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“RELATIONSHIP ON PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON GENERAL POPULATION”.

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ABSTRACT:

BACKGROUND: During the early stages of the pandemic in India, The lives of people were drastically affected with lock-down and fear related to the disease's potential effects and transmission. The fear due to the contraction of COVID -19 is on the rise because of the death tolls and global spread. Hence, this study attempted to find the psychological impact of COVID-19 among general people; and understand its relationship with the emotional changes on depression, anxiety and stress. This can potentially help policy makers in formulating comprehensive interventions.

AIM: To find out the relationship on psychological impact in the perspectives of depression, anxiety and stress on COVID-19 among general population by using (DASS-21) scale

MATERIALS AND METHODS: A community based non-experimental study with descriptive survey research design was used. The study was conducted among the general public in and around Karnataka. Snow-ball sampling technique/self-selection was adopted in order to select the samples of 250 general public who fulfils the selection criteria. The data was collected from the general public by using DASS-21 is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the emotional status of depression, anxiety and stress through self-administered method with the help of Google forms from 24th August to 31st August 2020. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used for analyzing the data.

RESULTS: Regarding age in years, 57% of the general population were between 21-30 years old, 78% were male and 22% were female; 30% of them were qualified with under-graduation, 66% of them were unmarried, 45% of the public were students and 49% were from urban area of Karnataka.

The relationship of psychological impact among the general population on screening in the perspectives of depression, anxiety and stress on COVID-19 were identified. Regarding relationship between stress and anxiety the Pearson correlation r value is 0.758 which is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, similarly on relationship between anxiety and depression $r = 0.728$ which is also statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ and the relationship between depression and stress $r = 0.809$ which is also statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

CONCLUSION: The present findings of the study state that the general population were vicarious towards their emotional status in terms of depression, anxiety and stress. To conclude COVID-19 has a very strong psychological impact on the general population. Therefore, increased attention should be paid to the psychological problems of the public, especially students under the situation of the spread and control of COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19, Depression, Stress, Anxiety, Psychological Impact, General population

INTRODUCTION:

COVID-19 is considered a highly contagious virus. Thus, even though only a minority of infected people develops severe symptoms, COVID-19 is a global health threat. In fact, on the 30 January 2020, the WHO declared the health outbreak caused by COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. As the coronavirus pandemic rapidly sweeps across the world, it is inducing a considerable degree of fear, worry and concern in the population at large and among certain groups in particular, such as older adults, care providers and people with underlying health conditions. In public mental health terms, the main psychological impact to date is elevated rates of stress or anxiety. But as new measures and impacts are introduced – especially quarantine and its effects on many people's usual activities, routines or livelihoods – levels of loneliness, depression, harmful alcohol and drug use, and self-harm or suicidal behaviour are also expected to rise.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The Covid-19 pandemic led to a prolonged exposure to stress. The prolonged stress could involve anxiety, depression, and the inability to manage traumatic and negative emotions. This increased attention might help in managing the current situation and other possible epidemics and pandemics. The security measures adopted in managing the pandemic had different consequences on individuals, according to the social role invested. Some segments of the population seem to be more exposed to the risk of anxious, depressive, and post-traumatic symptoms because they are more sensitive to stress. The pandemic has had a harmful effect on the public mental health which can even lead to psychological crises. Early identification of individuals in the early stages of a psychological disorder makes the intervention strategies more effective. Health crises such the COVID-19 pandemic lead to psychological changes, not only in the medical workers, but also in the citizens, and such psychological changes are instigated by fear, anxiety, depression, or insecurity. As a consequence, investigator showed an increased interest in measuring the relationship on psychological impact of covid-19 on general population in order to psychologically support the population.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

“A correlation study to assess the relationship on psychological impact of covid-19 pandemic on general population”.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the level of psychological impact in the perspectives of depression, anxiety and stress on COVID-19 among general population.
2. To find out the relationship on psychological impact of covid-19 pandemic on general population in terms of depression, anxiety and stress.
3. To determine the association between the psychological impact of covid-19 pandemic and the selected socio-demographic variables of general public.

