

# **Emerging Trends: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities (Post Covid-19)**

## **Volume-III**

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# Is the psychological wellbeing of the adults during COVID-19 need something else? A systematic review research.

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## **Abstract**

*This paper tries to address the psychological wellbeing of the adult population during the time of COVID-19 contagion in the world and what needs to be done with the existing health system. With rapid urbanization and acculturation due to business demand the focus of globalization has been changed from individual to global level now. This has resulted in lots of anxiety and stress among adult working professionals. Although it is realized and seen by WHO*

*through earlier mental health studies, the recently developed pandemic due to the SARS-COV-02 virus has enhanced the anxiety and stress level among the adults. On one side where COVID-19 has brought lots of opportunities to learn for self-dependency and limited use of resources across the globe to sustain the economic activities in the countries, the other side highlights increased stress levels among different adult populations about social insecurity and wellbeing. This current paper tries to understand the possible solution given in different studies and explore the relationship between “psychological health of adults” and “COVID-19 pandemic” so that existing policies can be reviewed for better productivity of the human beings. A cross-sectional and systematic review of literature is done with 50 articles searched from “Google scholar”, “PubMed”, “NCBI ” etc., to understand the type of psychological health that comes out during COVID-19. Authors suggest that conducting positive discussions, counseling, and engagement of community workers with proper information and family support systems should also require to be strengthened to ensure the psychological wellbeing of the adults.*

**(Keywords:** psychological pressure, COVID-19 pandemic, adult, emotional wellbeing, depression)

## **Introduction**

With the advent of the pandemic of the SARS-COV-2 virus, the whole world is facing crucial challenges in most of the front. Literature shows that most of the earliest patients were related to a market of titled Huanan seafood wholesale market from Wuhan and multiplied its impact very rapidly across the world which results into lots of mortality, anxiety, and stress(Li *et al.*, 2020, Kelvin and Rubino, 2020, Battegayet.*al.*, 2020, Rothana and Byrareddy, 2020 and Xiang *et.al.* 2020). This is also seen from the many research studies about the spread up of the outbreak with mental stress (Toraleset.*al.*, 2020, Shujaet.*al.* 2020 and Jakovljevicet.*al.*, 2020).Stress considered as a phenomenon result due to physical, perceptual, and emotional state which caused tension. However, different authors and medical scientists have defined it differently and create adverse effects on health. This can be broadly categorized into external i.e., it may

arise due to some environment, psychological or social scenario whereas the internal can be formed due to any kind of illness occur in the human body. More comprehensively the internal stress can lead to as "fight or flight" response, a complex phenomenon of neurologic and endocrinologic systems (Sheil, 2018). This means it is a general phenomenon caused every day and may lead to an unhealthy situation if not taken care of properly.

Recent literature on stress and COVID-19 revealed that most infected COVID patients are experiencing insignificant to modest respiratory disease and getting recovered without any particular medication. Among them, older age population, as well as persons with comorbidities are more vulnerable to generate severe illnesses due to COVID-19. In this crucial condition to control the pandemic, national governments have executed lockdown in the phased manner followed by isolation and quarantine for the cases and contacts. Hence the Old age population who are affected by ill health are more vulnerable as they are not habituated to remain at home for a long period and this results in more stress. Simultaneously, with the age and responsibilities of human beings, anxiety, and stress also increases (Vicario-Merino and Muñoz-Agustin, 2020). Many studies reported that in the pandemic period every person is suffering from mental stress (Rajkumar, 2020 and Olaseni et.al., 2020). Anxiety factors like food security, the safety of family and self, job security, getting an infection, and availability of medicine are identified as some of the stress triggers. However, the long run of unplanned lockdown has emerged as a big reason for getting stressed due to social distancing, quarantine, and self-isolation (Haider and Tiwana, 2020). Studies show that the older adults who have dementia may suffer from anger, stress, and withdrawn nature during the isolation (Jiloha RC., 2020) and people are worried about their family and health (Li et.al., 2020). Not only adults it is also reported that students are also facing stress about their education; parents are facing stress by thinking about their family member's safety from coronavirus disease. Ultimately, this scenario if not addressed properly will lead to ill health and mental problems among various communities in our country as well as the

globe and affect the productivity of various individuals.

