

Psychological Impact and Perceived Mental Health Care Needs during COVID-19 Pandemic among Health Care Professionals and General Population in India: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Fear, worry, and stress are normal responses to perceived or real threats, and at times when we are faced with uncertainty or the unknown. So, it is normal and understandable that people are experiencing fear in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aim: This study aimed to assess and compare psychological impact and perceived mental health care needs during COVID 19 pandemic among health care professionals and general population in East District, Delhi, India.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional online survey was conducted by using Google forms. Psychological impact was assessed by using Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) scale. Result showed that average GAD-7 score for anxiety was 10.6 (M = 10.6; SD = 1.71) for health care professionals and 10.8 (M = 10.8; SD = 1.49) for general population. Using a cut-off score of 10 for GAD-7, researcher found 74% health care professionals and 87% general population with moderated or severe symptoms of GAD. A total of 84.3% health care professionals and 92% general population require mental health care need in current crisis.

Conclusion: Researcher concluded that majority of the participants (80.5%) are having moderated or severe symptoms of anxiety. On comparison it was found that general population is more anxious and worried regarding COVID-19 pandemic in India and need to deal with their

mental health difficulties which they are having in the current situation.

Keywords: Psychological impact, Mental health care needs, Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), COVID-19

1. INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID 19) is an infectious disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-COV-2). It was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei, China, and resulted in an ongoing pandemic. The first confirmed case has been traced back to 17 November 2019 in Hubei.¹ Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.² The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease, its causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face.³ Health Care Workers generally are at risk of exposure to

highly infectious pathogens while they care for patients or by exposure to patient environment or biological samples. This may worry them of being infected and transmitting infection to family members.² National responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have been varied, and have included containment measures such as lockdowns, quarantines, and curfews. As of 14 July 2020, more than 13 million cases of COVID-19 have been reported in more than 188 countries and territories, resulting in more than 572,000 deaths. More than 7.22 million people have recovered from the virus. The most affected countries in terms of confirmed cases are the United States, Brazil, India, Russia, Peru, Chile, Spain, Mexico and the United Kingdom.¹ This study aimed to assess and compare psychological impact and perceived mental health care needs during COVID 19 pandemic among health care professionals and general population in East District, Delhi, India.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

This cross-sectional study was carried out from July 2020 to August 2020. A Snowball sampling technique was used. Data collection was performed by using a questionnaire which was developed by using Google forms. The questionnaire was

conducted in English language. The participants aged 18 years or older understand the content of the questionnaire. The link of the questionnaire was sent through e-mails, WhatsApp and other social media. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A consisted the demographics variables like Age, Gender, Marital Status, Educational Qualification and Religion. Section B consisted questions to assess psychological impact of COVID - 19 on adult population. The Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) form, a seven-item, self-report anxiety questionnaire was applied. The items enquire about the degree to which the person has been bothered by feeling nervous or anxious, not being able to stop or control worrying, worrying too much about different things, having trouble relaxing, being so restless that it is hard to sit still, becoming easily annoyed and feeling afraid as if something might happen, in the last 2 weeks. Section C assessed perceived mental health care needs of health care professionals and general population during COVID-19 pandemic. Descriptive analysis was computed in terms of mean and standard deviation with range for continuous variables and frequency with percentage for ordinal and nominal variables.

3. RESULT

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of Demographic Variables

Demographic variables		Health Care Professionals		General population		Combined	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Age	18-25 yrs	21	21	31	31	52	26
	26-35 yrs	53	53	37	37	90	45
	36-45 yrs	17	17	19	19	36	18
	>45 yrs	09	09	13	13	22	11
Gender	Male	19	19	38	38	57	28.5
	Female	81	81	62	62	143	71.5
Marital Status	Single	29	29	34	34	63	31.5
	Married	71	71	66	66	137	68.5
Type of family	Nuclear	84	84	79	79	163	81.5
	Joint	16	16	21	21	37	18.5
Educational Qualification	Matric	0	0	05	05	05	2.5
	Intermediate	0	0	22	22	22	11
	Diploma/ Graduate	81	81	61	61	142	71
	Postgraduate	19	19	12	12	31	15.5
Religion	Hindu	84	84	97	97	181	90.5
	Muslim	06	06	03	03	09	4.5
	Christian	07	07	0	0	07	3.5
	Others	03	03	0	0	03	1.5

