

A Systematic Survey to Study the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Psychological Distress in Indian Population

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An outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was reported in Wuhan, China, in 2019. SARS-CoV 2 is genetically similar with SARS-CoV from the 2003 by 79%. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared this outbreak as global pandemic. This pandemic has changed lives of people and also various aspects of the global, public, and private economy. The economic recession in this pandemic are predicted to increase in suicide as well as mental disorders. Awareness on public mental health and strategies to help people get through this difficult time is urgently needed. There is a paucity of literature that provides empirical evidence for the validity or appropriateness of common depression measures. Extensive clinical experience and research is required to fill the gap/lacunae in the existing literature. Taking into consideration of the above points, the current survey was planned to review the psychological distress due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, Depression, Mental health

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Introduction

COVID-19, caused by SARS-CoV-2, a respiratory illness with the symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breathing, etc (WHO 2019). To combat the spread of this global health crisis, COVID-19 strict public health measures have been established. (Adhikari et al., 2020). Huang et al. (2020) reported that COVID-19 could affect people's mental health also. During the Virus outbreak, various psychological outcomes were observed at different population levels. Most commonly, people have experienced fear of getting sick, dying, feeling helpless, etc. (Hall et al., 2008). Pandemics have a negative impact on public mental health, which can even lead to a mental crisis. (Xiang et al., 2020).

Awareness on public mental health and strategies to help people get through this difficult time is urgently needed. There is a paucity of literature that provides empirical evidence for the validity or appropriateness of common depression measures. Extensive clinical experience and research is required to fill the gap/lacunae in the existing literature. Taking into consideration of the above points, the current survey was planned to review the psychological distress due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

In order to study the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the psychology of general population, a survey was conducted through Google form. A total of 200 subjects were part of the online survey after agreeing the consent voluntarily. Patient Health Questionnaire depression scale (PHQ-8) a depression measure in population-based research was used for assessing.

Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) questions were considered regarding activity restrictions that have proven the validity and reliability of physical & mental health, and demographic health monitoring. Additionally, a "Healthy Days Symptoms Module" that comprises of questions related to depressive and anxiety symptoms, sleep problems, pain limitations and vitality was used. The questions are as follows: 1) Symptoms of Depression: "How many days did you feel sad, blue, or depressed?" 2) Symptoms of Anxiety: "How many days did you feel worried, tense, or anxious?" 3) Problems related to sleep:

"How many days have you felt you did not get enough rest or sleep?" 4) Pain limitations: "How many days did pain make it difficult to do your usual activities?" 5) Vitality: "How many days have you felt very healthy and full of energy?" Sociodemographic information and employment status was also obtained for each respondent. Also, two questions were asked related to the general health: "Has a doctor or other health care provider ever told you that you have an anxiety disorder (including acute stress disorder, anxiety, generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic attacks, panic disorder, phobia, posttraumatic stress disorder, or social anxiety disorder)?" and "Has a doctor or other health care provider ever told you that you have a depressive disorder (including depression, major depression, dysthymia, or minor depression)?"

Results & Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic had unparalleled effect, with high rates of mortality and sickness, economic recession and social isolation for large number of people. The effect of this crisis on mental health is unclear and very little is known about this. Hence this study aimed to provide data on the mental health of the general population during COVID-19 pandemic. The study survey was conducted online through Google form and is a representative sample from the Indian population during COVID-19 pandemic. Depression, anxiety, and mental well-being have been measured with well-demonstrated scales i.e PHQ-8. The COVID-19 pandemic and mass lockdown has led to social isolation of the people as precautionary measure of COVID-19. It is estimated that about large population experience psychological distress and portrays that the psychological wellbeing could be in danger (Shah, 2020). A group of mental health professionals recently discovered that anxiety and stress are already affecting people. They surveyed more than 2,000 online participants and found that social isolation was a detrimental effect of COVID19, creating feelings of anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicidal (Rahman, 2020).

The study was conducted on 200 peoples, of which major proportion belongs to 20-24 age group. Female accounts for 52.4% whereas 47.6% were male and mostly belonged to student background and were living in nuclear

Family and have a moderate worklife. Major proportion of this study was free from any disease. 80% were free from any depressive disorder whereas 20% had suffered from this. 11% feel depressed nearly every day out of which 6% struggle with sleep. 10% were facing poor appetite and 8% were suffering from dizziness. 56% population have ever felt bad about themselves and 48% were not able to concentrate properly during reading. Major proportion were living a healthy lifestyle but 81% were feeling anxious, depressed or worried.

