

## Impact of Covid-19 on Mental Health

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### Abstract:

The worldwide mental health landscape has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic, resulting in a complex and far-reaching effect. This position paper explores the intricate dynamics of the effect, situating it within the current framework of mental health difficulties. Before the epidemic, mental health inequities were prevalent, with stigma and insufficient resources impeding comprehensive support networks. The psychological toll of COVID-19 has been exacerbated by a combination of direct symptoms, such as health worry, bereavement, and loneliness, as well as indirect implications, including economic stress and disturbance of habits. Governments and organisations have implemented a variety of initiatives in response to the situation, including both urgent interventions like the provision of telehealth services, as well as long-term tactics such as the implementation of workplace mental health programmes and the allocation of financing for research purposes. Nevertheless, there are ongoing obstacles that continue to exist, including as discrepancies in access and the persistent social stigma associated with mental health. Key recommendations for a complete response include the prioritisation of mental health within public health plans, the implementation of destigmatization initiatives, the establishment of workplace mental health programmes, increased investment in research endeavours, and the fostering of community resilience. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the following ideas serve as a fundamental framework for constructing a mental health strategy that is both robust and compassionate. This approach aims to prioritise the mental well-being of individuals on a worldwide scale.

**Keywords:** Impact, Covid-19, Mental Health,

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, resulting from the emergence of the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, has presented an unparalleled risk to public health and has significantly impacted the mental well-being of humans on a global scale (Evans, et al., 2023). As the progression of the epidemic ensued, the diverse effects on mental well-being became more apparent, exposing an intricate interaction of variables that transcend beyond the acute physiological implications linked to the virus. The objective of this study is to examine and elucidate the significant and wide-ranging implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental well-being, providing insight into both immediate and indirect impacts that have arisen as a consequence of the current global emergency (Chandrasekaran, et al., 2020).

The ongoing global pandemic is attributed to the unique strain of the Coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2, which leads to the development of the coronavirus illness 2019 (CoViD-19). The declaration of the CoViD-19 outbreak as a public health emergency of worldwide significance was made by the World Health Organisation on January 30, 2020. The virus has already had a significant influence on the physical well-being of a substantial number of individuals, and moreover, it is anticipated to present a substantial mental health concern on a worldwide scale (Liu et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic, which is considered one of the most significant worldwide disasters in recent times, has had profound and extensive impacts on health systems, economy, and civilizations. Numerous individuals have perished or had significant economic setbacks. The pressure and separation of families and communities have been seen. The educational and social development of children and young individuals has been adversely affected. Numerous enterprises have experienced insolvency. A significant number of individuals have seen a decline in their socioeconomic status, resulting in their placement below the poverty threshold (Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020).

In the midst of the prevailing health crisis and its consequential social and economic ramifications, there has been a significant and pervasive influence on mental health. A considerable number of individuals have experienced heightened levels of anxiety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Hung et al., 2020). However, it is important to note that for many individuals, this global health crisis has served as a catalyst or exacerbator for far more severe mental health issues. A significant proportion of individuals have reported experiencing psychological discomfort and displaying symptoms indicative of despair, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress. There have been concerning indications of a broader prevalence of suicide ideation and actions, which includes the healthcare workforce (Gbenga-Epebinu et al., 2022).

Certain demographic groups have seen very disparate impacts compared to others. The closing of schools and universities has had the consequence of leaving young individuals susceptible to social isolation and disconnection, so exacerbating emotions of worry, uncertainty, and loneliness, ultimately contributing to emotional and behavioural difficulties. The need for children and teenagers to remain at home may have heightened the susceptibility to family-related stress or abuse, both of which are recognised as risk factors contributing to the development of mental health issues. Women have encountered heightened levels of stress within domestic settings, as shown by a prompt evaluation



indicating that 45% of women had encountered various manifestations of violence, whether via direct or indirect means, over the first year of the epidemic (Osakinle et al., 2021).

Prior to examining the concrete ramifications, it is important to grasp the context in which these difficulties have emerged. The mental health landscape prior to the COVID-19 pandemic exhibited notable worldwide inequities and deficiencies in mental health support systems. Mental health problems, which are often stigmatised and disregarded, have emerged as a significant worldwide problem, affecting a substantial number of persons who experience a range of ailments, including anxiety, depression, and more serious disorders (Das & Dutta 2021). The ongoing epidemic has intersected with an already existing mental health crisis, intensifying vulnerabilities and highlighting the need for a robust and adaptable mental health infrastructure.

