



Impact of covid-19 over mental health of children

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Abstract

The global lockdown and epidemic of COVID-19 has sparked a feeling of dread and concern among the public. Children and adolescents have suffered short-term and long-term consequences as a result of this phenomena in terms of their psychological well-being and mental health. There are a variety of risk variables that may have an influence on the severity of an adverse event for children, including their developmental stage, educational attainment, previous mental health issues, socioeconomic position, and if they are confined for fear of contracting an illness. Children and adolescents affected by the COVID-19 epidemic and the ordering of lockdowns to prevent further spread of illness.

Key Word: Mental, Health, Psychosocial, COVID-19, children etc.

Introduction

“Nearly 28 percent of the world's population is made up of youngsters under the age of 18. 16 percent of the world's population is under the age of 19, according to the United Nations Population Division. Children and teenagers throughout the globe have been affected in an unprecedented way by COVID-19. Throughout the globe, isolation and social distancing methods have been a key mode of protection against COVID-19 infection. Countries throughout the globe have been instituting regional and national containment measures or lockdowns since January 2020 on these grounds. Schools, educational institutions, and other places of activity were all shut down as part of the lockdown. As a result of these out-of-the-ordinary conditions, everyone experiences tension, worry, and feelings of powerlessness.

According to experts, this pandemic might have more long-term negative effects on children and adolescents than it does on adults. A wide range of circumstances, including developmental age, educational level, special needs, pre-existing mental health conditions, and economic



disadvantage, all have a role in determining the magnitude of the effect on this age group. To stop the spread of the virus, lockdowns are being imposed at national and regional levels throughout the country. The outcomes of these studies are discussed in the following sections.

- More than half (57%) of children living in fragile and conflict affected countries expressed a need for mental health and psychosocial support as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns. This rises to 70% for refugee and displaced children as opposed to 43% for children in host communities.
- Children and young people (38%) say they are feeling sad and fearful, with 12% on the extreme end of continuously feeling sad and fearful who may be at risk of developing mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety. This is higher than the World Health Organization's estimate of 9% of young people and adults combined experiencing extreme distress in conflict settings.
- The children's feelings stem from complex daily worries. Most children and parents feared contracting COVID-19 themselves or that relatives might die from the virus. 40% of children and 48% of parents indicate that COVID-19 is the main risk affecting their emotions. Children are anxious about school closures, interrupted access to basic services and their families' economic hardships due to COVID-19 containment measures. Some shared that they have gone hungry after parents lost their jobs.
- Children (aged 7-14) confided that they turn to trusted friends and family members for emotional support (86%), but youth (aged 19-24) are struggling to cope with the distress on their own. Less than half (41.8%) say they have someone they can look to for help.
- More than half of the parents (51.2%) reported changes in how their children spend their days in the community since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the parents, 44.3% noticed changes in their relationships with their children, including children's aggressive behaviour, and stress and pressure on both children and parents.
- Children and young people emphasized the negative effect on their mental health and wellbeing of disrupted access to critical services. They mentioned schools most frequently as being less available (89.2%), followed by services and activities (70.9%), playgrounds (65.0%), health centres (41.9%), food (38.1%) and water (10.6%). COVID-19 containment measures have also hampered community-based child protection, prevention and monitoring activities, putting children even more at risk.



- Children identified family poverty and food insecurity (38.1%) as a chief concern. For displaced children or those living in conflict zones, their parents' and caregivers' job loss puts them at grave risk of food insecurity, forcing them to resort to negative coping mechanisms and potentially resulting in violations of their rights and protections. This in turn contributes to their increased sense of helplessness and stress.