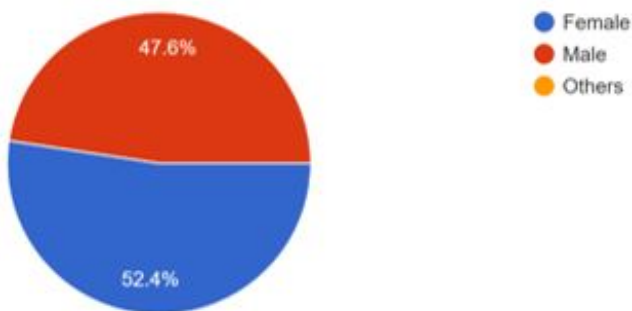


Fig-1: Gender distribution among study population

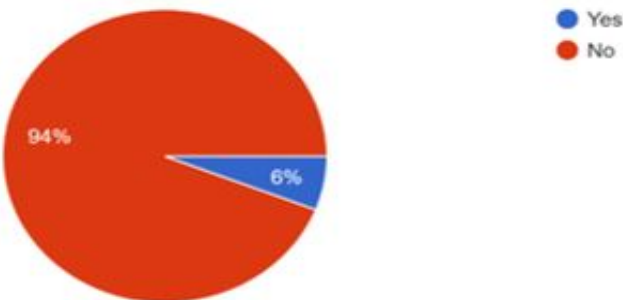


Fig-2: Prevalence of any disease(s) among study population

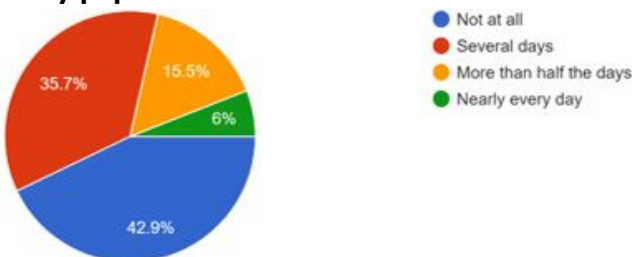


Fig-3: Sleep pattern among study population

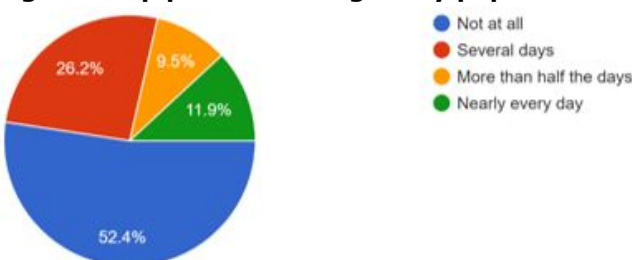


Fig-4: Eating pattern (Poor appetite or over-eating) among study population

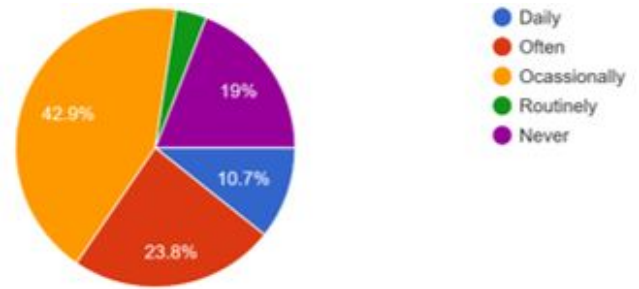


Fig-5: Trouble in concentration power among study population

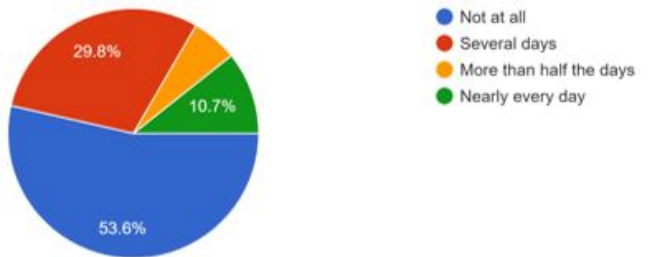


Fig-6: Frequency of anxiousness or depression among study population

The results of the present study shows that the symptoms of depression and anxiety were significantly increased compared to normal population data, even in people who had not previously been diagnosed with any mental disorders. COVID 19 pandemic had less impact on the psychological distress.

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