Table 1.1: Distribution of age-group wise information on the death rate

| Age-group         | No. and % of mortality | With basic conditions | Without basic conditions |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 0 - 17 years old  | 9 (0.06%)              | 6                     | 3                        |
| 18 - 44 years old | 601 (3.9%)             | 476                   | 17                       |
| 45 - 64 years old | 3,413 (22.4%)          | 2,851                 | 72                       |
| 65 - 74 years old | 3,788 (24.9%)          | 2,801                 | 5                        |
| 75+ years old     | 7,419 (48.7%)          | 5,236                 | 2                        |
| Total             | 15,230 (100%)          | 11,370 (75%)          | 99 (0.7%)                |

*Source: Worldometers.info. (2020)*

Table 1.1 shows the deaths that occurred in different age groups in New York City, United States (US). Recent data provided by “New York City Health as of May 13, 2020” clearly explained that mortality rate because of COVID-19 of adults is higher compared to children. In the figure “Underlying illnesses include Diabetes, Lung Disease, Cancer, Immunodeficiency, Heart Disease, Hypertension, Asthma, Kidney Disease, GI/Liver Disease, and Obesity” ("Coronavirus Age, Sex, Demographics (COVID-19) - Worldometer", 2020). In the support of this report a study has been done by Bansal, which reveals that the persons who have cardiovascular disease are more prone to COVID-19 infec-

tion and also more prone to death (Bansal, 2019). Giving this background, it is very much necessary to study different kinds of arrangements and provisions made in the policies in our country.

## **Methodology**

### ***Methodology to search the article and selection***

To meet the objective of the review paper here literatures are considered between 2005- May 13, 2020. For this the authors collected overall 50 articles in different search engines. The selection of the articles is done by searching in the different database such as “Google Scholar”, “NCBI”, and PubMed” and terms used to search articles are “stress and COVID-19”, “Psychological Stress” “Stress among adult in a pandemic”, “Anxiety in COVID-19” “Depression and COVID-19” make with different permutations and combinations. This article includes findings from countries from China, India, America, Brazil, Spain, Romania, Australia, Italy, United Kingdom, Pakistan, and Singapore. Before the finalization of the selection, narratives from 50 articles are reviewed with respect to COVID-19, and psychological stress among the adult population. These articles were reviewed in detail and analysis is done to understand the need for the adult population at the current time.

### **Methods used to conduct the thematic analysis**

For analyzing thematically, out of 50 articles 40 articles are selected based on the relevance of the topic, But due to the nature of the publication of this paper narratives are analyzed thematically as (a) Impact of COVID-19 on the adult population, (b) psychological effect on health workers and (C) reasons of stress. The majority of the studies are cross-sectional and review paper form different countries.

### **Key findings**

#### **Impact of COVID-19 on the adult population**

Around 7.6 billion adult population lives in the globe and among them 29 per-

cent belong to below 15 years and around 9 percent placed above 65 years. This population is varying from country to country and Europe covered a maximum of 18 percent of the elderly people (Statistica, 2019). Asia is reported to be with 9 percent of the elderly people and 24 percent of the population below 15 years. This means around 67 percent of the adult population resides in Asia. Ye et. al., (2020) in his study revealed that the pandemic has killed and infected a proportionately huge number of persons in China and elsewhere in the world, resulting in catastrophe for humans (Yi et.al., 2020). Not only this, but many studies also envisaged the significant association between comorbidity and COVID-19. A study conducted in China concluded that among 191 patients who are more than 18 years, 48% had comorbidity and among them 30 percent are affected with hypertension as a common illness (Zhou et al., 2020). Continuing the findings, a UK based study shown that specific anxiety related to COVID-19 was found greater in older participants (Shevlin et.al., 2020). But does this affect both the gender? Due to lock down it is seen that most of the females are going outside in search of bread and butter. No doubt this calamity has to bring an unexpected fear among the adult population due to loss of wages and jobs including the economy of the industry and country. In a gender-based study, it is seen that women of less than 45 years age who are educated and playing the role of farmer, worker, clerical, businessmen, service class, and unemployed have a higher risk of psychological stress than men (Song et al., 2020, Mazza et.al., 2020 & Filgueiraset.al., 2020). Research also shows that in the lack of effective treatment and vaccine, currently isolation and quarantine are the only solutions to diminish the circulation of the infection among the human population. But simultaneously it is also a fact that the habit of going outside on a usual day and remaining as a lockdown for such a long period has brought lots of anxiety, depress and stress among the adult population. Compared to this it is older people are affected more than youth and men are more vulnerable than women as they are going outside, especially the young adult population (Yi et.al., 2020). Study conducted by Lian et.al.(2020) resists this statement by explaining that

40.4 percentage of the selected youth are reported to be susceptible to psychology-related difficulties. Obviously, youth mental health has been associated with “being less educated”, “being the enterprise worker”, and “using negative coping styles”. Thus, evidence of being COVID-19 as a contagious infection may reflect an endless impact on the psychological and emotional health of youth and adults (Liang *et al.*, 2020, Kazmi *et al.*, 2020 and Li *et al.*, 2020).

