

## EDITORIAL

## Covid-19 and Depression

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There have been dozens of research reports to explore the negative effects of the Corona pandemic on human life and mental health. So far, researchers are of the view that major effects of the Corona on people's lives are directly related to depression, frustration and anxiety.<sup>1</sup> Several studies suggest that mental problems are currently on the rise around the world and people of all ages are suffering from depression<sup>2,3</sup>.

The World Health Organization (WHO), in this regard, has also issued detailed recommendations on mental health during the global outbreak of the Covid-19<sup>4</sup>. According to the WHO, panic, anxiety, and stress is typical responses at the time of crisis and it is quite understandable that people are facing fear and uncertainty due to the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>5</sup>. However, the WHO is committed to providing guidelines during the pandemic in the best interest of Corona patients, doctors, health workers, people in isolation, authorities and the general public<sup>6</sup>.

Globally, health experts are expressing that the emergence of Corona is having a devastating effect on mental health of people.<sup>7</sup> Recently researchers conducted a study on the mental health effects of the Covid-19, which found that depression is on the rise among young people.<sup>8</sup> The results showed that the rate of anxiety and depression among young people increased in mid-2020 due to the outbreak of Corona and the implementation of a worldwide lockdown<sup>9</sup> although there was a significant reduction in alcohol and drugs consumption among youth during the lockdown period, they still had a higher rate of depression<sup>10</sup>.

According to health experts, it is observed that many Corona patients are blaming themselves. The overall role of society is also very hopeless in this regard. The patient suffering from Covid-19 must not be criticized due to this disease. We must understand that it is not the result of any mistake on their part. Such vulnerable patients are already in pain, the negative attitude may result in increasing depression and frustration.

Various kinds of news reports about Covid-19 crisis have been dominating the media arena since its outbreak. Most of the news is about death casualties and rising numbers of cases.<sup>11</sup> When an ordinary person follows the news about the casualties due to Covid-19, he/she starts over thinking about the potential life threats associated with it. Unfortunately, people, instead of focusing on precautions, are much interested to know about the symptoms or casualties, and thus, assume that they are becoming victims of Covid-19.

The next question echoing in their mind is "what will happen with me now?" Since, the media is reporting continuously about the increasing figures of casualties,

therefore, they believe that it will be impossible to survive. Ironically, such a negative thinking leads towards more serious issues related to mental health.

The situation becomes more complicated and miserable for those people who are in quarantine or in self-isolation. They have nothing to do but to follow news reports about the deadly Covid-19. No doubt, they should keep in touch with their dear ones virtually through phone calls and social media, but the focus should be on good diet and positive activities to relax their minds as well.

Similarly, relatives must keep encouraging them to overcome the Coronavirus. Listening and watching news reports once or twice a day from a few authentic sources are more efficient than visiting numerous dubious websites. No doubt, many social media posts are creating panic in the form of sensational video, fake news and fabricated reports. There is also a dire need to differentiate between facts and rumors. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid unnecessary news reports emerging from dubious media outlets. The important aspect is that we should know how to avoid and defeat the disease.

Many health experts believe that mental health problems have increased worldwide since Corona, and that depression has led to an increase in uncertainty across the globe<sup>12,13</sup>. The Covid-19 crises has also affected our traditional lifestyle and human psychology. Working from home, layoffs, unemployment, online education, virtual meetings, ban on socio-religious gatherings and events, and lack of physical contact with loved ones are new norms of today's civilization. Human mind is reluctant to accept such major changes in lifestyle and thus, a number of mental health issues are raising<sup>14,15</sup> while the number of people who have recovered from Covid-19 is very high.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, during the pandemic; a large number of people are also helping others just for the sake of humanity. In this critical time, we should spread positive news and success stories to boost the morale of people, especially Covid-19 patients so that they should not become victims of depression.

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