The increase in mental health demands has resulted in significant disruptions to mental health services, particularly during the first stages of the pandemic when personnel and resources were often redirected towards COVID-19 relief efforts (Medford et al., 2020). During that period, individuals were also impeded from getting healthcare services due to social actions. In other instances, limited understanding and dissemination of inaccurate information on the virus contributed to the exacerbation of apprehension and concerns, resulting in individuals refraining from seeking assistance.

Acknowledging mental health as a fundamental aspect of holistic well-being is of utmost importance, especially during times of crisis. The complex relationship between physical and mental health highlights the need of treating the psychological consequences of the epidemic. In addition to the imminent danger posed by the virus, the repercussions on mental health have emerged as a significant social issue that demands focused consideration, compassion, and well-planned treatments (Xue et al., 2020). The objective of this article is to provide a stance on the severity of the situation, calling for a comprehensive strategy to public health that incorporates mental health factors into the wider discussion on pandemic response and recovery.

This research argues that it is crucial to have a thorough grasp of the many problems related to the impact of COVID-19 on mental health in order to establish effective solutions for addressing the psychological consequences of the pandemic. This position paper seeks to add to the continuing discourse on the confluence of public health and mental well-being in the context of global crises. It does this by analysing both direct and indirect repercussions, assessing current response mechanisms, and presenting forward-looking suggestions.

### **Context of Mental Health before COVID-19**

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the worldwide mental health situation exhibited a complex combination of advancements and enduring obstacles. Mental health problems, including a range of diseases including anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia, shown a high prevalence across various demographic cohorts on a global scale. The observed frequency of these diseases alluded to the extent of the current mental health crisis, a matter of worry that beyond geographical limitations (Osakinle, et al., 2021). Nevertheless, underneath the statistical data exists a significant obstacle - the ongoing social stigma around mental health. Despite the progress made in raising awareness, the persistence of social stigmatisation continues to impede individuals from seeking assistance



and obtaining suitable healthcare services. The persistence of discrimination against persons with mental health disorders has resulted in their social marginalisation and restricted their prospects for meaningful involvement.

Global disparities in the frequency and management of mental health disorders were apparent. High-income nations exhibited superior performance in the provision of mental health services, with respect to both accessibility and quality, as compared to low-income nations. The presence of limited resources, including financial and human capital, has been a substantial barrier to the development of comprehensive mental health care systems in several areas (Raamkumar, et al., 2020).

Vulnerable people, such as refugees, marginalised communities, and those living in war zones, encountered increased mental health vulnerabilities. The confluence of little resources and exposure to traumatic events exacerbated the difficulties encountered by these populations. Additionally, the contemporary work environment, characterised by elevated levels of stress and rigorous timetables, has played a significant role in the emergence of ailments such as burnout and anxiety disorders. The prevalence of mental health difficulties among young individuals has been increasing. The mental well-being of young individuals is significantly impacted by a combination of academic expectations, instances of bullying, and the intricate process of transitioning into adulthood. The provision of mental health assistance for this particular demographic cohort exhibited disparities, characterised by deficiencies in service availability and a pressing need for heightened consciousness and understanding (Medford et al., 2020).

Global differences in infrastructure and policy were evident. While several nations had robust mental health legislation and resources, others exhibited a delay in the development and execution of efficacious methods. The incorporation of mental health into wider public health agendas exhibited disparities, indicative of a deficiency in prioritisation across some locations. Gaining an understanding of the pre-pandemic setting is crucial in order to fully grasp the following effects of COVID-19 on mental well-being. The baseline provided enables the assessment of how pre-existing vulnerabilities were either increased or alleviated in response to the unique difficulties presented by the pandemic. The intricate interaction of several global mental health concerns established the foundation for the intricate dynamics that transpired during the continuing crisis.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health**

The commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic brought about a significant transformation in the worldwide environment, resulting in extensive repercussions that stretched beyond the immediate virus-related danger. As many communities confronted the problems presented by the global epidemic, there was a growing recognition of the deep and nuanced effects it had on mental well-being (Chang, et al., 2020). One of the most evident immediate consequences was the increase in health-related apprehension and the widespread concern over the transmission of infections. The persistent presence of a potentially fatal disease looms over persons globally, giving rise to increased levels of worry and anxiety. The severe emotional toll experienced by individuals as a consequence of the epidemic may be attributed to the sadness and loss incurred, which may be from the demise of loved ones or the communal grieving for the disruption of a familiar way of life. Individuals were confronted





with the challenge of navigating unfamiliar circumstances, as they grappled with the effects of enforced lockdowns and the implementation of social distancing protocols, leading to experiences of isolation and loneliness.

The pandemic's repercussions were seen in several indirect ways, exacerbating the difficulties faced by mental well-being. The presence of economic strain and unemployment surfaced as noteworthy factors, as people grappled with apprehension over their monetary security and future opportunities (Gbenga-Epebinu, et al., 2022). The epidemic has caused a significant disturbance to individuals' routines and everyday life, which were previously seen as sources of stability and comfort. This disruption has therefore led to increased levels of stress, further exacerbating the psychological effect experienced by individuals. It is worth mentioning that some groups who are more susceptible to harm, such as frontline workers and marginalised communities, experienced a disproportionate amount of hardship (Das & Dutta 2021). These groups encountered distinct obstacles that further worsened the already existent gaps in mental health.

As the progression of the pandemic ensued, empirical facts and statistical data served to emphasise the gravity of the mental health catastrophe. The data presented unveiled significant rises in anxiety, depression, and several other mental health conditions, giving a striking portrayal of the adverse impact inflicted upon individuals by the virus and its associated social consequences. The emergence of disparities across various demographic groups and locations has brought to light the need for focused interventions and support measures. Governments and organisations worldwide have used many approaches in addressing the mental health epidemic, with various levels of effectiveness (Chandrasekaram, et al., 2020). Immediate requirements were addressed via the implementation of measures such as enhanced availability of telehealth services, establishment of mental health hotlines, and execution of public awareness campaigns. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these interventions exhibited variability, therefore highlighting the persistent existence of deficiencies within mental health support frameworks (Aina, et al., 2023).

Notwithstanding the endeavours made to tackle the repercussions on mental health, it became apparent that there were notable obstacles and deficiencies in the approach. The issue of access to mental health care continues to be a matter of concern, characterised by inequities in both availability and pricing. The enduring social stigma around mental health has had a detrimental impact on people, impeding their willingness to seek assistance and maintaining widespread misunderstandings about mental health disorders.

### **Evidence and Statistics**

The profound influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental well-being is readily apparent via an abundance of empirical data and statistical analyses derived from many global sources. During the course of the pandemic, meticulous efforts were made by academics and health organisations to systematically record the psychological impact of the crisis, so offering valuable insights into the frequency and characteristics of mental health difficulties. Hung, et al. (2020) submitted the incidence of anxiety and depression globally had a significant increase during the epidemic, as stated by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Research undertaken in several countries, such as the United States and European nations, has shown heightened levels of stress, burnout, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



among healthcare professionals and other individuals working on the frontlines. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States has released a research highlighting a notable rise in emergency department visits linked to mental health among healthcare practitioners.

Certain groups that are considered vulnerable, such as immigrants and those residing in socioeconomically challenged neighbourhoods, have an increased likelihood of encountering mental health challenges (Evans, et al., 2023). The aggravation of pre-existing mental health inequities has been recognised in reports by humanitarian organisations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Research examining the effects of age on mental health has shown that distinct difficulties are encountered by younger age cohorts, including adolescents and young adults. The incidence of symptoms related to depression and anxiety shown a greater frequency among these demographic cohorts in comparison to older cohorts.

The influence of socioeconomic status on mental health outcomes was found to be substantial. Individuals who encounter economic adversity and unemployment are more prone to manifest signs of despair and anxiety (Osakinle, et al., 2022). Research conducted by national statistics organisations, such as the Bureau of Labour Statistics in the United States, has shown a significant association between rates of unemployment and the prevalence of mental health issues. Numerous research investigations have elucidated the post-pandemic consequences, revealing a heightened susceptibility to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among those who have been infected with the virus, as well as among those who have had bereavement or other disturbances in their lives. The enduring mental health issues were shown to be linked to the long-term economic ramifications of the epidemic, which included ongoing employment uncertainty and financial distress. Longitudinal studies, such as those undertaken by economic research institutions, have been used to monitor the long-lasting effects of economic pressures on individuals' mental well-being.