## **Psycho-social effect of COVID-19 on medical staffs**

At the current time, medical doctors and health workers are only saving a life by providing different kinds of treatment however, during this time they are bringing themselves to vulnerability due to lack of personal protective equipment and different negative behaviour of the cases and contacts. In the lack of effective policy and hygienic environment, these lifesaving professionals are facing the biggest stress-related problems as they dealt with COVID-19 communicable diseases. Earlier learning from other pandemics and contributing information on COVID-19 reveals about unmanageable anxiety that healthcare service providers challenges are linked with enhanced psychological diseases among (Tsamakiset.al., 2020). Another comparative study in China (Wuhan) has done on medical staff and college students and this study revealed that stress in medical staff was higher than that of college students. Reasons behind their stress are “Thought of being in danger”, “The possibility of self-illness”, “Worrying about family infection”, “Poor sleep quality”, “Needing psychological guidance”, “Worrying about being infected”(Wu *et al.*, 2020) and “fear for personal safety” faced by medical workers in New York City (Rippet.al., 2020). Lack of medical facilities such as the shortage of beds, masks, medicines, and foods for the patients also may be the reasons for their stress. No doubt the developed countries even did not think of such situations and resulted in a greater number of deaths.

A study conducted among the nurses and the general public who provide support to the COVID-19 patient shows that “front line nurses” are having lesser psychological responses than that of the workers who are working in the non-front

area. It may be due to the practice they are being taught during their education. In the same line, it is also seen that sympathetic traumatization is reported to be higher in “non-front line nurses” as well as the common mass in the comparison of front line nurses (Li *et al.*, 2020, Yuan *et.al.*, 2020) whereas research carried at different cities of China explained just opposite to this which means frontline health care workers are also facing challenges related to more risk of hopelessness, insomnia, nervousness and anguish (Lai *et.al.*, 2020, Si *et.al.*, 2020). This means both the adult population is in expressing stress as reported nervousness, sadness, and tension during the pandemic situation.

### **Reason for psychological stress**

Now, everybody understands that as being a government servant the professionals cannot remain away from the assigned job at this crucial time where private health service providers has started consultation online in maximum cities. The behavior of the patient as well as the suspectable contacts is not cooperating with the field level workers who are trying to trace the cases to reduce the spread up of the infection. It also acts as a factor to increase the stress among the health workers. Besides, there are different reasons for psychological stress discussed in the above section, and the government must address these factors to make the community healthier. The literature forms the review reported that reasons for the stress is “feeling of exposure”; “resigning or termination from job thought”; “feeling of life-threatening” and “feeling of family members and friends avoidance” (Zhu *et.al.*, 2020). Not only this, community with drinking history and suspected or confirmed COVID-19, living with family as a unit, and concerned about self or relatives for getting an infection by COVID-19, and chances of exposure to dying are also some risk factors which results to depression-related outcomes (Zhu *et.al.*, 2020, Sloan *et.al.*, 2020). Cases of corona virus are increasing day by day everywhere and if this continues, there will be a shortage of beds in the hospitals (Remuzzi and Remuzzi, 2020). Simultaneously due to COVID-19 pandemic, medical systems of many countries are suffering from

lack of medical facilities, medicines, beds for patients along with “background illness”, “fear of contracting with COVID-19 patients” and “a higher subjective overload” causes more stress among patients as well as among health care workers (Nemţeanu and Dabija, 2020, Shachamet *et.al.*, 2020). It means chances of getting an infection from an acquaintance are reported to be highly linked with an increased level of both hopelessness and anxiety. Not only this, other study shows that wherever a history of medical problems with stress, low-income for females, bad social relationship and closer relationships in the same spaces also linked to elevated concentrations of sadness and fear (Odriozola-González *et.al.*, 2020, Mazza *et.al.*, 2020, Flesia *et al.*, 2020). Questions come to mind in this crucial time is, if we are living in a society can how we avoid the members with whom we are interacting daily. It seems very easy concerning government orders such as isolation, quarantine, and lockdown, but our society is not practiced it for many decades as we are social animals.

