

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health in Young Adults

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Abstract: Background: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The disease spreads very fast and it is highly contagious as it is an airborne infection. Infected patients were showing mild to critical symptoms affecting their respiratory system. The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on everyone, forcing people to isolate, shield and minimize contact with friends and family. As current restrictions gradually lifted, we consider not only the physical impact, but the effect coronavirus has had on mental health and wellbeing. The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that the impact of COVID-19 on mental and psychosocial wellbeing will be significant and enduring. The pandemic primarily affects physical health yet has made a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing. Method: in this study, both male and female ranging from the age group 18 to 35 were taken. Total 303 data had participated in this study with convenient sampling method. Kessler Psychological Distress Scale was used to analyse the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on mental health in young adults. Data were analysed by using SPSS statistics. Result: From the data analysis, only 29.04% participants show no significant impact on mental health, where as 19.80% have reported mild mental disorder: 20.46% Participants have reported Moderate Mental health disorder and 30% Participants have reported to have Severe Mental health disorder. This shows significant affection of the pandemic on mental health in young adults. Conclusion: In this study, findings are suggesting, mental health affection ranging from mild to severe impact on young adults in COVID 19 pandemic due to many physical, financial and mental reasons.

Keywords: COVID 19 pandemic, mental health, Kessler Psychological Distress Scale

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that the impact of COVID-19 on mental and psychosocial wellbeing will be significant and enduring. The pandemic primarily affects physical health yet has made a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing. The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on everyone, forcing people to isolate, shield and minimize contact with friends and family.

As current restrictions gradually lifted, we consider not only the physical impact, but the effect coronavirus has had on mental health and wellbeing. Social distancing and isolation can result in loneliness, loss of confidence and increase the risk of anxiety and depression, all of which are heightened if someone lives alone.^{2, 3}

Loneliness has been linked to poor mental health [e. g., depression, hopelessness, substance use, and cognitive impairment], as well as worse physical health [e. g., malnutrition, worse motor function, hypertension, disrupted sleep, frailty], and higher mortality.⁴

Surveys show a major increase in the number of U. S. adults who report symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression and insomnia during the pandemic, compared with surveys before the pandemic. Some people have increased their use of alcohol or drugs, thinking that can help them cope with their fears about the pandemic. In reality, using these substances can worsen anxiety and depression.⁵

Many people around the globe who had pre-existing health conditions, front-line workers, people who are financially not stable, and the younger adults have shown the major affection in psychological as well as physical issues during the pandemic.⁶

There will be increase amount of depression, stress, anxiety, fear of future securities and many other psychological conditions seen after the pandemic. It may last for more than 2 to 3 years if proper follow up and preventive measures are not taken. If proper intervention and care are not taken to control the mental health issues, then the world may face a huge amount of mental breakdown majorly targeting college going students.⁶

Need for the study

COVID-19 Pandemic still going on worldwide and India is not an exception. Many younger adults need to work from home which leads to decrease in physical activity which can lead to number of Physical health issues as well as mental health issues. There is always fear of catching COVID-19 disease which may lead to stress, anxiety and fear which challenges mental health for younger adults. If we know at what level mental health is affected in younger adults, we can design a mental wellness Program to decrease mental distress during this Pandemic.

Aim of the study

To find out Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Mental health in younger Adults.

2. Method and materials

Source of Data: Community Dwelling Individuals.

Population: Both Male & Female 18-35 Years of Age Group

Study Design: Observational Study

Sampling Technique: Convenient Sampling.

Sample Size: 303 Subjects.

Outcome Measure: Kessler Psychological Distress Scale.

Duration of the Study: 1 Month

Descriptive Analysis was done in SPSS statistical tool.

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Inclusion Criteria-Both Male & Female Individuals within age group 18 to 35 years.

Exclusion Criteria-Individual with prior mental disability and individual with poor IQ.

