



COVID-19 on Mental Health Crisis in Developing Countries. An Overview

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Mental Health has been considered as an important dimension of human health since the origin of *Homo sapiens*. Other dimensions such as physical, social and economic factors have also an influence on human health [1]. Mental health refers to fluid contributions of culture, religion, and socio-economic concerns; a psychological conceptualization will still recognize some basic ingredients of mental health such as presence of mental fitness, availability (both real and perceived) of certain qualities, competencies, resources, that are potentially available to mobilize as their need arises “and not merely the absence of abnormal behavior”. According to Henderson [2], mental health signifies the operandi of an individual to pursue reasonable, purposeful goals; use his capacities and talents fruitfully.

It was an fiercest moment in the world when a newly discovered coronavirus disease erupt the face of the earth. It was first discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan, China and this has progressively become an ongoing pandemic across the World. As of 15 - October 2020, the confirmed cases of COVID-19: 38,202,956 and deaths: 1,087,069 (global data). The data of the COVID-19 infection rate in WHO regions are the following (confirmed cases): Americas - 18,185,839; South-East Asia- 8,204,366; Europe- 7,219,501; Eastern Mediterranean - 2,684,378; Africa - 1,240,683; Western Pacific- 667,448 [3]. COVID-19 is characterized with different symptoms which include fever, cough, fatigue, loss of smell and shortness of breath. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is typically within five days but may also range from two to 14 days [4].

COVID-19 has no known medical cure so far and hence it is therefore important to mobilise psychological (i.e. behavioural) strategies to remove it from human life. The recommended measure of social distancing; hand washing; prompt reporting; self-isolation; and other responsible health behaviours and practises are all centered on human behaviour parameters. It is clear that our behaviour deficits can impact seriously on its early detection/diagnosis; intervention and prevention.

The protective measure of “social distancing” is a direct ‘insult’ attack on the psychological and socio-anthropological nature of man as a social being who actively seeks stimuli and explores his environment via physical, social, and psychological channels. It is analogous to asking our brain to read rumour texts! Man conveys powerful messages to fellow men via hugs, touches, kisses, holds, curdling. What can psychology, the science of behaviour offers to humanity at the cross-road of human survival and perpetuity? The bubonic plaque came and took away millions; HIV came and humanity rose to action, mobilizing divine help, medical science and psychosocial strategies, to stem its potential tide of the extermination of human resource.

Nevertheless, in order to achieve mental health among the population, attentions must be paid to factors that can encourage or engender poor mental health. Certain risk-factors are clearly prominent in developing nations. These include crime rate; socio-economic life; gender and race issues; access to education and basic necessities of life: water, transportation, housing, employment, regional and inter-ethnic peace. Family structure and dynamics are

also important factors for divorce, conflict, violence, substance abuse, unwedded motherhood, separations and other in appropriate activities.

Harriet [5] also argued that restriction of movement experienced during lock down has a devastating consequence on the routines and activities that fosters good mental health. The restriction put heavily pressure on mental health which includes loss of livelihood; what to eat and also how to maintain good standard of living in this pandemic.

Mental health in developing countries is based upon the salutogenic-orientations, health policies, intersectional cooperation, and global efforts. We should all need to be together and mobilized to focus on and promote factors that ensure positive mental health for all socio-economic niches. Health policies and actions must take care of the “well”/healthy population as well. In a recently published article, Gowder has revealed that practicing of meditation or yoga and music therapy will be helpful for mental health or to get rid of stress.

Mental health is the overall body health of all human beings [6,7].

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