Continuing this rationale, electronic media is also identified as a reason for fear and psychological stress as it continuously showing negative news on COVID-19. This is creating anxiety on the audience which has no cure (Shujaet *et.al.*, 2020, Sloan *et.al.*, 2020 and Zaninet *et.al.*, 2020). A research from Uttar Pradesh, India revealed that some people are getting suicidal tendencies due to stress and fear of COVID-19, tested positive for corona virus infection, being isolated, and feeling lonely (Dsouza, *et.al.*, 2020). However, in the lack of psychological behaviour it is very difficult to say this. But as research studies shown that it is important for the media to not show unnecessary news related to the pandemic which brings more tension in the lives. It must be facilitated with selected and positive news gathered reliable sources.

## **Discussion**

COVID-19 has affected nearly all areas of our life, such as sports, education, business, private and government jobs, and so on. These changes have affected people physically and psychologically (Stankovska *et.al.*, 2020). It is quite

natural that during the pandemic, everybody is suffering from the problem of loneliness, depression, anxiety, and other psychiatric problems especially the health workers and adults. They are living in the fear of COVID-19 pandemic that the infection may be affecting them as they are dealing with cases and going outside for searching bread and butter. It is advisable that to be safe and alive everybody must follow the advisory of the government but is not practice for the maximum population as they are dependent on each other. Simultaneously, everybody should start making the immune system strong by different methodologies such as Yoga, taking nutritious food, and practicing a positive attitude towards life so that herd immunity can be developed. Besides, there are some psychological protective factors through which adults can protect themselves from anxiety and stress. They are “care provided by the hospital and department administrators, full coverage of all departments with protective personal measures to reduce nosocomial infection, reasonable and balanced work shift arrangement, sufficient logistical support, comfortable accommodations provided by the hospital, exercise habit, etc.” (Zhu *et.al.*, 2020 and Wuet.*al.*, 2005). Additionally, the literature shows, “frequently contacting with colleagues”, “calm mood”, “high psychological resilience”(Song *etal.*, 2020), “behavioral activation”, “acceptance-based coping”, “mindfulness practice”, “loving-kindness practices” (Polizziet.*al.*, 2020), “emotional stability”, “self-control”, “positive coping style” and “internal locus of control” (Flesiaet *al.*, 2020) also can be used to reduce the stress.

## **Conclusion and Suggestions**

Providing proper information and one to one counseling may be used as an option to slow down the transmission of information. Along with this, WHO advisory shows that sanitation and hygiene practice is also effective to reduce the transmission, however in underdeveloped countries where the population is densely spread up it is very difficult to practice. Similarly, is the case for social distancing and hand hygiene, which is very difficult for third world countries, as

around more than half of the populations are belonging to rural areas and the socio-economic condition is not so well developed. The rural and urban disparities in the health system are clearly visible and emerged as a challenge in front of the governments however, in urban areas of the developed cities; use of technology is applied to cut out the dispersion of the contamination. But, the effectiveness of these technologies and their cost is needed to be research and understand in third world countries. A study report supports this statement by explaining that “social distancing”, “improved hand hygiene behaviour” are the only predictors of positive behavior change with “no effect of politically relevant variables” (Harper *et.al.*, 2020). The proper use and supply of PPE and hygienic practices also reported reducing the fear (Wang *et al.*, 2020). However, uses of all these as strategies is questionable in under developed countries. In many private and government sectors workers are allowed to do their work from home except essential service providers (doctors, nurses, other health care workers, policemen, and so on) during the lockdown period. When these workers will return to their workplaces after lockdown, they can suffer from psychological stress due to fear of COVID-19 pandemic. So, the government should take care of the disinfection of these workplaces, also they should provide them masks, sanitizers, etc. so that workers can stay stress-free and do their work with full concentration and efficiency.

A study of China shows, the symptoms of stress, depression, anxiety, and insomnia were found among the workers when they returned to their workplace to do the labor after lockdown and quarantine in the course of the COVID-19 infections. Learning belong to China reveals, that improvement in the hygiene concern of offices from the company on workers’ health status is lead to reduce the psychological characteristics among workers (Tan *et.al.*, 2020). However, the most important argument is effective counseling and social security. Currently, in none of the policy, these two important strategies are used during general times. However, the health insurance scheme for free of cost will be much beneficial to them. Second, the announcement of economic package and

its quality execution will only reduce the stress level among the businessmen and job seekers especially the migrant population. However, it is a big challenge to address the stress at the current level of illiteracy among the masses in underdeveloped countries. In this case the government may take the help of the non-governmental organization, local leaders, and build their capacity on how to manage the community's stress. Their roles and responsibilities need to be strengthened more technically as well as with respect to the use of information technology, as this is an opportunity at the current time to ensure the wellbeing of the local community.

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