
Current Topic

Common Mental Health Problems During COVID -19 Pandemic

Dr. Himanshu Desai

A new strain of Coronavirus family originated at Wuhan city of China in December 2019. This novel corona virus is highly contagious and in just few months has become a serious threat to human health all over the world .

It is found that that people may experience symptoms of psychosis, anxiety, trauma, suicidal ideation, and panic during outbreaks of communicable diseases .

Problems in people with Mental illness due to Covid 19

1. **Anxiety disorders** : Due to lock down and fear of getting corona infection has increased anxiety related issues in public. Sometime mild symptoms or slightest exposure will create panic like situation.
2. **Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD)**: Obsessive symptoms has increased. Abnormal becomes the new normal for people who have washing compulsions and fear of contamination.
3. **Depressive Disorders** : Due to lock down and migration of workers and other issues there is great effect on routine work and economy. Which eventually produces depression, and which increases preexisting depressive illnesses
4. **Substance abuse** : Non availability of substance sometime produces serious withdrawal symptoms. For some one it is chance to quit their vices.
5. **Psychosis** : Patients with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia type of severe mental disorders are likely to have relapses due to risk in both the availability of regular medication and medication compliance
6. **Suicide** : There was increased suicide rate due to pandemic and lock down. There were different factors responsible for that.

Steps To Reduce The Stress And Improve Psychological Well Being

1. Avoid excessive exposure to news regarding of COVID-19.
2. get reliable information about how to protect yourself, such as the MoHFW.
3. Recognize the things you can control. Take care of your body.
4. Try to do some activities which you enjoy or work on your hobbies to return to your normal life.

5. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get regular good sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs.
6. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member.
7. Maintain proper hand-washing and social distancing.

Mental Health of Children During The Pandemic Lockdown

The Pandemic lockdown is not only affecting adults and older people but has also left children and adolescents. It is affecting them physically and mentally which can lead to various problems.

Due to lockdown, all the schools and institutions have been closed. There is a sudden change in the environment of the children who are staying with their parents or any caregiver as their outdoor activities and social interaction with friends have been restricted.

Mental health problems can broadly be fear of infection, irritability , boredom, anxiety, stress, depression, unhealthy sleeping and eating habits, difficulty in attention and concentration. Over use of the social media is also noticed. Which was another major reason for conflict between children and parents.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP THE CHILDREN?

1. give them clear information about the pandemic to reduce anxiety and fear, discuss and fix up the use of social media and news for them and all of the family.
2. Be supportive and empathic to the child.
3. Engage them in different activities like crafts from waste papers, dancing, singing, board games and others to make them calm and relieved.
4. Discuss and make a daily time-table and ask them to follow it regularly. Schedule the study hours, if preferable, during their school timings and study place.

Correspondence Address : Dr. Himanshu Desai

GLPS Clinic, Dev Complex, 2nd floor, opp. Mercedes Benz Show Room, Parimal Garden
Cross Road, Ahmedabad - 380006. • E-mail : drhimanshudesai@yahoo.com

5. Engage your child in some physical activities and exercises .
6. Encourage your child to learn some new activity daily like cooking, learn musical instruments, reading new books, cleaning, gardening, watering plants, serving food, cleaning utensils and others.
7. Family time should be given. Manage some family interacting activities like playing indoor games and spending some hours chatting with one another.
8. Allow them to be in touch with friends or classmates through phone or online media for fix time.
9. If the child comes to know about any upsetting news, reassure them and try to keep them away from such things.

Geriatric Mental Health During COVID 19 Pandemic

The infection can occur to all age group but elderly are at a higher risk. In this population loneliness, isolation, is already prevailing. The mental health problem may increase in elderly due to social isolation and various medical issues, quarantine and loss of follow up for medical and mental illness.

Pandemic creates issues such as: fear of contracting the infection (for self and family members), fear of quarantine or hospitalization, death (of oneself or family members), anxiety related to day to day activity, regular health check up visits and worries about family members living far away. Sleep and appetite problems seen due to absence of physical inactivity during the lockdown.