Psychiatrists and therapists

- For children and adolescents throughout the world who are suffering from mental health issues due to extreme stress, the involvement of mental health professionals such as clinical psychologists, psychiatrists and psychiatric social workers is critical.
- To replace in-person exams and therapies, there is a requirement for 'tele mental health compatibility.' The goal of mental health practitioners should be to reach out to the broader population. Audio-visual materials relating to good parenting, mental health awareness, stigma reduction, mental health hygiene practises, healthy behaviour promotion and psycho-educational materials pertaining to children's and adolescents' mental health treatment need to be developed and disseminated.
- There is a pressing need for mental health treatment that is both integrated and creative. Parents, paedophiles, teachers, school counsellors, community volunteers, NGOs, police, etc. should be engaged and educated about the mental health condition of children and adolescents and briefed in basic psychological first aid in order to better help them.
- Involvement of teachers and school counsellors in the development of resources for mental health education, life skills training, parent collaboration, and professional referrals.
- Online training for paediatricians on mental health screening of vulnerable children, evaluation of psychosocial variables, and necessary inputs for the therapy of moderate stress and anxiety in children is offered. "
- Mental health promotion and behaviour issue management materials for special schools, employing contingency management, psychological first aid, and contacting mental health specialists are all necessary.



- Identify high-risk children (e.g., disadvantaged children, children of migrants), administer psychological first aid, and collaborate with caregivers and mental health care specialists by creating materials for community volunteers.
- When children or their parents are isolated, mental health professionals should concentrate on creating and administering online questionnaires to identify psychological distress and other stress symptoms, as well as providing ad hoc supportive treatments.
- For children with established problems including ADHD, autism, and intellectual impairments, clinical psychologists should develop and conduct short-term behavioural therapies that are largely parent-focused and launched via digital and electronic media. A similar approach should be used to teenage psychiatric issues including PTSD, depression, and drug misuse. Often, a unique answer is needed for a specific problem at hand..
- Doctors must carefully consider the risks and advantages of psychotropic drugs for children and adolescents e.g. anti-depressants, anxiolytics/anticonvulsions, etc., and arrange prescriptions for those who are unable to do so.
- When it comes to children and adolescents, mental health professionals need to do long-term, longitudinal research to determine how the COVID 19 epidemic affects their mental health over time”.

Review of literature

(Al Dhaheri et al. 2021) studied "*Impact of COVID-19 on mental health and quality of life: Is there any effect? A cross sectional study of the MENA region*" COVID-19, the name given to the new coronavirus that caused the outbreak, has been identified as a pathogen that may be transmitted from person to person. In late December 2019, episodes of pneumonia of unclear aetiology were recorded in the Chinese city of Wuhan. A worldwide pandemic was proclaimed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in mid-March 2020 because of the widespread spread of the illness in many nations, after its debut as an epidemic. More than 108 million cases have been confirmed as of February 14th, 2021, with 5.99 million of those cases occurring in the Eastern Mediterranean.



(Octavius et al. 2020) studied "*Impact of COVID-19 on adolescents' mental health: a systematic review*" I came upon this Physical distance and closed public locations like schools, universities, and workplaces have been implemented across the globe in an effort to limit the spread of the disease. On the other side, a lack of social interaction has had a negative influence on mental health, particularly for adolescents. People between the ages of 10 and 19 are considered adolescents, a generation that is particularly susceptible to mental health problems because of their sensitivity to psychological and social change. Adolescents engage more with their peers and the social environment than do newborns and children, and they even create more complicated peer relationships.

(Ma et al. 2021) studied *The impact of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak on education and mental health* And they discovered that our everyday lives are being affected by the continuing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic. How the epidemic will finally spread and the success and drawbacks of these control tactics remain largely unknown. In 188 nations, the United Nations estimates, more than 90% of registered pupils have been forced to stay at home because of school cancellations. Children's education, mental health, and overall well-being are all anticipated to suffer as a result of the outbreak, which will force many schools to close and keep students home.

