

## **Covid-Mentandemic: Covid Induced Mental Pandemic in Health Care Professionals**

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### **Introduction**

With the sudden outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic globally, whole world suffered from this lethal disease but the health care professionals (HCP) including doctors, nurses, technicians, paramedical, administrative, pharmacy staff remain the main professionals directly involved in management and treatment of COVID 19. Although in all the countries HCP did a heroic job with full dedication and selflessly saving lives of millions but during this long 2 yrs of period they also suffered with disease emotional stress, physical stress due to overwhelmed number of cases and working round the clock for patients with mental and physical tiredness. HCP are also humans and they are not immune to the psychological consequences due to COVID-19. Among all the HCPs, front-line workers were at greater risk of acquiring this deadly and devastating disease.

Many reasons could be narrated for the adverse psychological outcomes in HCP including but not limited to excessive workload/ long work hours, fear of catching infection themselves or transmission the infection to the family, remaining in quarantine for few months away from the family because the mode of transmission was not clear and inadequate personal protective equipment, over-enthusiastic media news, feeling inadequately supported [1].

Another important reason for such psychological impact is the very high infection rate with consequent high risk of complications related to COVID and Non COVID factors in HCP, this might lead to frustration, helplessness, adjustment issues, stigma, fear of discrimination and death or long term comorbidity in the medical staff [2]. Despite the low mortality rate of 2%, the COVID-19 virus has a high transmission rate and the mortality is higher. The literature published during the outbreak of SARS almost more than a decade ago suggested that HCW are at higher risk of developing anxiety, depression, stress during these periods [3]. A similar school of thought exists about the effect of COVID-19 pandemic, some studies were carried out in the past 3 months to assess the psychological impact of this disease on healthcare workers.

In India, some of doctors committed suicide when they were diagnosed as COVID positive, thousand of HCP died due to COVID19 and no official support of help had been offered to them from government. Many of doctors either were terminated from the hospital because their speciality like Dental, ENT, ophthalmology and other superspecialists were no longer needed due to high number of COVID case and many doctors resigned and worked on low salary, some doctors faced violence also form the patients relatives. These all factors contributed to significant level of mental stress among HCP and still doctors are under mental stress or post traumatic stress disorders.

HCP face many problems in their personal, social and marital life as well with resultant high numbers of marital conflicts, separation and divorce among the doctors and with consequent effects on their kids and parents.

### **Conclusion**

COVID-Mentandemic, COVID induced socio-psychological, physical and financial stress are being faced globally and with consequent another ongoing but hidden pandemic of stress, depression, anxiety and many more psychological disorders called as COVID Mentandem-

ic would increase and continue in near future and all governments should take necessary steps for avoidance of this COVID-Mentandemic by controlling coronavirus spread, developing and delivering effective vaccine with at least 80% coverage target and to keep themselves ready for supporting HCP psychologically for better mental health being over coming few years.

Positive motivational factors like supportive and proud family and colleagues, positive role models, validation and appreciation by peers/patients, positive caretaking experience, a sense of validation of existence, knowledge, and acceptance the possible inevitability of infection need to be strengthened to boost the morale of HP. As per this study, the negatives associated with patient care include multiple needs of the patients, stigma, need for clear management plans. One solution proposed by the HP interviewed to overcome the negatives include setting up of multidisciplinary teams and screening questionnaires [4].

### Future Perspectives

The mental health issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic can be short-term or long-term. All Governments should provide psychological and social support to the HCP and especially to them who had COVID 19 or who suffered psychosocially and financially during the COVID era. Existing literature addresses the immediate mental health concerns only. It is important to see the long-term mental health sequels of COVID-19 infection. Nothing is known about the after-effects of novel coronavirus infection; hence, there is a need for extensive research in terms of its long term impact on HCP populations.

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