There continues to be persistent disparities in worldwide access to mental health treatments. The World Bank's reports have shown notable disparities in the accessibility of mental health experts and services among high-income and low-income nations. The global health crisis has precipitated a rapid transition towards the use of telehealth services as a means of providing mental health care. Data collected from various health agencies and telehealth platforms have shown a notable increase in the use of virtual mental health consultations. These findings provide valuable insights into the changing dynamics of mental health care delivery (Aina, et al., 2023).

### **Government and Institutional Response**

In light of the mounting mental health crisis precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, governmental bodies and organisations worldwide implemented a variety of strategies with the dual objectives of meeting urgent requirements and cultivating enduring resilience among communities. The prompt reactions were rapid and diverse. Governments have acknowledged the significant importance of telehealth programmes in facilitating accessible mental health assistance. Virtual consultations with mental health specialists have emerged as a crucial resource for persons seeking support while sticking to social distancing practises. Crisis hotlines and support services were implemented with the purpose of providing prompt



aid to those facing escalated mental health difficulties, hence enabling quick interventions and referrals. Public awareness campaigns have been more prominent, as governments have engaged in collaborative efforts with mental health organisations to effectively communicate information, combat stigma, and promote the need of prioritising mental well-being among people (Chang, et al., 2020).

Policy efforts were moreover established to effectively respond to the changing requirements of the populace. Several governments have undertaken a process of reevaluating and modifying their current mental health policies with the objective of enhancing mental health coverage, increasing accessibility, and integrating mental health issues into larger public health efforts. The issue of workplace mental health assistance has gained significant attention, leading institutions to adopt programmes aimed at aiding workers who are experiencing heightened levels of stress and uncertainty. Community-based activities were officially supported and financially backed in order to enhance social connections, mitigate feelings of isolation, and provide localised assistance. In consideration of long-term approaches, governmental entities have acknowledged the persistent nature of mental health issues (Chnag, et al., 2020). The initiatives included several measures aimed at enhancing mental health infrastructure, such as the development of existing facilities, the provision of training for professionals, and the integration of mental health services into primary care settings. Research money was granted with the aim of enhancing comprehension of the enduring ramifications of the epidemic on mental well-being. The integration of collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations has become essential, with a primary emphasis on the exchange of optimal methodologies, effective resource coordination, and the resolution of global mental health inequities.

Notwithstanding these efforts, there continued to be obstacles and enduring deficiencies in the governmental and institutional reaction. The issue of accessing mental health care remains a significant one, since discrepancies in both availability and cost persist. The presence of societal stigma around mental health issues presents a substantial obstacle to individuals seeking assistance, hence emphasising the need for ongoing public awareness initiatives. The involvement of governments and institutions in defining the trajectory of individual and community well-being was crucial in navigating the developing environment of the mental health crises. Sustained assessment, adjustment, and advancement in these interventions are crucial for establishing a robust mental health framework capable of enduring the persistent obstacles presented by the pandemic and subsequent public health emergencies (Evans, et al., 2023).

### **Recommendations**

In order to effectively address the enduring and substantial influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental well-being, it is imperative to adopt a comprehensive and enduring strategy. In light of the dynamic issues faced by civilizations, the following proposals arise as key principles for alleviating the psychological impact of the epidemic. It is of utmost importance to put forward viable remedies aimed at alleviating the repercussions of COVID-19 on mental well-being. Effective strategies should not just focus on short-term treatments, but also include substantial long-term expenditures in the development and enhancement of mental health infrastructure. In order to develop a holistic strategy, it is essential to prioritise





mental health within public health agendas, destigmatize mental health disorders, and cultivate resilience within communities.

It is imperative for governments and organisations to place utmost importance on the advancement and execution of all-encompassing mental health assistance systems. This include the allocation of more financial resources towards mental health services, guaranteeing equal access to these services for individuals from all demographic backgrounds, and promoting cooperation among healthcare providers, community organisations, and mental health practitioners. A comprehensive approach to support should include a range of strategies aimed at preventing issues, intervening at an early stage, and providing long-term care in order to effectively handle the varied needs of people and communities.