3. Results

Table 1 shows mean of age in years

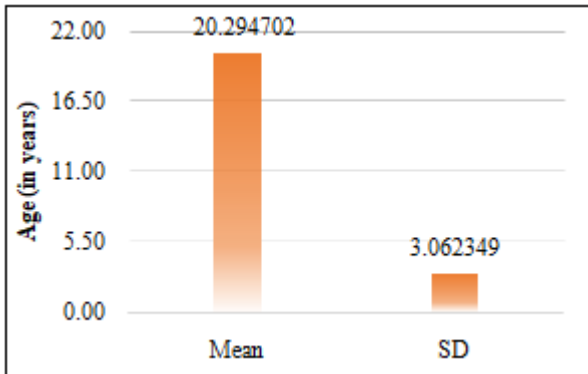


Table 2 shows gender distribution

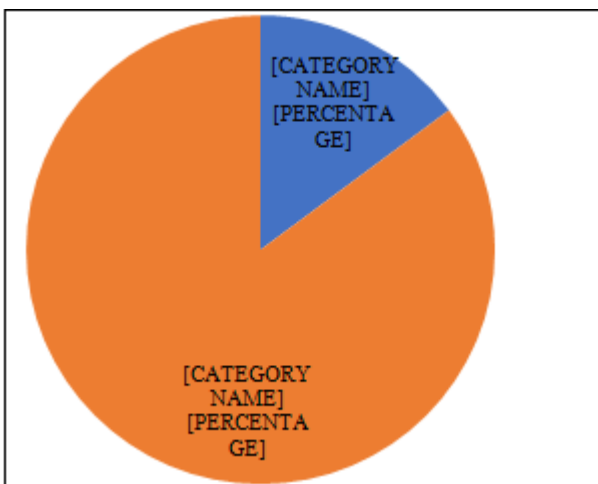
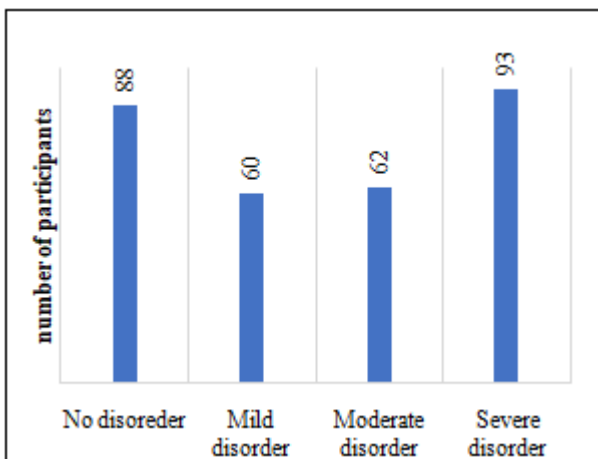


Table 3 shows number of participants affected with mental health



The participants of Age group 18 to 35 years with 15% male and 85% female mostly Student (97.7%), working

individuals (2.3%) filled Kessler Psychological distress Scale. Only 29.04% Participants have reported well in terms of Mental health, where as 19.80% Participants were reported with Mild Mental health disorder; 20.46% Participants were reported to have Moderate Mental health disorder and 30% Participants were reported to have Severe Mental health disorder.

4. Discussion

In present study it was found that majority of the subjects were found with moderate to severe mental health disorder.

Possible reason can be biological mechanisms such as dysregulated hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis function and dysregulated immune function have been proposed to mediate the link between loneliness and these poor health outcomes.^{7, 8}

According to van Roekel *et al.* (2016), loneliness or self-isolation during pandemic may have both trait and state characteristics; however, persistence of loneliness can lead to negative health consequences.⁹

The reported prevalence of loneliness/Isolation in the US ranges from 17% to 57% in the general population and is higher in people with physical and mental illnesses including heart disease, depression, anxiety and dementia.⁹

In our study younger adults suffered from varying degrees of mental health issues as due to pandemic they were not able to meet their friends and relatives for long period of time.

Lack of socialisation is the major cause for mental health issues in younger adults.

5. Conclusion

Results suggest that there is mild to severe impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental health in Young Adults.

Acknowledgement

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Conflicts of interest- Nil

Funding- None

Ethical clearance- It was given by ethical committee

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