(Dawel et al. 2020) studied "*The Effect of COVID-19 on Mental Health and Wellbeing in a Representative Sample of Australian Adult*" revealed that there is a lack of information regarding the influence of large-scale epidemics on community mental health, especially during the acute period. When it comes to supporting communities in the face of the unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak, we are ill-equipped. An urgent need for data to inform government policy and resource allocation was the goal of this study. An Australian representative sample was surveyed at the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic, which was the first time a representative sample of Australians was surveyed. Well-validated questionnaires were used to evaluate depression, anxiety, and overall psychological well-being (PHQ-9, GAD-7, WHO-5). With the use of linear regression, we looked for correlations between COVID-19 exposure and mental health, as well as the effects of COVID-19 on job and social functioning and other socio-demographic characteristics. Individuals without a



history of mental illness had much higher levels of depression and anxiety than the general population.

(Meherali et al. 2021) studied *Mental Health of Children and Adolescents Amidst COVID-19 and Past Pandemics: A Rapid Systematic Review* People's lives throughout the globe have been disturbed by the COVID-19 epidemic and steps to combat it, according to the study findings. The COVID-19 pandemic's direct and indirect psychological and social consequences on young children and adolescents are now apparent and will continue to influence their mental health in the future. It was the goal of this knowledge-synthesis study to determine how this current pandemic is impacting children and adolescents' psychological well-being, as well as to assess the efficacy of various interventions used in previous and current pandemics to aid in the mental well-being of children and adolescents.

(Lee 2020) studied *Mental health effects of school closures during COVID-19* It discovered that for children and adolescents with mental health problems, such closures represent a loss of access to the supports they typically receive via schools.. One mental health organisation surveyed 2111 young people with mental health issues in the UK and found that 83% believed the epidemic had worsened their illnesses. Peer support groups and face-to-face programmes have been discontinued, and some young people may have difficulty obtaining mental health care over the phone or online, as reported by 26% of respondents.

(Tang et al. 2020) studied *Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations* It concluded that the outbreak and shutdown of COVID-19 has sparked a worldwide feeling of dread and worry. Children and adolescents have suffered short-term and long-term consequences as a result of this phenomena in terms of their psychological well-being and mental health. There are a variety of risk variables that may have an influence on the severity of an adverse event for children, including their developmental stage, educational attainment, previous mental health issues, socioeconomic position, and if they are confined for fear of contracting an illness. COVID-19 pandemic effects on children and adolescents' mental health and the execution of lockdowns throughout the country or area to prevent the spread of infection

(Shah et al. 2020) studied *Impact of COVID-19 on the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents*" For example, children's daily routines have been severely disrupted by this



unexpectedly enforced social isolation. Most schools shuttered, cancelled lessons, and switched to home-based or online instruction as a way to promote and enforce social distancing norms in an effort to slow the spread of the virus. In 143 nations, 67.6 percent of pupils' education and learning have been harmed because of coronavirus. Students' and families' lives have been considerably disturbed as a result of the move away from physical education programmes, raising concerns about the mental health of youngsters. Children's growing brains were put in an unusual scenario due to a sudden shift in the learning environment and a lack of social connections and activities.

Factors contributing to the mental health of children

“Children and their families have been subjected to a variety of stressors and emotional disturbances as a result of the current epidemic. Parents and/or carers have been obliged to work from home for many weeks because of the homestay arrangement. As a result of employment losses, many families were unable to maintain their financial stability. Children are afraid of this sickness because they believe that if they become sick, their parents would remain at home and not go to work. As many families rely on school programmes or food stamps, not all families have the finances to provide appropriate provisions for their children. Even while some families have lost loved ones to the pandemic, others reside in locations where the virus has not spread. There are children whose parents work in COVID-19 situations, and there are children whose parents now work from home or have just been terminated”.

Conclusions

COVID-19 has gained worldwide recognition, yet its immediate and long-term effects on children's mental health are difficult to predict. They might be harmed as a result of measures taken to contain and deal with unforeseen circumstances. Many of the measures attempted to help children and their families, such as shutting schools, restricting opportunities for social contact, placing limitations on travel, ending sports, and converting to online education, have resulted in pain, dread, and anxiety among those affected. Children's mental health must be continually protected and guarded by guardians, educational institutions, and health authorities via open communication and expert therapy. Parents, teachers, school administrators,



counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatric doctors should all work together to help children who are more vulnerable to mental health crises.

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