

Effect of Covid-19 on Mental Health of Working People

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ABSTRACT

Job loss in covid-19 which effected the mental health of working people badly. According to WHO it is the biggest global crises in generation, the covid-19 pandemic has had severe and far-reaching repercussion for health system, economies and societies. Millions of people have fallen below the poverty line. Without any source of earning income, many are unable to feed them-selves and their families. A grate number of people have reported psychological distress and symptoms of depressive and anxiety disorders. Other eating disorder, sleep-wake disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, panic attacks can be seen.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Job loss, Mental health, Poverty, Global crisis, Psychological distress

The novel Coronavirus is believed to have originated from a wet market in Wuhan, China, and has spread all over the world, resulting in a large number of hospitalization and death[1]. More than a third of the world's population has been put under lockdown with restricted movements to contain the widespread of the virus[1]. Covid-19 has caused significant distress around the globe. Since the very beginning, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the psychological well-being of people. This virus causes an acute respiratory syndrome (COVID-19) that rapidly spread around the world [2]. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronaviruses, it is known to cause diseases ranging from cold to more severe illnesses such as SARS and MERS[3].

Among different professions, students and healthcare professionals were found to experience stress, anxiety and depression more than others. The current research is an attempt to explore psychological distress among people residing in India during the lockdown. Four hundred and three participants were asked to complete a questionnaire with questions around symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and family affluence. The results indicated that people who do not have enough supplies to sustain the lockdown were most affected, and family affluence was found to be negatively correlated with stress, anxiety, and depression [1]. Students all over the world, are also experiencing distress because of the uncertainty of examinations in their schools and colleges, and with regards to availability of jobs, etc. In spite of teachers trying their level best to teach students online, the impact of such teaching is not optimum [1].

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The COVID-19 outbreak, which was followed by home confinement, is expected to have had profound negative impact on the mental health of people. Associated factors, such as losing jobs and income, can be expected to lead to an increased risk of suffering from psychopathological problems [2]. According to the International Labour Organization's press release from 18 March 2020, a reported 5.3 million jobs will be lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the low scenario, and 24.7 million in the high scenario. In terms of mental health, in the high scenario, this would translate into an increase in suicides of about 9570 per year. In the low scenario, unemployment would be associated with an increase of about 2135 suicides [2]. Three independent systematic reviews concluded that people who became unemployed during a recession and/or experienced financial crises were more likely to suffer from poorer health and increased stress, depression, mental hardship, anxiety, and suicidal behaviors [2]. A study conducted with USA young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that poor mental health outcomes were 2- to 6-times higher for young adults who had either experienced or anticipated employment loss. However, the subjective experiences when losing a job or income may vary, and, thus, the impact of job and income loss on mental health might be different for each individual [2].

All of the studies that have examined the psychological disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic have reported that the affected individuals show several symptoms of mental trauma, such as emotional distress, depression, stress, mood swings, irritability, insomnia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress, and anger [3]. Although the COVID-19 restrictions may have had both negative and positive effects on mental health, a general increase in mental health problems during the pandemic has been repeatedly reported in the general population[5] .

According to WHO “‘Pandemic’ is not a word to use lightly or carelessly,” It is a word that, if misused, can cause unreasonable fear or unjustified acceptance that the fight is over, leading to unnecessary suffering and death.” [4]. “This is not just a public health crisis; it is a crisis that will touch every sector [4].

The COVID-19 pandemic affected employees and their employment situations substantially [5]. Due to a decreased demand for services and supply chain disruptions, many employers were forced to cut employee costs [5]. Occupation and work environment seem to be important, and consistent with expectations, research has suggested that an increase in job loss and job insecurity across the pandemic negatively affected mental health [5].

The demand of online remote working from home significantly increased in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This unforeseen situation has forced individuals and organizations to rapidly train employees and adopt the use of on-line working styles, seeking to maintain the same level of productivity as working from the office [6]. A large proportion of respondents recognized the advantage of eliminating travelling time when working remotely from home which also has a positive impact on the environment and CO2 emissions. However, some drawbacks have been identified such as the lack of face-to-face discussion and informal meetings during working days. Many employees struggled due to variety of reasons, such as time management and having to work around childcare commitments (when the schools are closed) [6].

