Psychiatric Disorders in Unfurling Covid 19 Pandemic

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The resurging Covid-19 pandemic has brought stress, anxiety, fear among people. The pandemic has fragmented economic and social framework, including largest ever economic slowdown. This pandemic has caused cancellation of events, gatherings, imposing of lockdown or curfews, shortages of supplies, closure of institutions and organizations etc. Faced with new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends, and colleagues, it is important that we look after our mental health as well. By increasing the risk of isolation, fear, stigma, abuse, and economic fallout, Covid-19 has led to an increase in the risk of psychiatric disorders, chronic trauma and stress, which eventually increase suicidal behaviours. Current treatment modalities of Covid 19 are focussed on infection transmission control, antiviral and supportive treatment and development of effective vaccine whereas psychosocial aspect has been neglected.

Factors in covid 19 pandemic leading to psychiatric disorders:

1. Huge pecuniary loss owing to unemployment, business losses, and wrecking of psychosocial life.

2. Use of social distancing, masks, home confinement, isolation, quarantine as measures to prevent the spread of Covid 19.

3. Restriction in travel and lockdown, Closures of temples, gathering, social rituals.

We call for the management of these stress disorders to successfully manage the unremitting Covid pandemic. Governments should provide economic supports for needy ones, social support, education through multimedia and telecommunication, and consultations for diagnosed and at-risk of psychiatric disorder like stress, suicide. At this difficult time communities, societies, organizations, should gather and target those at risk of psychosocial disorders. People should be educated through IEC about this aspect of the Covid pandemic, providing support, methods to tackle stress, constructive utilization of this time. Besides, prompt treatment of psychiatric disorders, increasing mental health promotion and awareness as well as reducing social risks like poverty are other broader strategies for suicide prevention.

Creation of helpdesks and helpline by covid centres, government, and organizations for management of stress, anxiety, fear, and risk of suicide should be done. Teleconsultation for people, minimizing the use of social media and multimedia news, etc. People can be educated by information, education and communication by multimedia like TV, newspapers. People with high-risk behaviours like a history of attempted suicide, history of anxiety treatment and panic attacks, substance abuse, loneliness, talking of death, people with minimal social support, unemployed should be monitored and followed. So much work has to be done on psychosocial aspect of covid 19 to achieve the holistic goal of having a society free of covid 19 fear.