

COVID-19 Effect on Mental Health

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CO: corona, **VI:** virus, **D:** disease, covid -19 with its first outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei, China, in December 2019, and was recognised as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. As of 23 March, more than 352,000 cases of COVID-19 have been reported in over 190 countries and territories, resulting in more than 15,300 deaths and over 100,000 recoveries. India is also among 190 countries, and our UT Jammu and Kashmir is also affected. Covid -19 has high communicability comparison to its mortality.

Covid-19 has proved to be the stressful disease because of its communicability and as effector of this stress, it not only has damaged the physical integrity but also the psychological dimension in the people.

Effect of Disease on Mental health

Disease of any kind either non communicable or communicable has a major impact on the mental health. Depending upon the severity of the disease, as today when the whole world is in grip of COVID-19 and the countries like USA, china, Italy, France etc are helpless in front of this pandemic catastrophe, the disturbed mental health among the people is expected. Be it COVID-19 outbreak or other public health events, can cause emotional distress and anxiety. During any disease outbreak Feeling anxious, confused, overwhelmed or helpless is mostly prevalent, especially when you have less information about the disease. Even if you are not at high risk of getting sick these feelings of distress and anxiety can occur.

The incidence of suicide (which is sign of depression and a psychiatric emergency) because of COVID-19 has been reported as on 18 march A 35 years old suspected novel coronavirus (Covid-19) patient admitted to the Safdarjung Hospital committed suicide by jumping from the hospital building, in other cases two persons have allegedly committed suicide in Uttar Pradesh after they suspected that they had contracted the coronavirus, one youth among committed suicide by jumping in front of a train. And cases of depression increases respectively. These incidences proves that fear of death, social stigma, Apart from COVID-19 communicability which is true in itself but the rumors, gosips and misleading news results in more dangerous impact on health including mental health.

Rumors, Gossip and Fake News

Rumors are widely spread talk with no reliable source to back it up. And when these pieces of information are passed from person

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to person and spreading it as ‘fake news’. Rumors related to COVID-19 that creates panic and worries among people which are not authenticated by concern department.

The most difficult thing is to separate these rumors and gossips from the real truth, As a result, people sometimes give more weight to what they see in their social media whether fake news or rumor and feed them more than what they get from more credible news sources.

What’s the Harm?

When it comes to “fake news,” the effects can be devastating. Most of the times these fake news can impact on your psychological well being and that results in irreversible damage to mental health. The harm can be from mild to severe which may result in things like:

- Exhaustion
- Anxiety
- Depression

This will not stop at psychological domain only but can result in physical violence. And if it is left untreated, it may be long-term physical and mental health problem, including:

- Clinical depression
- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Panic attacks
- Guilt
- Suicide etc

Coping Tips

People that are feeling emotional distress related to COVID-19 can take actions to help support themselves and others.

- Set limit: social media, local or national news.
- Stay active:
- Take adequate sleep and rest.
- Be hydrated take good amount of fluid (lemon water ,ginger water, mint water)
- Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and avoid alcohol.
- Eat healthy balanced foods (rich in vitamin C).
- Stay Connect: with loved ones a,
- Others who may be experiencing stress about the outbreak
- Talk on facts rather than on fabricated issues.

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- Discuss your feelings and take pleasure from conversation apart from the catastrophe (COVID-19).
 - Keep yourself busy with your interests like reading, music, sketch, painting, writing etc.
 - Get accurate health information from reputable sources. For health information about COVID-19, contact the Centers for Disease Control, your local healthcare provider.
 - Better is to follow designated officials or official accounts on social media like twitter for authenticated news.
 - If you're experiencing emotional distress related to COVID-19, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or your local crisis line.
 - For coping tools and resources call Psychiatric Nurses, Psychiatrists, Clinical Psychologists, social worker.

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