Family Dynamics During Lockdown

COVID 19 Pandemic is a form of external stress for couples and families specially for those who are more severely affected (e.g. those who develop the disease, become unemployed, experience major financial losses).

But not everything is gloomy. The increased time and involvement of the family members in day to day activities has given a new found living experience for the children of this age . Children learn to cook from mothers, fathers spending more time with their children is new experience. Communication among distant family members has grown with different video calling apps. Families use to play different games like tambola, ludo online to gather.

Domestic Violence During COVID 19 Lockdown

Domestic violence is an indoor crime which usually happens in an intimate relationship such as dating, marriage, cohabitation or a familial relationship and hence it is also termed as intimate partner violence. In India, 70% of women are victims of domestic violence

Domestic violence a global crisis

In Spain, emergency number for domestic violence received 18% more calls in the first two weeks of lockdown. And was increased to 270% with the launch of a WhatsApp service for women trapped at home since lockdown began. --Reuters

The French police reported about 30% rise in domestic violence.

Calls to a national domestic abuse helpline rose by 49% and killings doubled weeks after lockdown in United Kingdom. — BBC news

Lockdown & domestic violence: India

Lockdown in India has been no different; India's national commission for women on Friday said it registered 587 complaints of domestic violence from March 23 to April 16 which was a significant more than the 396 complaints received in the previous 25 days.

Why domestic violence increased during covid19 pandemic?

The main reason here was the state of lockdown which lead to crisis in many sectors of life leading to increased irritability.

1. Financial crisis:
2. Difficulty in accessing the substance had lead to the rise in irritability among the perpetrators.
3. Confinement into small space has also lead to invasion of personal space which has lead to continuous locking into the argument.
4. Reduced job opportunities have further lead to increased irritability among perpetrators.

Health Care Worker's Mental Health and well-being during Covid pandemic

During any crisis , disasters and outbreaks, all individuals-front line warriors, including health care workers may be affected emotionally and physically.

Facing this critical situation, health care workers are at risk of developing psychological distress and other mental health symptoms.

The ever-increasing number of confirmed and suspected cases, overwhelming workload, depletion of personal protection equipment, widespread media coverage, lack of specific drugs, and feelings of being inadequately supported may all contribute to the mental health burden of these health care workers.

A cross-sectional survey conducted by J Lai et al. 2020 in Wuhan, China, and enrolled 1257 respondents and revealed a high prevalence of mental health symptoms among health care workers treating patients with COVID-19 in China. Overall, 50.4% had depression, 44.6% had anxiety, 34.0% had insomnia, and 71.5% had distress of all participants.

Steps for prevention:

Take proper self-care. Do activities which promote your emotional, physical, relational, and spiritual/religious wellness. Maintain structured routine; ensure breaks and a proper sleep hygiene; be in touch with relatives/friends regularly; spend time for rejuvenation by doing activities and hobbies which are relaxing and not related to work. Do exercise regularly and have a healthy diet. Do pranayama, Yoga, and practice relaxation exercises.

Mental Condition of Family And Person With COVID Diagnosis

When a person himself/herself is diagnosed as COVID positive then he may undergo several types of psychological disturbance.

- Emotional instability
- Increased anxiety, worries for the future, Panic Attacks.
- Depression and agitation.
- Tension, guilt of spreading, fear of infection to family members, and anger for one's self for not taking enough precautions, Irritation and other's blames.
- Frustration, confusion, and inability to take a decision.
- Unable to maintain a daily routine.
- Difficulty in communication.

General Principles On Dealing With Mental Health Problems During The Pandemic

Understanding that we are not alone. Yes, it is a pandemic. All most all people around the globe have been affected, Eat well and Drink well, Exercise and Maintaining Daily Routine, Learn to handle the Isolation, Rejecting the false news, Managing Health Anxiety Symptoms, Be a support to others