

A Study on Social Isolation Experience during Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The COVID-19 Pandemic is a serious global burden. This has been resulted in loneliness and social isolation due to extended period of time and billions of people are quarantined in their own home as nations have locked down to implement distancing as a measure to avoid spread of infection. The timelines of the growing pandemic being uncertain the isolation is compounded by mass panic and anxiety.

Objectives: To assess the social isolation experience towards the COVID-19 outbreaks including health status of an individual.

Method: The descriptive study was conducted to assess general people social isolation experience. General people were selected through convenience sampling. The data was collected using structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using graphical representation and the results expressed as percentage.

Results: A total of 50 respondents from general population were included in the study. Of the general population surveyed, social isolation experience during covid-19 was reported, nearly 17% responded worst experience, 13% responded bad experience, 15% responded good experience and only 5% had no comments regarding on social isolation experience.

Conclusion: The societal impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic has been very challenging. No aspect of normal societal functioning has been spared. Adopting appropriate steps to keep social and familial connections, maintain healthy activities can help relieve the adverse consequences of loneliness and isolation.

KEYWORDS: *Social Isolation, COVID-19, loneliness*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The world is facing a global public health crisis as corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) emerged as a menacing pandemic. The timelines of the growing pandemic being uncertain, the isolation is compounded by mass panic and anxiety. This important social threat of a pandemic is largely neglected. We look at the impact of COVID-19 on loneliness across different social strata, its implications in the modern digitalized age and outline a way forward with possible solutions to the same. There is no doubt that national and global economics are suffering, the health system are under severe pressure, mass hysteria has acquired a frantic. Pace and people's hope and aspirations are taking a merciless beating. The uncertainty of a new and relatively unknown infection increases the anxiety, which gets compounded by isolation in lockdown. As global public health agencies like World Health Organization (WHO) and Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) struggle to contain the outbreak, social distancing is repeatedly suggested as one of the most useful preventive strategies. It has been used successfully in the past to slow or prevent community transmission during pandemics. Multiple restrictions have been imposed on public movement to contain the spread of the virus. People are forced to stay at home and are burdened with the heft of quarantine. Individuals are waking up every day wrapped in a freezing cauldron of social isolation, sheer boredom and a penetrating feeling of loneliness. This COVID-19 pandemic seems to have brought our frenzied speed of modern society to a grinding halt and has literally crushed the wings of unlimited social interaction. The concept of boredom and loneliness leads to anger, frustration on the authorities and can lead for many to defy the quarantine restrictions, which can cause dire public health consequences. Emotional unpreparedness for such biological disasters have detrimental effects, as this situation is unprecedented in all measures. It also makes us take a step back questions: is social distancing only for a specific social class; as millions of migrant labors, homeless individuals and daily wage workers stay stranded in their workplaces railway and bus station and factories with overcrowding and poor hygiene. The current recommendations to stay at home, practice social distancing and limit social interactions mean that many people feeling the effects of isolation.

BATTLING THE HIDDEN PANDEMIC OF LONELINESS

Combating loneliness through healthy relationship with oneself and others is one of the best ways to preserve humanity. People are likely familiar with the unusually painful experience of loneliness which leads to a complex emotional state of isolation.

“Loneliness is the most terrible poverty, leading to the feeling of being unloved”- Mother Teresa. We all love to be around people. We like social gatherings, friends, and families, relatives, hanging out or conversing for hours and travelling. In social psychology, there are terms like “self-concept” and interpersonal attractions which basically state that the constant need for human interactions is in reality the constant attempt to battle loneliness. People are likely familiar with the unusually experience of loneliness which leads to a complex emotional state of isolation, be it real or virtual. Loneliness is a universal emotion, subjective to each individual. It stems from physical, social or emotional isolation of an individual from his/her intimate surroundings. Loneliness can bring about negative thinking patterns of “hopelessness” and “worthlessness” which in turn can spiral into depression. A lot of anxiety and doubts generate about the future and a lonely person starts considering him/herself to be unwanted, unloved and unproductive. Loneliness is not just about “external isolations” it is a state of mind. There is no single common cause of loneliness and hence there is no common isolation. Loneliness is not an illness, but rather a state of mind. Most suggested measures are lifestyle modifications indulging in spiritual or humanitarian activities, reminiscence of olden days or memories and music. These factors can promote healthy socialization and reduce stigma. It is important to understand the nature of loneliness, the reasons, the circumstances leading to it and the thoughts surrounding. A vital step in fighting loneliness that arises due to fear of socializing is learning adequate social skills and behavior.

DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF LONELINESS ON HEALTH

5 potential pathways through which loneliness may wreak havoc on one’s health.

1. Loneliness may diminish person’s resolve self-discipline over-time, making them more likely to indulge in self-destructive behaviors such as drinking or eating to excess.
2. People who describes themselves as lonely are also more likely to contribute to their social isolation by neglecting to engage with others to secure emotional support.
3. Loneliness produces objective and measurable effects on the immune ad cardiovascular systems.

DEFINITION

Social isolation is defined as the absence of relationships with family or friends on an individual level, and with society on a broader level the absence or weakness of a person’s social network indicates whether the person is socially isolated.

DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION ON HEALTH

Perhaps because of its frequent association with living alone and loneliness, social isolation has also received considerable attention. The corona virus pandemic has brought with it many difficulties for billions of people around the globe. From ravaged economies, state-wide shutdowns, travel-bans to social isolation and uncontrolled death worldwide. This pandemic has not been easy for many reasons. For individuals that are more technologically inclined, many of the challenges that social distancing has introduced are easily resolved through online and digital platforms whether it means video chatting with families/friends or taking advantage of online streaming and gaming platforms to connect with peers.

HOW TO HANDLE CORONAVIRUS ISOLATION AND ANXIETY

Vaccines are available and should get one to protect oneself, good self-care offsets anxiety and stress, eat well, go walks, get 6-8 hours of sleep at night, have a daily routine, regular wake-up and bedtime, make time for excessive and relaxation, socialization, spend quality time with family, change mindset, get busy oneself.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

TABLA GIRUM, KIFLE LENTIRO (2020): COVID-19 is an emerging disease caused by highly contagious virus called SARS-CoV-2. It is caused an extensive health and economic burden around the globe. There is no proven effective treatment yet, except certain preventive mechanisms. Some studies assessing the effects of different preventive strategies have been published. Therefore this study aimed to review evidences related to COVID-19 prevention strategies achieved through contact tracing, screening, quarantine, and isolation to determine the best practices.

BEATRICE LEE (2021): In this study, aimed to gain a better understanding of how COVID-19 affects mental health in vulnerable populations. Data from 269 individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions were collected to understand whether loneliness mediates the relationship between perceived COVID-19 stress and maladaptive COVID-19 coping strategies among people with disabilities and chronic health conditions.

LENA DAHLBERG (2021): Physical distancing risk collateral damage such as increased loneliness. Despite the significance support was associated with 39% increased odds of sustaining physical activity.

DEBANJAN BANERJEE, MAYANK RAI (2020): The disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 has literally brought the world down to its knees just within last few months.

RIFAT KAYIS, MASK D GRIFFITHS (2021): The main objective of the present study was to examine the associations between fear of COVID-19 and mental well-being, through serial mediation analysis that include loneliness. The present study comprised 773 participants were collected. Self-report data were collected including psychometric measures assessing fear of COVID-19, loneliness and mental well-being. The findings suggest that highest fear of COVID-19 is associated with lower mental well-being by negatively affecting individual's emotion and behavior.

WILLIAM CYK, TOWNSON AT, KAPUR M, FERREINA AF, NUNN, and GALANTE J, et al. (2021): In the rapid systematic reviews six electronic database (Medline, Embassy, Web of Science, Psyc.INFO, and Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews appraising interventions for loneliness and for social isolation. A sample of 715 adults aged between 18 and 72 years old took part in an online survey during the period of lockdown. The survey included self-report measures to assess perceived sense of loneliness, excessive use of social media, and anxiety. Participants reported that they spend more hours/day on social media during the pandemic.

GIADA PEITRABISSA, SUSAN G. SIMPSON (2020): Perceived social isolation during the COVID-19 Pandemic significantly has had an extraordinary global impact, with significant psychological consequences. Changes in daily lives, feeling of loneliness, job losses, financial difficulty, and grief over the death of loved ones have the potential to affect the mental health of many. In an atmosphere of uncertainty, it is essential that clear and precise information is offered about the problem and how to manage it. In this contribution, a rationale is provided for an urgent call for a rapid response to the mental health impacts of COVID-19. Moreover, suggestions for individuals to regulate their emotions effectively and appropriately are provided.

