



COVID-19 Pandemic Disaster: Psychosocial Challenges and Impact of Lockdown and Precaution Measures in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Commentary

COVID-19 is a traumatic event all over the globe. By May 24, 2020 the WHO reported 5,204,508 confirmed cases globally with 337,687 deaths [1]. The first two reported cases from Saudi Arabia were on March 2, 2020 [2], which grows to 74,795 confirmed cases with 399 deaths by May 25, 2020 [3].

It is a real globalization event for children, adolescents, adults, geriatrics, and their families and community. Different precaution measures and lockdown took place by Governments all over the world to reduce the spread of disease. The pandemic daily report information sends through various media, including television and social media platforms, which make the audience standing in the status of PANIC waiting for new information either locally or internationally that reduce their anxiety during lockdown and quarantine stay [4,5].

The COVID-19 pandemic is a new stressor or traumatic event for mental health care workers. Before the pandemic outbreak, No previous studies about the consequence of mental health, or a written action plans manual to help psychiatric care workers to deliver high-quality services[6]. With this traumatic event, the media introduces new vocabularies and terminologies to the audience, creating misconceptions and worsening the situation. Such observations were internationally encountered. Hence, the government took rapid responses utilizing the traditional modalities of media that include T.V and Radio. Also, the new media platforms, such as express internet mobile messages facilities that include "WhatsApp" messages and other platforms; however were not enough to disclose the worry of community and families [7,8].

The Psychology support teams create a mental well-being action plan for the prevention and early detection of mental illness. Through stages, start from raising mental health awareness, detecting current mental illness, and identifying available resources to find solutions to present mental health problems. Moreover, that will affect future mental health crisis interventions and planning.

Psychosocial support that was established through the government and civil society foundation to prepare and support the society for such occurrence is an essential part of the healthcare system's priorities that manages the quarantine and hospital isolation medical care. Providing and supporting the community, especially those in

quarantine or even to the families who kept under lockdown with "someone" to talk to and discuss the hidden and suspected worries, have significant advantages.

In the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia, health care staff from Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University Health Care Services recruited to take care of Quarantine Health Care Facilities (Holiday inn, Novotel, aloft hotel). On arrival of the guest, well-trained psychological support staff will receive him/her as a guest. Additionally, it provides professional help ranging from basic evaluation skills to psychotherapeutic intervention such as cognitive behavioral therapy, mainly trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, and keeping in mind that he or she is a "guest," not patients or clients. Hotline and virtual clinic services are available on demand. Sometime, if the person urgently needs physical presentation in the clinic will be arranged under COVID-19 precaution.

A summarized kit-tool in the Arabic language will be hand to the guests on arrival. The psychological support team can verify or clarify the information received by guests through different sources, primarily social media, and maximizing the psycho-education and reassurance process. Moreover, they provide various psychological interventions as well as pharmacological treatment if indicated.

A population has such service with well-planned, coordinated, and reintegrated programs that rectify wrong transmitted information through social media have better perception, understanding, and acceptance of these events as observed in population served by IAU, Dammam, Saudi Arabia [9].

Our experience of IAU psychological support team staff taking care of three quarantine hotels till May 26, 2020, with total numbers of "1200 visitors" of approximately 16800 nights in house stay indicates the importance of psychosocial support services provided for the quarantine guests. The guest may experience stress-related symptoms like confusion, insomnia, derealization, depersonalization, depressive, and anxiety symptoms. Also, some of them may need an extension of such services after clearance and return home. Furthermore, the expansion of these services should be carried to their families, if indicated.

Another observation that needs to be considered and looked for is the Post-COVID stigmatization that can emerge soon with an increasing number of cases with the tracking bracelet to follow them up. Moreover, the pandemic events on health care workers caring for COVID-19 patients need to look for in order to treat appropriately.

A formulation of the psychological support system of CBT expert personal to facilitate the healing process of the society from post-quarantine/lockdown trauma and post COVID-19 stigmatization needs to be established rapidly [4,5].

Another psychosocial support system needs to establish to health care workers who provide COVID-19 treatment [10,11].

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