

# Global Impact of Covid - 19 Pandemic on General Population: A Comprehensive Review.

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Submitted: 10-11-2023

Accepted: 20-11-2023

## ABSTRACT:

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, has had a profound and far-reaching impact on the global population. This comprehensive review aims to provide an overview of the multifaceted consequences of the pandemic on individuals, communities, and societies worldwide. This article covers the public health implications, including the spread of the virus, vaccine development and distribution, and the strain on healthcare systems. Additionally, explored the socio-economic repercussions, encompassing the disruption of daily life, remote work and education, economic challenges, and mental health concerns. The pandemic's influence on vulnerable populations, healthcare disparities, and the effectiveness of public health measures is also scrutinized. Furthermore, discussed the innovations and adaptations that have emerged in response to the crisis, such as telemedicine and remote learning. As navigating the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, it is crucial to reflect on the lessons learned and the potential pathways towards a more resilient and equitable global society. This review synthesizes the latest research to offer a comprehensive understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic's consequences on the general population and calls for a collective response to address the complex issues it has brought to light.

**KEYWORDS:** COVID- 19, Mental health, Pandemic.

## I. INTRODUCTION:

Following the human corona virus infection (COVID-19) epidemic in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019, there is growing information and concern about the impact on worldwide mental health. Information on the transmission and lethality of COVID-19 is disseminated by the worldwide media, local and international health organizations (such as the World Health Organization), epidemiologists, virologists, and opinion leaders, with hourly updates. Even though this virus poses a risk to

patients, the general public, policymakers, health organizations, and teams, its impact on global mental health is still underappreciated<sup>[1]</sup>.

The WHO has also voiced worry about the psychosocial and mental health effects of the pandemic. It is hypothesized that new policies like self-isolation and quarantine have disrupted people's regular lives, activities, and routines, which could increase the prevalence of suicidal thoughts and behaviors, dangerous drug and alcohol use, loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Due to lockdowns imposed on people all over the world, there has been a rise in domestic violence cases involving women and children who are unable to flee their abusers while under quarantine<sup>[2]</sup>.

There are various factors that can influence mental health during pandemics which mainly involves impacting the mental health and well being of general population.

## Global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the general population

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the general population has been nothing short of profound and all-encompassing. From a public health standpoint, the virus has caused millions of infections and deaths, straining healthcare systems and underscoring the vulnerabilities of our global health infrastructure. The economic fallout has been equally significant, with lockdowns, job losses, and business closures leading to economic contractions and increased poverty rates.

The pandemic has taken a substantial toll on mental health, with isolation, anxiety, and uncertainty leading to elevated rates of depression and anxiety. Education systems have been disrupted, and the digital divide has become more pronounced, threatening educational equity. Social interactions have been restricted, and travel limitations have separated families and friends. The rapid development of vaccines has offered hope, but distribution and vaccine hesitancy remain challenges. The pandemic has also shone a light on

existing health disparities, emphasizing the need to address healthcare inequalities. The adoption of new behaviors, such as mask-wearing and remote work, may have lasting impacts on society. Ultimately, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of global solidarity and cooperation in addressing global health challenges, as well as the need to build a more equitable and resilient world in its aftermath.

### Factors that influenced mental health during covid-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented global crisis, not only posed a severe threat to physical health but also cast a profound shadow on mental well-being. As societies around the world faced lockdowns, social distancing, and the pervasive fear of a novel virus, a myriad of factors converged to influence mental health. This short exploration delves into the key factors that shaped the mental health landscape during the pandemic, ranging from social isolation and economic strain to the infodemic of information and the general climate of uncertainty. Understanding these influences is essential for comprehending the broader impact of such crises on individuals and communities, as well as for informing strategies to promote psychological resilience and support in the face of future challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on mental health worldwide, with several factors influencing this impact. These factors include:

1. **Isolation and Social Distancing:** The need to isolate and practice social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus led to feelings of loneliness and social isolation, which can negatively affect mental health.
2. **Fear and Anxiety:** The fear of contracting COVID-19, uncertainty about the future, and anxiety about the health of oneself and loved ones contributed to heightened stress and anxiety levels.
3. **Economic Uncertainty:** Job loss, reduced income, and economic instability caused financial stress, impacting mental well-being for individuals and families.
4. **Health Concerns:** Worry about one's own health and the health of loved ones due to the pandemic's impact heightened anxiety and stress.
5. **Grief and Loss:** The loss of family members, friends, or even the inability to hold traditional

funerals and mourning rituals added to the grief and loss experienced during the pandemic.