DEA ROSA GRACIA, ERICA ROSA RUBETTA (2020): COVID-19 is a unique disease was confirmed in Wuhan, Hubei, China in late 2019 and within 6 months the virus spread rapid throughout the World. The obscurity in overcoming this virus is the background of the intervention applied several interventions conducted, such as nationwide lockdowns, quarantine and isolation. In addition to avoid the virus transmission, these interventions also have psychological impacts that affects the mental health.

PANDEY V, ASTHA A, MISHRA N, and G JEYAVEL S, RAJKUMAR E AND PRABHU G (2021): The present study explored the experiences, perceptions and attitudes of patients and their care-givers toward COVID-19. The traumatic analysis emerged with 4 major themes. Psychological experiences of people was generated. Prominently with sub-themes indicating the perceived experiences like fear of spreading diseases to others, and the need for psychological counselling attitude of others towards patients and care-givers revealed that family members and relatives played a major positive role on the patient's mental health.

RAJINDER K DHARMA (2020): A meta review reported that interventions that was found useful incorporated promotion of accessibility and acceptability of care, ongoing contact, use of trusted local providers, family involvement, and economic benefits. Interventions include screening for isolation, counselling, emotional disclosure, physical activity promotion, maintaining social interactions and social prescribing and using

II. METHOD

This study was undertaken in Vijaynagar Mysore within local geographical area with nearby groceries shop, provision store. While collecting data from the general population the following safety precautions were taken like wearing mask, using sanitizer and social distancing. The study consisted of 50 respondents within age group of 18-24 years. Respondents were selected by convenience sampling technique. The participants were briefed about the nature of the study, consent were given and a pretested structured questionnaire was administered. Data that recorded include general data comprised of age, gender. The information pertaining to pattern of COVID-19 effects, experience, prevention and management of social isolation were included in the questionnaire.

DISCUSSION

TABLE 4.1 DESCRIPTION OF ISOLATION EXPERIENCE IN ONE WORD

SL NO.	PARTICULAR	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	% OF
1	GOOD	15	15%
2	BAD	13	13%
3	WORST	17	17%
4	NO COMMENTS	05	05%

From the above table represents the isolation experience of the respondents in one word. It shows that 15% of them described as good experience. 13% of them described as bad experience. 17% of them described as worst experience and remaining 5% of them described as no comments.

TABLE 4.2 COPING WITH TIME DURING PERIOD OF ISOLATION

SL NO.	PARTICULAR	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	% OF
1	Reading books	1	1%
2	Watching TV	2	2%
3	Video calls with friends, family relations.	1	1%
4	Social media	5	5%
5	Rest sleep	19	19%
6	All the above	22	22%

From the above table represents the respondents' utilization of time by doing following activities during isolation. Its shows that 1% of the respondent spending time by reading books. 2% of the respondent spending time by watching TV. 1% of the respondent spending time by connecting with friends, family relations through video calls. 5% of the respondent spending time with social media. 19% of the respondent spending time by taking rest, sleep. Remaining 22% of the respondent followed all the above mentioned activities.

RESULTS

A total of 50 respondents' were selected by convenience sampling method of which 17% responded isolation experience as worst and 22% responded that they were coping with time by following all the above mentioned activities during COVID-19 isolation period.

III. DISCUSSION

The societal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been broad and very challenging. No aspect of normal societal functioning has been spared. Social isolation and social distancing are necessary measures to prevent virus from spreading. Adopting appropriate steps to keep social and familial connections, maintain healthy activities, managing of emotional and psychiatric symptoms can help to relieve the adverse consequences of loneliness and isolation. Timely based isolation for mild COVID-19 cases could substantially reduce the number of new infections. Local epidemic burdens should determine the facility based isolation strategies.

The significance of the study showed that majority of respondents' described isolation experience was worst. This experience can be overcome with taking action towards health concern by taking good care of oneself and avoiding thinking too much about the worst case scenarios. Majority of respondents' managed time by doing activities like reading books, watching TV, video calls, social media, rest sleep during COVID-19 isolation. It shows people are aware of doing activities that makes them busy and managing time during lockdown period.

IV. CONCLUSION

Therefore many people are struggling with isolation and boredom during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Given these circumstances some people may fall into symptoms of loneliness and depression. These challenging times have required people to play their part by social distancing, social isolation and following safety measures during COVID-19 Pandemic.

The limitations of the study are: the study was conducted less amount of time due to lockdown restrictions. Respondents' were not feeling comfortable while providing answer due to restricted timings of lockdown and they were busy in purchasing necessary items for daily living.

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