Many aspects of people's lives (emotional, relational, work, social, economic, recreational) have been affected by the pandemic, so much so that current research highlights the impact that the COVID-19 emergency is having on the perception of people's quality of life (QoL),

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as well as on their daily psychological and emotional experiences[7].The repercussions from the pandemic have significantly hit the global economy, including an increase in the unemployment rate worldwide , especially among young adults and women[7].Current literature suggests that people who had lost their job during the pandemic reported higher symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress, and lower positive mental health compared to individuals who kept working [7].The negative impact on employment caused by the pandemic may have attacked confidence in the future, which is a crucial component of individual well-being, thus generating a sense of hopelessness, namely the perception that the future will have negative outcomes[7].

An article given by WHO states that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work [8]. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year [8]. Without the means to earn an income during lockdowns, many are unable to feed themselves and their families. For most, no income means no food, or, at best, less food and less nutritious food [8]. As breadwinners lose jobs, fall ill and die, the food security and nutrition of millions of women and men are under threat, with those in low-income countries, particularly the most marginalized populations, which include small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples, being hardest hit [8].

Millions of agricultural workers – waged and self-employed – while feeding the world, regularly face high levels of working poverty, malnutrition and poor health, and suffer from a lack of safety and labor protection as well as other types of abuse. With low and irregular incomes and a lack of social support, many of them are spurred to continue working, often in unsafe conditions, thus exposing themselves and their families to additional risks. Further, when experiencing income losses, they may resort to negative coping strategies, such as distress sale of assets, predatory loans or child labor [8].

The 2019 coronavirus epidemic can undermine not only physical health but also individuals' psychological resources and resilience. In a highly interconnected and globalized world, the impacts of the pandemic on a social and economic level have become evident since the outbreak [9]. The global economy has slowed down sharply and global stock indices have plunged. A lot of people committed suicide, and millions of people lost their job [9]. The pandemic could have severe effects on the mental health of the general population and of workers. Experts point out that both people who already suffered from psychiatric problems, and others who have never experienced symptoms, could be at risk [9].

Healthcare workers have largely contributed to the society. Preliminary country-specific reports suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has a negative impact on the mental health of the healthcare workforce[10].The high demand for providing health care to patients with confirmed and suspected COVID-19, along with the fears and concerns of becoming ill with the virus or infecting their families, have put an enormous emotional burden on Health Care Workers(HCWs)[10].Many HCWs have been overwhelmed by the increased workload; the lack of supplies and materials to provide appropriate treatment and protect themselves; the lack of clinical guidelines on patient prioritization; the increased feelings of isolation and loneliness; and the high rates of COVID-19 among HCWs. As vaccines for COVID-19 roll

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out, moreover, it remains unclear if and when there will be enough vaccines available for this highly exposed population in all regions [10].

CONCLUSION

This rapidly caused virus not only raised concerns over general people but has also caused several psychological and mental disorders. Working people have faced so many difficulties during the time of covid 19 in every sector, especially the laborers who already earn very less to just run the house but now they are unable to do anything because the whole country facing the lockdown. Many breadwinners commit suicide because they feel they have no other option left and it becomes very difficult for them to even provide nourished food to their family. People who work in companies are mostly working from home for whole day sitting on one chair and working on a computer, they could get easily distracted by various household issues due to which they could not get any productive ideas which creates psychological distress after some time. Covid also affects the agricultural sector because farmers were unable to transport nutritious vegetables to people. In this whole scenario, healthcare workers are the ones who work in full-fledged lockdown and play a very important role to help us overcome that time. Healthcare workers have a negative impact on their mental health because of their hectic schedules and the fear of getting the virus or infecting their families. People who do not have enough supplies face suicidal thoughts, anxiety, depression, and other issues. The job loss effect the quality of life of working people.

Suggestion

Government can provide supplies to the families for their survival in lockdown and put some efforts to manage the mental health issues related to covid 19 like depression, sleep disorder, suicidal ideas, substance abuse which are more likely to affect healthcare workers, through various media platforms in the form of creative and audio-visual materials on managing stress and anxiety. Provide a short time work allowances, which help to prevent mental health problems among employees during economic crises.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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