COVID-19 AND MENTAL HEALTH: AN OVER VIEW

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ABSTRACT:

Novel Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) originating from China has rapidly crossed all over the world, infecting people throughout the whole world. This phenomenon has led to a massive public reaction in the country; the media has been reporting continuously to keep all informed about this pandemic situation. All these things are that leads to increase in their level of anxiety, stress and fear. This in turn is affecting their mental health.This paper is an attempt to assess their knowledge about the covid-19, stress, fear, anxiety and mental health specifically stress, anxiety and fear among Indian population during this pandemic.

INTRODUCTION:

COVID-19 started in December 2019, commonly known as 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 hospitalizations and deaths (Wang et al. 2020)[1]and by now it has spread to almost all the countries of the world.Coronaviruses, so named due to the outer fringe of envelope proteins resembling crown ('corona' in Latin), are a family of enveloped RNA viruses (Burrell et al., 2017)[2]. They are generally pathogenic to mammals and birds and cause mild upper respiratory tract infections in humans. They occasionally can be transmitted to a larger human population and can cause severe respiratory illnesses exemplified by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2003 and 2012 respectively.Not much is known about novel corona virus at this point, which understandably affects our mental health especially for those who have other mental health conditions like anxiety, stress, fear and depression. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic on

March 11, 2020, and as on March 31, 2020, near about 7 lakhs cases have been confirmed and more than 33,000 deaths have been reported (WHO website dated 31.03.2020 at 11:00 am Indian standard time) across 204 countries, areas, or territories and the cases are likely to rise [3]. As of 29 September there were approximately 6,145,291 Confirmed cases, 947,576 Active Cases, 5,101,397 Recovered, 96,318 Deceased cases reported in India (www. Hindustantimes.com)[4].

Mental Health is a core issue of human existence. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a "state of well-being in which every individual realized his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community". It is a state of full and harmonious functioning of the total personality that reflects a maximum of success, satisfaction and excellence. It is the ability of a person to adjust to the world and those around with maximum effectiveness.

Presently, with no medicine or vaccine available for Covid-19 the situation has turned worrisome. People have been strictly advised to maintain social distance, wear a mask, and sanitize their hands frequently.The knowledge and attitudes of the public are expected to largely influence the degree of adherence to the personal protective measures and ultimately the clinical outcome. Hence, it is important to study these domains in the Indian population. The mental health issues are other major health concerns, which are expected to increase day by day during this epidemic.It is going to impact various spheres of life such as the economy, industries, global market, agriculture, human health, health care, etc. Psychologists and mental health professionals speculate that the pandemic is going to impact on the mental health of the population globally with the increase in cases of depression, suicide, and self-harm, apart from other symptoms reported globally due to COVID 2019 (Moukaddam& Shah, 2020)[5]

It speculates that new measures such as self-isolation and quarantine have affected usual activities, routines, and livelihoods of people that may lead to an increase in loneliness, anxiety, depression, insomnia, harmful alcohol, and drug use, and self-harm or suicidal behaviour (World Health Organization, 2020c)[6].

Such widespread outbreaks are associated with adverse mental health consequences. Widespread outbreaks of infectious disease, such as COVID-19, are associated with psychological distress and symptoms of mental illness (Bao et al., 2020)[7].In times of an epidemic, people tend to experience fear of getting infected with the virus/disease resulting in anxiety, stress, and depression, etc. (Hall et al. 2008)[8].

As a result, in addition to the adverse effects on physical health, the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to cause chronic psychological manifestations like depression, anxiety, panic disorder, and psychosomatic manifestations (Tandon, 2020)[9].

The anxiety and concerns in society are globally affecting every individual to variable extents. Recent evidence suggests that individuals who are kept in isolation and quarantine experience significant distress in the form of anxiety, anger, confusion and post-traumatic stress symptoms (Brooks et al., 2020)[10].

A problem of mental health care has emerged as a core issue in the present day society. It is impossible to deny the extraordinary impact of this pandemic on people and especially those who are suffering from corona virus as exposure of coronavirus may result in a range of responses. These reactions can be emotional, somatic and behavioural and can cause severe damage to the person to the extent of committing suicide. There are various resources available online which can be helpful in managing and coping with the stress arising out of the pandemic. It is important for people to take care of themselves, their family members and friends. Helping others to cope with their stress makes the community stronger.As persons with mental health conditions, we are familiar with the battles in our minds. There aren't any easy solutions, but we are much stronger than we realise. Likewise, we are learning to live with covid 19 and one day we shall get through it.

Here are some of the important points which can help people to cope with this pandemic and get help who required.

1. Keep yourself informed from national and local authorities. Keep yourself up-to-date about covid-19 with the latest news related to @WHO social media.
2. Keep in touch with the family and friend online.

3. Keep up with the daily routines as far as possible.

4. Eat healthy meals daily at regular intervals.

5. Exercise regularly.

6. Maintain personal hygiene.

7. Make time for doing things you enjoy.

8. Try to be strong and take it as a challenge, because challenge can be overcome.

9. Try to be positive, calm and patience.

From the previous ages human race had been through various challenges and hardships in their lives, which every day they have faced continually and enjoyed as a winner learning to cope with the situations and difficulties. Therefore, in this time too, it is very important to evolve a simple counselling package for general public and for those who are covid positive that can be delivered by givers at home or in the hospital. The package should contain a number of dimensions, such as being empathetic and supportive to all those who are affected. They need to be listened with compassion and kindness. Establishing online mental health and counselling services at hospitals, community health care centres, and at university departments of psychology could be an opportunity to address such a crisis (Liu et al., 2020)[11].

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