6. **Disruption of Routine:** The disruption of daily routines, including work, school, and social activities, led to a loss of structure and a sense of normalcy, which can negatively affect mental health.
7. **Access to Healthcare:** Limited access to healthcare services for mental health treatment due to the strain on healthcare systems affected those in need of support.
8. **Digital Divide:** Disparities in access to technology and the internet for remote work, education, and social connections highlighted inequalities and contributed to feelings of isolation.
9. **Domestic Violence and Child Abuse:** Increased stress and isolation within households exacerbated domestic violence and child abuse, leading to severe mental health consequences for victims.
10. **Changes in Substance Use:** Some individuals turned to increased alcohol or drug consumption as a coping mechanism, which can have adverse effects on mental health.
11. **Racial and Ethnic Disparities:** The pandemic disproportionately affected marginalized communities, highlighting preexisting health and social inequities, which impacted mental health.
12. **Stigma and Discrimination:** Stigmatization of those with COVID-19 and discrimination against certain groups, particularly Asian communities, added to psychological distress.
13. **Information Overload:** Constant exposure to pandemic-related news and misinformation can lead to information fatigue and anxiety.
14. **Mental Healthcare Access:** Limited access to mental health services due to lockdowns and overwhelmed healthcare systems posed challenges for individuals seeking help.
15. **Community Support:** The availability of community support, including support groups, mental health resources, and outreach, played a crucial role in mental health resilience.
16. **Resilience and Coping Skills:** An individual's existing resilience and coping skills, as well as the ability to adapt to new challenges, influenced mental health outcomes.

Understanding these factors is essential for addressing the mental health challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and developing

effective strategies to support individuals and communities during and after such crises.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on mental health worldwide. Several factors have influenced mental health during this challenging time; following are some of the key factors:

#### **Social isolation and loneliness:**

Lockdowns, social isolation techniques, and quarantine procedures have all contributed to a rise in loneliness and social isolation. Social isolation and lack of support can have a detrimental effect on mental health. Since the onset of the epidemic, understanding of how COVID-19 affects mental health has grown. This topic has been the subject of many publications and comments, and it is abundantly clear in the clinical context that some patients' mental health has declined as a result of the stressors connected to the pandemic. However, rather than particularly addressing the effects of social isolation, the majority of this work has concentrated on the interaction of COVID-19 stressors.

Overall, it has been suggested that some people may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19-related psychosocial outcomes, including those with weakened immune systems, those who reside in or receive care from communal environments, and those who have a history of psychiatric, medical, or substance use disorders<sup>[3]</sup>. In older persons, loneliness and social isolation are all too common and frequently co-occur. Social isolation is defined by the volume and regularity of one's social interactions, as opposed to loneliness, which pertains to subjective sensations. According to a widely accepted definition, social isolation is an objective state that reflects people's social contexts and interactional patterns, while loneliness is described as the subjective sense of being alone. According to studies, social isolation and loneliness have diverse effects on health but both might have negative effects through both common and unique mechanisms<sup>[4]</sup>.

#### **Fear and Uncertainty**

There was a great lot of anxiety and apprehension about the virus, how it spread, and what it might do. Stress and worry levels have increased as a result of concerns about getting the virus, future uncertainty, and the health and safety of loved ones. Knowing more or having more information about the virus might increase one's anxiety, but so can their dread of the unknown. In

fact, a persistent threat that is ambiguous might grow oppressive over time. There is no way for a person to know if the person next to him is infected or not, which adds more uncertainty to the situation. Reports and estimates on the mortality rate are impossible to conduct with any degree of accuracy because many infected people are asymptomatic. When the unknown is intensely experienced, which causes anxiety; there is a connection between intolerance for uncertainty.

