health services (Yang et al., 2020). Fear of involuntary admission or imprisonment among homeless people who can act as a barrier to mental health care (Tsai and Wilson, 2020). The need for disclosure and social support among populations of migrant workers to reduce the risk of common mental disorders (Liam et al., 2020). Relationship between COVID 19 related stress and anxiety and adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes (Rashidi Fakari and Simber, 2020) and the potential discrimination and stigma faced by Chinese students abroad during epidemics leading to anxiety and stress related disorders (Zhai and Du 2020). In all of these cases close

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cooperation is needed between psychiatrists and specialists in the other branch of medicine as well as local authorities and community health workers, Therapeutic interventions and strategies, articles correspondence n = 2 comment n = 3 specific for the provision of mental health care to individuals directly affected by the COVID -19 epidemic (Duan and Xu, 2020; Liu et al, 2020a). The use of strategies is addressed (Xiao, 2020; Zhou et al., 2020; Yao et al., 2020b). In addition, an article from India discusses the importance of psychiatrists in general during the COVID -19 epidemic. This article identified six important roles for the psychiatrist i.e. public education on the general psychological effects of an epidemic, motivate the public to adopt strategies for disease prevention and health promotion, Integrate their services with the available health services, Teach problem solving strategies to deal with the current crisis, Train COVID -19 patients and their caregivers and provide mental health assistance to health professionals (Mental 2020). In the context of more specific therapeutic strategies the proposals include the development of teams of qualified specialists to deal with emotional stress (Duan and Xue, 2020). Use of online surveys to assess the scope of mental health problems (Liu et al., 2020b). Development of online content for mental health education (Liu et al., 2020a). Provision of online counseling and self-help services (Liu et al., 2020b). The use of structured articles such as asynchronous telepsychiatric consultations (Xiao, 2020). Development of synchronous telemedicine services for clinical purposes as well as consultations (Zhou et al., 2020). And the need to make online mental health services accessible to individuals of lower socioeconomic individuals (Yao et al., 2020b). Such strategies offer hope of providing mental health services in an easily accessible manner without increasing the risk of infection. However, they are significantly dependent on the availability of trained labor and infrastructure and it is not known to what extent these approaches will be accepted by the general public in addition they have not yet been tested or validated in the respective target populations.

There is an urgent need for the discovery, evaluation, and refinement of mechanistically driven interventions to address the psychological, social, and neuroscientific aspects of this pandemic. This includes bespoke psychological interventions to boost wellbeing and minimize mental health risks across society, including in vulnerable groups, and experimental medicine studies to validate clinical biomarkers and repurpose new treatments for the potentially neurotoxic effects of the virus (Holmes, Emily A et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

Although there are few large-scale observational studies available in this area to date it is clear that the COVID 19 epidemic has led to vigorous and multifaceted responses from psychiatrists and allied professionals and explicit mental health Multiple levels in the general population among health workers and in vulnerable populations. As the number of patients affected by the epidemic continues to increase the psychiatric profession particularly in Asian countries faces a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to address many of the barriers and limitations identified in the literature above but also the opportunity to implement possible suggestions or recommendations at the local or regional level. It may take several weeks or months for the long-term effects on the mental health of COVID -19 to become fully apparent and to manage this effect not only for psychiatrists but also for the health system in general. More research is needed to assess the scope of the epidemic even as a preliminary or pilot study especially in those in which ill health is less developed and the impact tends to be more severe (Duan and Xu, 2020). Faces barriers to access to health care in other vulnerable populations such as children and adolescents in remote or rural areas and tries to assess the impact of COVID -19 on people related to a lower socioeconomic status mental health with limited time culturally sensitive and that can

be taught to health professionals and volunteers developed these interventions should be tested so that information on effective therapeutic strategies can be widely disseminated among those working in this field. There is an urgent need for research to investigate the effects of multiple epidemic-related media outlets and to optimize health messages in the vicinity of Covid-19 (Holmes, Emily A et al., 2020).

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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