



Letter to the Editor: Psychological Health Issues and Stress Management during COVID-19 Pandemic

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The novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) became a pandemic on 11 March. COVID-19 did not only cause a life crisis, but also psychological stress: tension, anxiety, fear, and despair among the affected populations. How to help individuals navigate reactions to traumatic stress and get out of the psychological crisis has become a public concern that needs to be discussed on time. The psychological health concerns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have been discussed in this letter.

Anti-pandemic steps of self-quarantine and social-distancing were employed to curb the spread of COVID-19, but ultimately triggered a certain degree of side-effect: anger and anxiety in the general public. In particular, front-line medical emergency workers and COVID-19 patients were more vulnerable to developing psychiatric disorders. Despite public knowledge, there is a degree of anxiety that affects the quality of life during pandemics, including quarantine times. A national survey recorded that, under the threat of COVID-19, the prevalence of psychological distress is up to 35% among the general population in China [1]. The lack of evidence-based science and medical knowledge of the population can be difficult to differentiate from speculation and rumor that can induce fear and anxiety in large populations [2]. The amount of activity and workload for certain occupations decreased due to quarantine and self-isolation during the outbreak of COVID-19, resulting in a lack of usual social activities that would contribute to stress and isolation [3-5]. When previously working people are forced to stay at home for a long time, their income decreases, resulting in anxiety [6,7]. In another large sample, a cross-sectional survey of 1,257 health workers

in China during the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 70% recorded anxiety, with 50% reported depression and 34% reported insomnia [8]. Sustained psychological distress and inadequate sleep can affect the physiological stress response system of the body, leading to a further risk to health [9].

Attentive interventions for psychological disorders should be made available to everyone during pandemics. Possible approaches to support the mental well-being of people during COVID-19 may include telepsychiatry, adequate assessment, and referral for mental health issues; physical exercises, self-monitoring health education, and general prevention measures against COVID-19 infection. WHO recommends that people in isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic should strive to follow strategies to remain connected with family and friends and maintain social networks, follow a regular daily routine, pay attention to one's needs and emotions, participate in healthy activities and avoid rumors that may lead to anxiety and stress [10]. Health education should be paired with psychological counseling for disadvantaged people. An integrated multidisciplinary approach is required to address the prevailing psychological issues among people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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