

## **Impact of Covid 19 - A Study of the Major Stressors and Coping Strategies.**

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### **Abstract**

The current outbreak of COVID – 19, corona virus from the SARS family, is a respiratory disease highly infectious in nature. With its epic centre at Wuhan a province in China. The virus has spread its wings all around the globe with major deadly impact on the developed countries where the death toll has been the maximum. The deadly virus has not only taken up the lives of the humans but also has put stigma on the lives of living people as well. It has resulted to a steep rise in the level of stress which is playing a toll on the mental health of the humans of all age groups in all the impacted countries. The present study also puts forth the major coping strategies like meditation, financial assistance from the government etc. which can be used to combat these stressors which are an outcome of the terrorizing COVID – 19 infection.

Keywords: Corona Virus, Outbreak, stress, impact, strategies.

### **Introduction**

The year 2020 “red carpeted” a deadly virus the “COVID -19”. The new year eve, 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019 saw an outbreak of a new corona virus from the SARS family which spread among humans in the Wuhan province of China. The virus has since then not only terrorized China but also has shaken the whole world to the very core. The intensity of the spread and its lethality has been updated continuously by various agencies including the national, international health agencies and the global media. Currently all governments and health agencies are only concerned with the impact of this deadly virus on the physical health of the humans. The mental and psychological impacts have till now been totally ignored. A respiratory syndrome due to pneumonia has put Wuhan (China) in the spotlight since December 2019 (Li et al, 2020). The study has linked the origin of the virus to the sea food wholesale market in Huanan (Y. Chen, Liu & Guo, 2020). The researcher has detailed in his paper the measures taken by the Chinese authorities who include the closing of the markets, rapid health measures, intensive checking (N. Chen, Zhou, et al., 2020).

**Objectives:**

1. To study of major stressors of COVID - 19 on the humans.
2. To recommend strategies to combat these stressors.

**Research Methodology:**

Published articles concerning mental health related to the COVID-19 outbreak and other previous global infections have been considered and reviewed.

**Literature review:**

The current outbreak of the corona virus infection has proved to a highly infectious disease and has been marked as deadly due to the extreme intensity of its spreading capability. The global community wide spread of the virus has severally impacted the global and mental health of the country's economic and public health. It is an undisputed fact that every country is putting their best foot forward to fight the deadly monster. Despite all the efforts taken by the countries to counteract the spreading of the virus, there is still a major gap in the strategies to be taken up in dealing with the mental stress issues. The various measures taken to contain the virus have included the strategies of lockdown and isolation have paved a way to major mental health problems including high level of stress, depression, frustration, insomnia, anger and fear. The high level of uncertainty regarding the economy, job stability, treatment costs also have collectively made a major dent in the psychological strength of the public.

The study laid specific impact on the fact that the health care providers should lay emphasis on health disorders arising from not only on the physical but also the neurological symptoms (Jeong et al, 2016). The research has advocated that a mental health support plan and minimum 6 months follow up should be provided to all patients who have been kept in isolation for treatment (Lin et al, 2007). The health care workers, the medical staff, the law enforcement agencies are all under massive risk of mental stress resulting psychiatric disorders. They are the people who are the front runners in this fight against the virus and thus highly prone to stress and depression (Lee et al, 2018). The study has focused on the extent of penetration of the Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the society due to the COVID 19 virus. The researcher has concluded that the outbreak has resulted in a direct increase of approx. 7 % in the cases of major depression. The factors that increase the risk of stress have been highlighted by the study as follows the lower socio and economic status, interpersonal conflicts, extensive use of social media news etc (Heather Mowbray,

2020). The findings of the research suggested that the conflicting information that is received during the lockdown period results in much higher and acute stress levels. The users who were involved in heavy usage of social media platforms tend to experience higher levels of stress. Thus, the researcher has recommended monitoring of social medias so as to exercise control on media exposure to misleading information (Purgato et al., 2018). The fear of uncertainty leads to increase in the level of anxiety of both the persons effected and not effected by the disease of situation. The intense public fear results in discrimination among the society members (Mowbray,2020).