Fear of the unknown appears to be a fundamental fear and is a core component of anxiety. Concerns with COVID-19 include anxiety that comes with unpredictable and uncontrollable situations in addition to fear of the unknown. Therefore, regardless of the likelihood that it will occur, learning to be afraid of an undetected threat is simple. The inability to endure ambiguity is thus associated to COVID-19 fear via rumination, and this damaged well-being due to the predominant focus on negative emotions, according to a study on COVID-19. No matter how much training someone receives, they will probably need to have a certain amount of tolerance for uncertainty, especially at this point<sup>[5]</sup>.

#### **Financial distress and Economic Fragility**

The economic effects of the epidemic have caused financial difficulty for many people and families. Significant financial stress has been caused by job losses, reduced working hours, and business closures. This stress can result in anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems. Financial hardship is typically defined as the inability to pay bills, buy necessities like food and clothing, and afford appropriate housing, utilities, medical care, and transportation<sup>[6]</sup>. Financial difficulty is substantially associated with a higher risk of depression compared to other indicators of income and socioeconomic level, and personal debt is directly tied to prevalent mental diseases<sup>[7-10]</sup>. In instance, consumer credit or overdue mortgage payments appear to be the primary drivers of the link between debt and depressed symptoms<sup>[11]</sup>. Therefore the Covid-19 has an indirect effect on people's mental health.

#### **In the realm of health, the COVID-19 pandemic had profound global impacts:**

1. **Overwhelmed Healthcare Systems:** The pandemic strained healthcare systems worldwide, with hospitals and healthcare workers facing unprecedented challenges in

treating COVID-19 patients while balancing other medical needs.

2. **Disruption of Routine Healthcare:** Non-urgent medical procedures were postponed, routine check-ups were missed, and vaccination rates dropped, potentially leading to long-term health consequences.
3. **Mental Health Implications:** Social isolation, fear, and uncertainty had adverse effects on mental health, with increased cases of anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions.
4. **Vaccine Development and Distribution:** Rapid vaccine development was a major global effort, with vaccination campaigns being a key strategy for controlling the pandemic's impact and resuming normal life.
5. **Health Disparities Exposed:** The pandemic highlighted existing health disparities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable and marginalized populations, including minority communities and those with limited access to healthcare.
6. **Pandemic Fatigue:** Extended duration of the pandemic led to pandemic fatigue, making it challenging to maintain preventive measures and health behaviors.
7. **Innovations in Telemedicine:** Telemedicine and remote healthcare solutions gained prominence, offering alternative means of healthcare access and reducing the risk of viral transmission.

Understanding these health-related consequences is essential for enhancing healthcare preparedness, addressing mental health needs, and promoting equitable access to healthcare services in the aftermath of the pandemic.

#### **Disruption of daily routines and lifestyle changes**

Mental health negatively impacted by the significant adjustments made to daily routines as a result of the pandemic control policies. These include the suspension of work and school, the cancellation of regular events (such as volunteer work, church, and outdoor hobbies), the substitution of online communication for offline contact, and a sharp decrease in outdoor activities. For example, when comparing the spring of 2019 to the spring of 2020, Giuntella and colleagues found that among a sample of American university students, there was a significant decline in physical activity and an increase in screen time and sleep duration<sup>[12]</sup>.

Although the sample's heightened depression was linked to the disruption of routines, a straightforward Fitbit intervention that offered \$5 daily for reaching 10,000 steps restored physical activity to its pre-pandemic level but was unable to lessen psychological suffering. Similarly, during the peak of the local outbreak, a research conducted in Italy on seniors living in communities found a sharp decline in physical activity, adherence to the Mediterranean diet, social activities, and cognitively stimulating activities, along with an increase in idle time<sup>[13]</sup>. The sample's lower mental health was specifically linked to the decline in productive activities.

The pandemic has interfered with daily activities like work, school, and leisure time. These interruptions may result in feelings of loss, increased stress, and trouble adjusting to new situations, all of which can have a detrimental effect on mental health.