Frequency and percentage of all the demographic characteristics like Age, Gender, Marital Status, Educational Qualification and Religion are represented in Table 1. Out of the 200 participants, the majority (45%) were 26-35 years old while only 11% were >45 years old. 71.5% of them were females while the rest were males (28.5%). 68.5 % participants were married whereas 31.5% were single. Majority (81.5%) of participants belongs to nuclear family. Most of the participants (71%) have completed Diploma/ Graduation and only 2.5% were educated upto Matric.

Almost 90.5% of the participants belonged to the religion of 'Hindu' while only 1.5% belonged to the other religions.

3.2 ASSESSMENT OF ANXIETY

Table 2 shows that the average GAD-7 score for anxiety was 10.6 (M= 10.6; SD=1.71) for health care professionals and 10.8 (M = 10.8; SD=1.49) for general population. Using a cut-off score of 10 for GAD-7, researcher found 74% health care workers and 87% general population with moderated or severe symptoms of GAD.

Table 2: GAD-7 Score of health care professionals and general population

S. No.	Participant	Max Score	Min Score	Mean	SD
1.	Health care professional	14	5	10.6	1.71
2.	General population	15	7	10.8	1.49

3.3 ASSESSMENT OF PERCEIVED MENTAL HEALTHCARE NEEDS

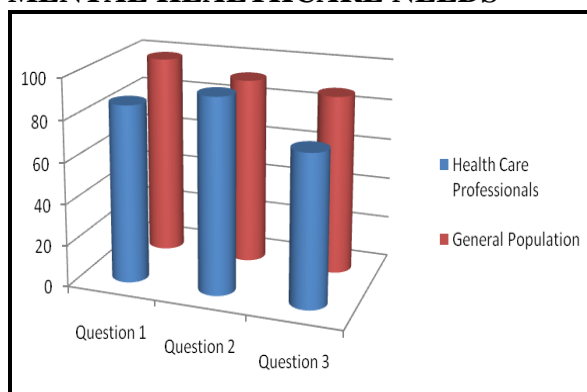


Fig 1: Perceived mental healthcare needs of health care professionals and general population

A total of three questions were framed to measure the perceived mental healthcare needs of health care professionals and general population during COVID-19 pandemic. As shown in Fig.1, out of 100 health care professionals about 86% agreed that it would be nice to talk about worries for the novel corona virus pandemic. A total of 94% health care workers felt the need to get mental health help if anyone panics in this pandemic situation. Whereas 73% will suggest people obtain mental health help who are highly affected by the Pandemic. As compared, 98% general population agreed that it would be nice to talk about worries for the novel corona virus pandemic. 91% general population felt the

need to get mental health help if anyone panics in this pandemic situation and 87% will suggest people obtain mental health help who are highly affected by the Pandemic.

4. DISCUSSION

There is a wide consensus that the outbreak of an infectious disease is often linked with adverse psychological outcomes. Containment measures, including compulsory or self-quarantine and social distancing may increase the risk of mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety.⁴ The present study aimed to assess and compare psychological impact and perceived mental health care needs during COVID-19 pandemic among health care professionals and general population. Result shows that majority of participants (45%) were 26-35 years old and 71.5% of them were females. 68.5 % participants were married and majority (81.5%) of participants belongs to nuclear family. Most of them (71%) have completed Diploma/ Graduation. Almost 90.5% of the participants belonged to the religion of 'Hindu'. Using a cut-off score of 10 for GAD-7, researcher found 74% health care workers and 87% general population with moderated or severe symptoms of GAD.

Result revealed that 84.3% health care professional and 92% general population requires mental health need in current crisis.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that majority of the participants (80.5%) are having moderated or severe symptoms of anxiety. On comparison it was found that general population is more anxious and worried regarding COVID-19 pandemic in India and need to deal with their mental health difficulties which they are having in the current situation.

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