### **Major Stressors of COVID -19:**

An inherent characteristic of human nature is to fear the unknown and the uncertain. The intense level of uncertainty of the future has resulted in the highest degree of stress, fear and concern. These reactions are very natural and everyone at whichever age level is experiencing the heat of the situation. The children are getting frustrated as they are not able to understand the gravity of the situation which has deprived them from all out door games. The youth is frustrated with the lock down as they feel disconnected from the social life and their friends. They are also unsure of their future as their career is yet to start and the economy is heading into a headlong collision with global recession. The middle age group is stressed with the economy going down, the lockdown resulting into an accelerated move towards recession. The insecurity relating to job stability, salary cuts or business and industry heading towards closures due to lock down. The fast-paced move of business loans turning into Nonperforming assets due to non-payment of loans resulting from loss of business. Last but not the least our senior citizens are under immense fear of survival as their main source of income is interest on their savings. The falling economy has resulted in lowering of interest rates by the banks thus resulting in the lowering of their income which is further threatening their financial survival.

It is very evident that the stress has stressed all groups irrespective of their age, gender or socio – economic status. An analysis by different researchers have revealed that the categories, based on age discrimination, having been impacted the maximum are the children and the elderly people.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on children:**

The age group from one to 16 are said to be the part of the luckiest age group as they are not burden with the complexities of life. They live their life in most carefree environment far away from financial burdens and societal issues. But the stressful environment surrounding them due to the

COVID impact has confused and stressed them without them understanding how to overcome them. The elders are so involved in dealing with their own stress levels that they tend to ignore the mental issues of their children thus making the issues worse. Since youngsters are totally confused as they fail to understand what is so serious and deadly about another variety of cough and cold. They feel grounded as if they have been punished and the irony is that they don't know why. Again, if someone from their family has been infected by the virus it becomes very difficult for them to handle. Both the younger and older children may resort to anger and irritability to showcase their dissent on their being locked away from their friends and their playgrounds. Parents may fail to give them the right amount of emotional security as they themselves are going through so much of stress. This mishandling of the children emotions may result in a major negative impact on the children mental state.

Parents and elders can easily address this situation and prevent their children from going into depression and frustration. All that the children need is the love and attention from their parents and elders. They just want to feel wanted and responsible and this can be easily done by explaining them the situation in a simple way, giving them some responsibilities, keeping them busy with some creative work.

#### **Impact of COVID -19 on the elderly:**

The age group of 60 and above have already entered that phase in life where they feel left out and unwanted. They become more and more insecure and feel like a burden to their family members. This age group witness an already increasing health issues and to top it all they deal with the insecurity and fear of contracting Corona virus. The media and the health organisations day in and day out stress the fact that the death numbers are higher in this age group due to corona. The mental pressure and stress have already passed the danger levels. Their children are busy with handling their own financial and mental insecurities that they totally forget that the elders in their family are much more vulnerable to this stress. This can be resolved by giving them more time and care. Making them aware that they are not unwanted and burden to the family.

#### **Strategies for coping stress: Recommendations:**

WHO has taken the present and future predicted impact of the virus and its remedial measures very seriously? It is issuing advisories with directives for the dealing with the critical situation. It is continuously monitoring the situation over the countries together with the respective national

authorities. The organisation is offering its valuable insights on the tools and techniques to handle the issues.

Dr Hans Kluge, director WHO, has highlighted that the best way to fight this mental stress, resulting from the measures implemented to contain the virus, is stay connected with the society even by following the rules of social distancing. The mental stress levels can be grounded by feeling wanted and making others feel the same. Everyone should try and connect and check on each other through calls, video chats, messaging etc. The best method to fight our fears is to acknowledge them and discuss them instead of ignoring them and letting them become a mental burden.

Special efforts should be directed towards the individuals who have been infected or whose families have been infected. Special care should take for dealing with stress of law enforcers and health care professionals. Studies related to mental health patients of COVID 19 are very few but various researchers have, highlighted the possibility of predicting the causes and consequences of the stress on mental health. The researcher has laid emphasis on the recommendation that the issues related to increasing mental health problems can be resolved by community interventions and support both financial and psychological (Purgato et al., 2018).

### **Conclusion:**

The present study presents all the possible causes of stress due the pandemic on the all the ages of humans i.e. how this deadly virus has changed the created an environment of uncertainty among all the age groups of the society. Humans feel uncertain about their future as children feel stress regarding their education and elder have their own serious issues regarding financial stability and health concerns. The present study also puts forth the strategies which can be adapted to overcome these stressors like mediation, socialising through web, financial assistance etc. Although this pandemic has many cons to it but on the brighter side it has also taught us sustainable ways of along with spending more time with family.

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