

Impact of COVID-19 on Psychological Burden for Elderly: (Literature Review)

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ABSTRACT

WHO has declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020. While this virus affects the entire body, this pandemic affected on the entire aspects of society. So that, it would be appropriate to quote COVID-19 as a social disease as it affects all the individuals of the society in terms of their physical, mental, social health and challenges the economic status of the entire population, irrespective of whether they were physically sick. We can anticipate a higher prevalence of psychological distress during any pandemic than typical situations. The COVID-19 instills fear and anxiety among people. Isolation and quarantine to reduce disease transmission have a negative impact on one's mental health. The lockdowns lead to the closure of educational institutions and workplaces, loss of jobs, economic loss, lack of physical activity, restrictions on travel and gatherings. All these factors cumulatively affected the mental stamina of millions worldwide. COVID-19 more dangerous in elderly related to decline the physiological immune systems and having some chronic diseases that induce psychological burden on elderly.

Keywords: COVID-19; Pandemic; Psychological; Burden

Background

Till December 2019, probably no one whether ordinary person or even the scientific researcher, would have thought that a tiny organism would challenge all human beings across the globe, despite their race, culture, ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic status [1]. In December 2019, a cluster of atypical viral pneumonia cases of unknown cause was reported from Wuhan, China. After that, the infectious agent was identified as a novel coronavirus, with similarity in structure to Severe Acute Respiratory Virus (SARS), and therefore named as SARS-CoV-2 [2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) coined the term (COVID-19), given the fact that the first case was detected in December 2019 [3]. The virus, besides primarily affecting the lungs, attacks almost all the essential organs, such as the heart, kidneys, and liver. Related to its novel nature, alarming levels of spread, severity and susceptibility of the entire world, WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020 [3]. While this virus affects the entire body, this pandemic affected on the entire aspects of society. So that, it would be appropriate to quote COVID-19 as a social disease as it affects all the individuals of the society in terms of their physical, mental, social health and challenges the economic status of the entire population, irrespective of whether they were physically sick [1]. We can anticipate a higher prevalence of psychological

burden on elderly during any pandemic than typical situations [4]. Anxiety and depressive symptoms may constitute common reactions among elderly diagnosed with COVID-19 especially those who may be hospitalized due to concerns for one's own health or the health of others, the need for physical isolation and quarantine to reduce disease transmission (which have a negative impact on one's mental health as it lead to social isolation), concerns over the risk of infecting others, loss of livelihood, loss of loved ones, feelings of helplessness, boredom and loneliness, potential risk of death, and concerns over leaving family members alone who may need care [5].

Burden may trigger new symptoms or exacerbate underlying mental or neurological conditions [6]. Patients with pre-existing mental health conditions and substance abuse disorders may also be adversely impacted [7]. Elderly people with COVID19 are at higher risk for sleep problems owing to acute stress responses, as well as additional reasons for those who are hospitalized such as environmental factors, invasive medical procedures (e.g. mechanical ventilation) and the frequent combination of multiple medications possibly disrupting sleep patterns [8]. Despite being benign, the psychological morbidities can affect the quality of life and productivity, mainly due to its chronic nature. Thus, it is essential to identify and treat wherever possible, prevent psychological morbidities for a

better quality of life and productivity during and after the pandemic [9]. There are specific ways to deal with burden, such as increases physical activity, eating a healthy diet, avoid watching excess news channels on COVID-19 situations, talking with a loved one, friends or family members, and connecting with the community via social media will reduce burden levels and alleviate fears and anxiety regarding the situation. In case of experiencing a mental crisis, it is better to seek health care advice rather than dealing with the problem by own self [10].

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