

Increasing Investment on Psycho-Social Support amid Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The Novel Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) outbreak has caused serious psychological well-being. The contagion virus is rapidly increases demand for mental health services. The changes in our daily lives, Bereavement, isolation, financial hardship and grief over the death of loved ones are the potential factors affects the mental health and well-being of many. Several people may be facing increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia, and anxiety. This article aims to help orient people supporting the COVID-19 response to integrate psychosocial support skills into their daily work, thereby making a difference to the well-being of people they come into contact with during the pandemic and provides practical advice for taking care of one's own mental well-being, communicating with empathy, and helping people suffering from stress or severe distress.

KEYWORDS: Investment, Psychosocial support, COVID-19, Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide while the demand for mental health is increasing, according to a new WHO survey. The survey of 130 countries provides the first global data showing the devastating impact of COVID-19 on access to mental health services and underscores the urgent need for increased funding.

The pandemic is increasing demand for mental health services. Bereavement, isolation, loss of income and fear are triggering mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones. Many people may be facing increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia, and anxiety. Meanwhile, COVID-19 itself can lead to neurological and mental complications, such as delirium, agitation, and stroke. People with pre-existing mental, neurological or substance use disorders are also more vulnerable to SARS-CoV-2 infection – they may stand a higher risk of severe outcomes and even death.

“Good mental health is absolutely fundamental to overall health and well-being,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. “COVID-19 has interrupted essential mental health services around the world just when they’re needed most. World leaders must move fast and decisively to invest more in life-saving mental health programmes – during the pandemic and beyond.”

Fear, worry, and stress are normal responses to perceived or real threats, and at times when we are faced with

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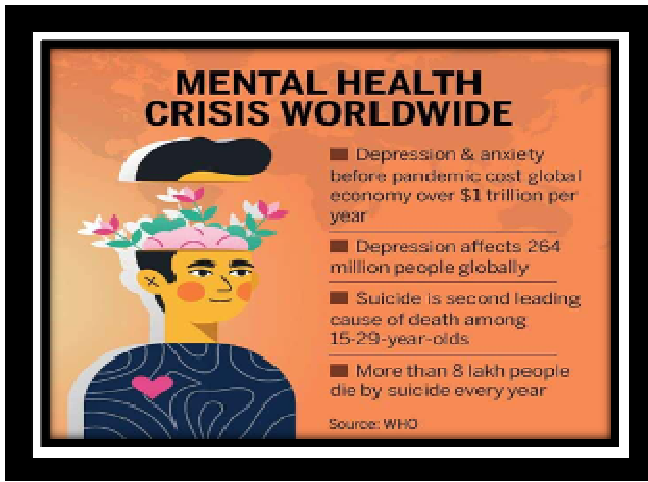


uncertainty or the unknown. So it is normal and understandable that people are experiencing fear in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey was conducted from June to August 2020 among 130 countries across WHO's six regions. It evaluates how the provision of mental, neurological and substance use services has changed due to COVID-19, the types of services that have been disrupted, and how countries are adapting to overcome these challenges.

Countries reported widespread disruption of many kinds of critical mental health services:

- Over 60% reported disruptions to mental health services for vulnerable people, including children and adolescents (72%), older adults (70%), and women requiring antenatal or postnatal services (61%).
- 67% saw disruptions to counseling and psychotherapy; 65% to critical harm reduction services; and 45% to opioid agonist maintenance treatment for opioid dependence.
- More than a third (35%) reported disruptions to emergency interventions, including those for people experiencing prolonged seizures; severe substance use withdrawal syndromes; and delirium, often a sign of a serious underlying medical condition.

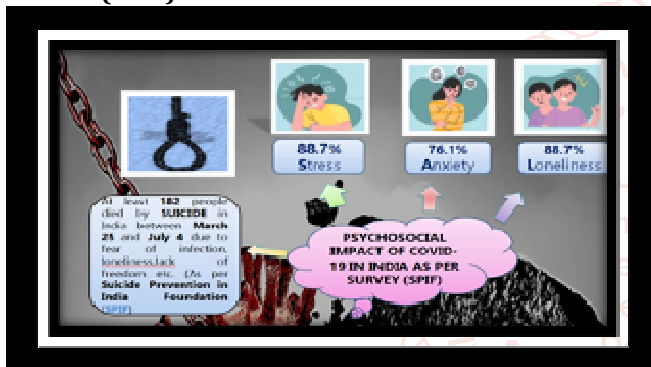


Reasons of Psychological Distress in COVID-19

Added to the fear of contracting the virus in a pandemic such as COVID-19 are the significant changes to our daily lives as our movements are restricted in support of efforts to contain and slow down the spread of the virus. Faced with new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues, it is important that we look after our mental, as well as our physical, health.

- 30% reported disruptions to access for medications for mental, neurological and substance use disorders.
- Around three-quarters reported at least partial disruptions to school and workplace mental health services (78% and 75% respectively).

PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN INDIA AS PER SURVEY (SPIF)



Psychosocial Care in COVID-19

While many countries (70%) have adopted telemedicine or teletherapy to overcome disruptions to in-person services, there are significant disparities in the uptake of these interventions. More than 80% of high-income countries reported deploying telemedicine and tele-therapy to bridge gaps in mental health, compared with less than 50% of low-income countries.

Those who do invest in mental health will reap rewards. Pre-COVID-19 estimates reveal that nearly US\$ 1 trillion in economic productivity is lost annually from depression and anxiety alone. However, studies show that every US\$ 1 spent on evidence-based care for depression and anxiety returns US\$5.

➤ **Crisis Hotlines as per American Psychiatric Association (APA)**

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
(800) 273-8255
- Crisis Text Line**
Text HELLO to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
(800) 273-8255
- National Domestic Violence Hotline**
(800) 799-7233
- National Graduate Student Crisis Hotline**
(877) 472-3457
- National Sexual Assault Hotline**
(800) 656-4673
- Child Abuse Hotline**
(800) 422-4453
- CDC National HIV & AIDS Hotline**
(800) 342-2437
- Alcoholics Anonymous**
(202) 966-9155
- Narcotics Anonymous**
(800) 543-4670
- Gamblers Anonymous**
(855) 222-5542
(800) 799-7233
- Veterans Crisis Line**
(800) 273-8255



The following figure 1, illustrates the active cases of COVID-19 infection cases in India till 23 October 2020

Conclusion

The current focus on the Psychosocial support provided to the people infected with COVID-19 infection all over the world and affects mental health of an individual's that may cause psychosocial consequences among general population. The emerging mental health issues related to this global event may evolve into long-lasting health problems, isolation and stigma. Global health measures should be employed to address psychosocial stressors, particularly related to the use of isolation/quarantine, fear and vulnerability among the general population. The information from media and social network should be closely controlled and community supportive psychological interventions globally promoted.

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