#### **Media consumption and information overload**

In an effort to stop the corona virus (COVID-19) from spreading, some nations implemented lockdown procedures in 2020. Social media started to take front stage as the primary source of information during this pandemic. During the pandemic lockdown, social media use was found to have the ability to affect people's psychological health<sup>[14]</sup>. Information overload and anxiety may result from continuous exposure to news updates, social media, and online discussions about the pandemic. Misinformation and rumors can worsen stress levels and have an impact on mental health<sup>[15]</sup>.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a wide range of **mental health concerns** among the global population. Here are some of the key details regarding these concerns:

1. **Social Isolation and Loneliness:** Lockdowns, social distancing measures, and restrictions on gatherings led to increased social isolation. Many individuals were cut off from their usual support systems, leading to feelings of loneliness, which can have adverse effects on mental well-being.
2. **Fear and Anxiety:** The pervasive fear of contracting the virus, especially in the early stages of the pandemic when little was known about it, led to heightened anxiety levels. This fear often extended to concerns about the health and safety of loved ones.

3. **Uncertainty and Stress:** The pandemic introduced a high degree of uncertainty into daily life, including concerns about employment, financial stability, and health. This uncertainty contributed to elevated stress levels for many individuals.
4. **Economic Strain:** Job losses, reduced work hours, and financial instability due to business closures or economic downturns had a direct impact on mental health. The worry about meeting basic needs, such as housing and food, exacerbated stress and anxiety.
5. **Disruption in Daily Life:** Routine activities and social interactions were disrupted, impacting people's sense of normalcy and stability. Changes in work, education, and leisure activities posed challenges and triggered feelings of unease.
6. **Mental Health Disorders:** Pre-existing mental health conditions were exacerbated by the pandemic. Additionally, new cases of anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders emerged due to the unique stressors of the crisis.
7. **Grief and Loss:** Many individuals faced the loss of loved ones, sometimes without the opportunity for proper farewells or traditional mourning rituals. This complex grief added to the emotional toll of the pandemic.

Significant losses have been caused by the pandemic, including the loss of friends, family, work, and social relationships. Grief and mourning during this period might cause increased emotional suffering and have a negative influence on mental health. In a study by Esima MC it showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the severity of mourning between before and after the epidemic. Those who had just lost a loved one during the pandemic, however, had greater degrees of grief than those who had lost a loved one before to the outbreak<sup>[16]</sup>. Predictions that the pandemic will eventually result in a higher prevalence of grieving disorders are supported by the fact that acute grief is a powerful predictor of future disturbed grief<sup>[17]</sup>.
8. **Access to Mental Health Services:** While the need for mental health support increased, access to services was hindered by lockdowns and overwhelmed healthcare systems. Telehealth and online counseling emerged as alternatives, but not all individuals had equal access to these resources.
9. **Pandemic Fatigue:** As the pandemic persisted, some individuals experienced pandemic fatigue, leading to a decline in adherence to preventive measures and health behaviors. This fatigue further complicated efforts to control the virus's spread.
10. **Resilience and Coping Mechanisms:** On a positive note, the pandemic also highlighted the resilience of individuals and communities. Many people developed new coping mechanisms, sought emotional support, and engaged in self-care practices to manage their mental health.

Understanding these mental health concerns is critical for healthcare systems, policymakers, and communities to provide appropriate support and resources to help individuals navigate the psychological challenges brought about by the pandemic. Promoting mental health awareness and resilience-building will be essential for long-term recovery and well-being.

## II. CONCLUSION:

COVID-19 pandemic has caused both a public health catastrophe and a crisis in mental health. It has emphasized the connection between mental and emotional health. Addressing the problems with mental health brought on by this pandemic will be crucial as we move forward. In order to aid people in recovering and creating a more resilient society in the post-pandemic world, efforts must be made to make accessible mental health support available, lessen uncertainty and fear, and encourage resilience in the face of adversity.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and lasting impact on the global population. It has tested the resilience of healthcare systems, economies, and societies at large. Lessons learned from this crisis will inform future pandemic preparedness, public health measures, and our understanding of the interconnectedness of the world. The pursuit of equitable vaccine distribution, mental health support, and addressing systemic inequalities will be ongoing priorities as we move forward from this global crisis.

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