

World Mental Health Day: Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Community Mental Health.

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- 1) Global Perspectives.**
- 2) Global Impact.**
- 3) Clinical Presentations.**
- 4) Impact on Mental Health Services.**

1) Global Perspectives:

- As we know, COVID-19 pandemic began in Wuhan, China in Dec 2019,
- And within couple of months, it spread widely across the world to be declared by WHO as a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 and launching worldwide waves of fear, concerns, uncertainties and strict precautionary measures affecting almost all aspects of our daily life.
- Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, the situation of mental health across the world was not the best at both levels; the parameters of mental health status and the indicators of mental health care & services:
 - According to WHO:
 - About one in four individuals will have a mental health problem at some point in their lives (25% of world's population).
 - Close to 800,000 people die due to suicide every year, which is one person every 40 seconds.
 - For each adult who died by suicide there are more than 20 others attempting suicide.
 - Mental disorders rank 2nd in global burden of disease, after infectious diseases.
 - Mental disorders exert a greater toll on health of the world than AIDS, TB & Malaria combined.
 - 5 of the 10 leading causes of disability worldwide are mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.
 - Economic costs of mental health problems are massive.
 - Estimated at least 3–4% of GNP across member states of the EU.

- Largest proportion of the cost is outside the health sector e.g. through lost employment & absenteeism.
- These social costs account for 60–80% of the total economic impact of major mental health problems.
- Impact of mental health problems at a population level is expected to grow significantly after COVID-19 pandemic.
- World Mental Health Day is an opportunity for the world to come together and begin redressing the historic neglect of mental health & mental health services.

2) Global Impact:

World-wide rapid spread of COVID-19 and its strong association with significant morbidity and mortality has affected almost all aspects of our life:

- Work & Employment,
- Business,
- Economy,
- Family life,
- Socialisation and Social life,
- Education & Child Mental Health,
- Travel & Tourism,
- Entertainment,
- Sports,
- Cultural & Religious practices,
- Loss of loved ones by death,
- Access to health care,
- Stigma of COVID-19,
- Lock down & Limited mobility,
- Quarantine.

3) Clinical Presentations:

- Extreme fear of COVID-19, phobia, panic attacks & phobic avoidance.
- Obsessive Compulsive hand wash & other precautionary measures.
- Fear of being locked-down & quarantined like claustrophobia.
- Anxiety/ Depressive presentations re: work, family, health, travel, etc.
- Pathological Grief & Depression.
- Occasional Post COVID-19 psych symptoms: delirium, depression, insomnia & neuropsychiatric symptoms.
- Impact on Child Mental Health:
 - Disrupted schooling & school activities,
 - Poor education & misbehaviours,
 - Fear, worries, somatic symptoms & disturbed sleep.
- Children need simple information & demonstrated reassurance by parents & key

figures.

4) Impact on Mental Health Services:

- The limited access to quality & affordable mental health care in the world before the pandemic has been further diminished due to COVID-19 as the pandemic has disrupted health services around the world.
- Examples; reduced capacity of long-stay facilities such as care homes and psychiatric institutions.
- Disrupted face-to-face assessments/ meetings; mental health staff being infected with the virus or deployed to COVID services, and the closing of mental health facilities to convert them into COVID care facilities.
- Adoption of helpline, phone consultations and telemedicine options.
- World Mental Health Day is an opportunity for the world to come together and begin redressing the historic neglect of mental health & mental health services.

5) References:

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