The seamless integration of mental health issues into larger public health efforts is crucial. It is imperative for governments to acknowledge the interdependent connection between physical and mental well-being, and to integrate mental health considerations into policy frameworks, pandemic preparation plans, and emergency response procedures. The integration of many components is crucial in establishing a robust public health infrastructure that can effectively respond to both the immediate and long-term impacts of global crises. There is a need to enhance the amplification of efforts aimed at reducing the social stigma associated with mental health issues. It is recommended that governments, in conjunction with advocacy organisations, initiate enduring public awareness initiatives aimed at challenging misconceptions, providing education to the general public, and fostering open dialogues around mental health. By cultivating a climate characterised by comprehension and compassion, communities may establish a milieu whereby people are encouraged to actively seek assistance without apprehension of being stigmatised.

In the context of employee mental well-being, institutions and enterprises assume a crucial role in providing assistance. The implementation and sustenance of workplace mental health programmes, including counselling services, stress management measures, and flexible work arrangements, may significantly enhance the well-being and efficiency of employees. The promotion of a cultural ethos that places mental health as a primary concern fosters an atmosphere whereby people see a sense of backing in effectively managing the demands of both their work and personal lives. It is imperative for governments to dedicate resources towards doing comprehensive study on the mental health ramifications resulting from the ongoing epidemic. The use of longitudinal studies, epidemiological research, and clinical trials has the potential to enhance our comprehension of risk factors, efficacious therapies, and the progression of mental health outcomes across a given period. It is imperative that policy choices and the development of specific mental health therapies be guided by evidence-based research.

The establishment of social support networks and the cultivation of community resilience are of paramount importance. It is recommended that governments allocate resources towards community-based mental health projects that enhance social ties, mitigate feelings of isolation, and provide localised assistance. Enabling communities to cultivate their own resilience techniques may foster a grassroots approach to mental health that complements treatments implemented from higher levels of authority.



In the wake of the global impact of COVID-19, the following suggestions serve as fundamental principles for fostering a stronger and more empathetic attitude towards mental well-being. By placing emphasis on providing extensive support, incorporating mental health into wider public health endeavours, addressing social stigma, concentrating on workplace well-being, allocating resources to research, and fostering community resilience, societies can strive towards a future in which mental health plays a fundamental role in global well-being.

### Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a complex and wide-ranging effect on mental health, requiring a comprehensive and ongoing approach to address it. Through an examination of both the direct and indirect consequences, an assessment of the efficacy of existing interventions, and the formulation of prospective suggestions, efforts may be made to alleviate the psychological burden imposed by the epidemic and establish a more robust and compassionate trajectory for the future.

In summary, the effects of COVID-19 on mental health provide a complex array of difficulties that extend beyond the acute risks associated with the virus. The data given highlights the pressing need for a thorough and ongoing response, recognising both the immediate and indirect impacts on people and communities worldwide. In the context of the current crisis, it is crucial for governments and organisations to acknowledge mental health as an essential element of public health. The ongoing global epidemic has brought to the forefront existing inequities and vulnerabilities, underscoring the need of focused treatments, destigmatization initiatives, and the incorporation of mental health into wider public health policies. In order to advance towards a more resilient and compassionate world, it is essential to place significant emphasis on the provision of comprehensive mental health assistance, allocation of resources towards research endeavours, cultivation of community resilience, and questioning prevailing cultural norms. These measures are crucial for establishing a society in which mental well-being occupies a central position within public health agendas.

In formulating a trajectory for progress, it is essential to prioritise cooperation at all scales, including local, national, and international levels. It is essential for governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), healthcare practitioners, and local communities to collaborate and establish a comprehensive and coordinated approach in order to effectively tackle the complex and diverse challenges posed by the mental health crisis. By drawing lessons from the difficulties posed by the pandemic and adopting strategies grounded in empirical evidence, societies can establish a framework for a future wherein mental health is not solely given precedence during emergencies but is deeply embedded in the framework of worldwide health endeavours. This will contribute to the creation of a world that is more adequately equipped to promote the psychological well-being of all its residents.

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