Effect of COVID-19 on Mental Health: An Analysis

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Abstract:- A Pandemic is not just a medical condition if affects almost everyone and causes stress, anxiety. The COVID-19 pandemic had a great impact on people mental health. It drastically affected everyone across the world. This was a difficult time for all of us as we heared about the spread of COVID-19 from all over the world, through social media, television, family, friends and other sources. The most common emotion faced by all was fear. Uncertainity & isolation affected people's mental health. It involved all the age groups. It has caused unprecedented disruption to daily life. This paper will review the Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and to emphasize on Relaxation strategies to deal with Anxiety. It concluded that Effect of COVID-19 on mental health was found to be higher among each section of our society and It can be resolved by implementing various interventions on time otherwise it may lead to perilous situation.

Keywords:- Depression, Anxiety, Stress, COVID-19.

I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a contagious diseases caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov-2). Although It is known to cause diseases ranging from cold to more severe illnesses such as SARS and MERS[1]. Symptoms of the Corona virus infection are variable ranging from mild to severe illness. Common symptoms include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, loss of smell, taste, nasal congestion, myalgia, diarrhoea and breathing difficulties. Severe cases of the disease can lead to heart, and respiratory failure, acute respiratory syndrome, or even death[2] In addition to the physical impacts, COVID-19 can have serious effects on people's mental health[3]. Public health actions such as social distancing was necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety.

COVID-19 pandemic lead to psychological changes not only in the health care workers, but also in the citizens of all over the world, and such psychological changes are instigated by fear, anxiety, depression, or insecurity[4]

It affected everyone to a very large extent. As we have discussed earlier isolation affected people's mental health, involved all the age groups. It has caused unprecedented disruption to daily life. Studies has shown that frequent exposure to media may lead to distress. In the current situation, it is challenging to accurately predict the psychological and emotional consequences of COVID-19.

II. RELAXATION STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH ANXIETY

Relaxation is an important part of energy conservation, It can also help you to control anxiety, improve the quality of life and reducing pain and discomfort.

A. Square breathing exercise :
In this exercise, the breathing process is assisted by following the lines of a square. For this exercise, the individual can draw a square on a piece of paper or may even trace a square on the palm of the hand. The individual will therefore breath in and breath out while tracing the outline of the square. A pictorial representation of the exercise is as follows:
- Suggestions for using the activity: As this activity is not time consuming it can be used during transition (lunch break, snack etc.) or whenever someone is feeling restless.

B. Clap-Tap-Breathe Out or Clap-Snap-Breathe Out :
In this activity, individuals will follow a rhythm which will allow them to engage in physical activity as well as focus on their breathing. In this activity, an individual will first clap, followed by a snap/tap and then finally they will breathe out. When they are breathing out, they will do so from their mouths and will make a sound while exhaling.
- Suggestions for using the activity: Can be used whenever the person is feeling restless and needs a break from the work space.

C. Power Hug :
In this activity, individuals will be giving themselves a hug! They will be instructed to place their right hand on their left arm and the left hand will be placed on the right arm. Once they're in this position, they will follow this pattern for the activity: ' *Tap-Tap-Squeeze* '. The purpose of the activity is to again allow people to have the chance to be aware of their own bodies and be present in the moment. This activity can also be done as follows: ' *Tap-Tap-Squeeze-Affirm* '. In this pattern, after a person has given a hug to themselves, they will repeat a positive affirmation (for example: I have the power within me or I believe in myself).
- Suggestions for using the activity: This activity can be helpful to ground people in the present moment.

D. Breathing exercise :
In this activity, individuals will have to concentrate on their breathing. This can be done for 2-3mins for people who are not used to doing breathing exercises and the time can eventually be increased till however an individual is comfortable. The purpose of this activity is to be aware of the body and be present in the moment. The following links can be used for reference:
- Suggestions for using the activity: This activity can be helpful to transition between different activities in the daily

schedule (especially in getting back to work post lunch or late in the afternoon)

E. 5-4-3-2-1 Technique :

This grounding activity utilises all the 5 senses that we have. The activity can be done as follows: (what five things we can see, Four things we can hear, Three things we can touch, Two things we can smell, One thing we can taste)

If engaging all of the 5 senses is difficult, individuals can start with engaging the senses that they are most comfortable with and which are easy to focus on - like vision, hearing and touch. After they are used to these senses, they can slowly start engaging the other senses as well. It is also possible to switch the number of things they have to notice when using their different senses.
- Suggestions for using the activity: This activity can be helpful to ground oneself in the present moment especially when starting to feel restless or when attention starts diverting.

F. Objective:
➢ To review the Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health
➢ To emphasize over Relaxation techniques to deal with Stress and Anxiety

III.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

➢ *Ram Lakhan, Amit Agarwal et al (2020) "Prevalence of Depression, Anxiety and Stress during COVID-19 Pandemic "*

A review was conducted to get the rate of mental health problems in the COVID-19 during the first seven months. This article Investigates that Prevalence of all forms of depression was 20%, stress 53% and anxiety 35% in the combined study population of 113,285 individuals. The prevalence rate of all forms of depression, stress, anxiety, phobia, sleep problems & psychological issues in general population was found to be higher during COVID-19

➢ *Nader Salari, Amin Hosseinian-Far et al. (2020) "Prevalence of stress, anxiety, depression among the general population during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis"*

After reviewing many articles on prevalence rate of stress and anxiety among people. This study concluded that Prevalence rate of stress in 5 studies with a total sample size of 9074 is obtained as 29.6%, the prevalence of anxiety in 17 studies with a sample size of 63,439 as 31.9% and the prevalence of depression in 14 studies with a sample size of 44,531 people as 33.7%

➢ *Usama Rehman, Mohammad G. Shahnawaz et al (2020) "Depression, Anxiety and Stress Among Indians in Times of Covid-19 Lockdown"*

In this study Four hundred and three participants were asked to complete a questionnaire with questions around symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and family affluence. The results indicated that people who do not have enough supplies to sustain the lockdown were most affected, and family affluence was found to be negatively correlated with stress, anxiety, and depression.

IV.   DISCUSSION

As we have discussed this earlier that COVID-19 pandemic had a great impact on people mental health. It drastically affected everyone lives across the world. This was a difficult time for all of us as we heared about the spread of COVID-19 from all over the world, through social media, television, family, friends and other sources. The most common emotion faced by all was fear. However, situation has not changed much yet since the beginning. Limited progress has taken place toward the development of a vaccination still its a long journey to go while keeping all the impacts of COVID-19 over mental health, few relaxation strategies has been explained in this paper in order to control anxiety and stress and how to handle social isolation and emotional problems for the betterment of the society as well as to improve the quality of life and reducing discomfort.

V.   CONCLUSION

People who were kept quarantine experienced higher levels psychological issues. Occurrence of mental health problems has increased in all populations during this pandemic. After analyzing several findings this review concluded that the occurrence of mental health problems, specifically adjustment and fear related, mood swings, anger irritability, stress has increased in all populations. We also concluded the Effect of COVID-19 on mental health was found to be higher among each section of our society.

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