HYPOTHESIS:

Ho₁- There is no statistically significant relationship between the psychological impact of covid-19 pandemic on general population in terms of depression, anxiety and stress.

Ho₂- There is no statistically significant association between the psychological impact of covid-19 pandemic and the selected socio- demographic variables of general public.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Experience of depression, anxiety and stress may be varying with different groups of people in general population.
- General People with any co-morbidity may have a high incidence of anxiety and depression which may lead to more stress.
- Screening the general people will help in early identification of psychological problems and requires immediate assistance from experts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

A cross-sectional study with quantitative research approach with correlational research design was adopted. A web-based questionnaire was designed for this study and distributed to those who could access the online form, utilizing convenience sampling. The form, along with a brief description of the study, was sent to potential participants via social media platforms such as Face book and whatsapp using the web link of the surveying questionnaire. Moreover, respondents were instructed to send the questionnaire link to their friends during the said period. The study was conducted on general population at Karnataka. The samples were selected by using on-probability self-selection/snowball sampling technique with the sample size of 250 who fulfills the selection criteria with the extension of support from the study subjects. The inclusion criteria for participation were to be any people, aged 18 years or older, able to understand and read English and willing to complete the online survey. The exclusion criteria involved having a prior diagnosis of any psychiatric condition and not interested to complete the survey. The survey's average completion time was about 15 min. A standardized tool on assessment of depression, anxiety and stress was used by using DASS-21 which is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the emotional status of depression, anxiety and stress through self-administered method with the help of Google forms from 24th August to 31st August 2020.

The following tool were used to collected data.

- Tool -1: Socio – demographic profile.
- Tool -2: Assessment of depression, anxiety and stress by using DASS-21

Tool -1: It includes question regarding the personal details of the people such as Age, Gender, educational qualification, Occupation, Religion, place of residence. Marital status,

Tool-2: DASS-21 is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the emotional status of depression, anxiety and stress. Each of the three DASS-21 scales contains 7 items, divided into subscales with similar content.

Formal permission was obtained from the institutional ethics committee of the institution and concerned approval was taken from the study subjects through online, the investigator had already explained the purpose of the study to the study subjects in general before they fill the questionnaire in the google form. The study subjects were selected according to the investigator convenient through self-selection method and through them the snow ball sampling technique was adopted till the desired sample is achieved. The data was collected from the general public by using DASS-21 through self-administered method with the help of Google forms. Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained during the process of data collection, participants were informed that the research will not reveal any identifying information. Later the data was coded and preceded for statistical analysis by using SPSS Version 23.0 (IBM) statistical software to analyze the data with descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS:

I: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES:

- **Age:** 148 (59%) of general population were in the age group of 31-40 years, 45 (18%) of them were in the age group of 41-50 years. And 53 (21%) of them were in 21-30 years.
- **Gender:** 195 (78%) of them were males and 55 (22%) were females.
- **Place of residence:** 93 (37%) of the study subjects were from rural area and 122(49%) were from urban area and 35(14%) were from semi- urban area
- **Type of the family:** 210 (84%) of the general population were from nuclear family and 40 (16%) were from joint family.
- **Marital status:** 85 (34%) of the study subjects were married, 165 (66%) of them were unmarried.
- **Profession:** Among 250 study subjects 113 (45%) were students and 80 (32%) of them were health care professionals. And 05 (02%) of them were homemakers.
- **Religion:** 147 (59%) of the study subjects were Hindus, 13(05%) were Muslims. And 82(33%) were Christian,

Table 1: Frequency and Percentages distribution of level of depression, anxiety and stress among general population.N=250

Sl No	Study variable (psychological impact)	DEPRESSION		ANXIETY		STRESS	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
01	Normal	38	15	34	14	49	20
02	Psychological distress	212	85	216	86	201	80

Table - 1: discussed on the frequency and percentage distribution of level of depression, anxiety, and stress among general population where 38 (15%) of the were found to be normal whereas 212 (85%) of them were found to be with depression, regarding anxiety 34 (14%) of them were found to be normal whereas 216 (86%) of them were found to

be with anxiety, towards stress 49 (20%) of them were found to be normal whereas 201 (80%) of them were found to be with stress.

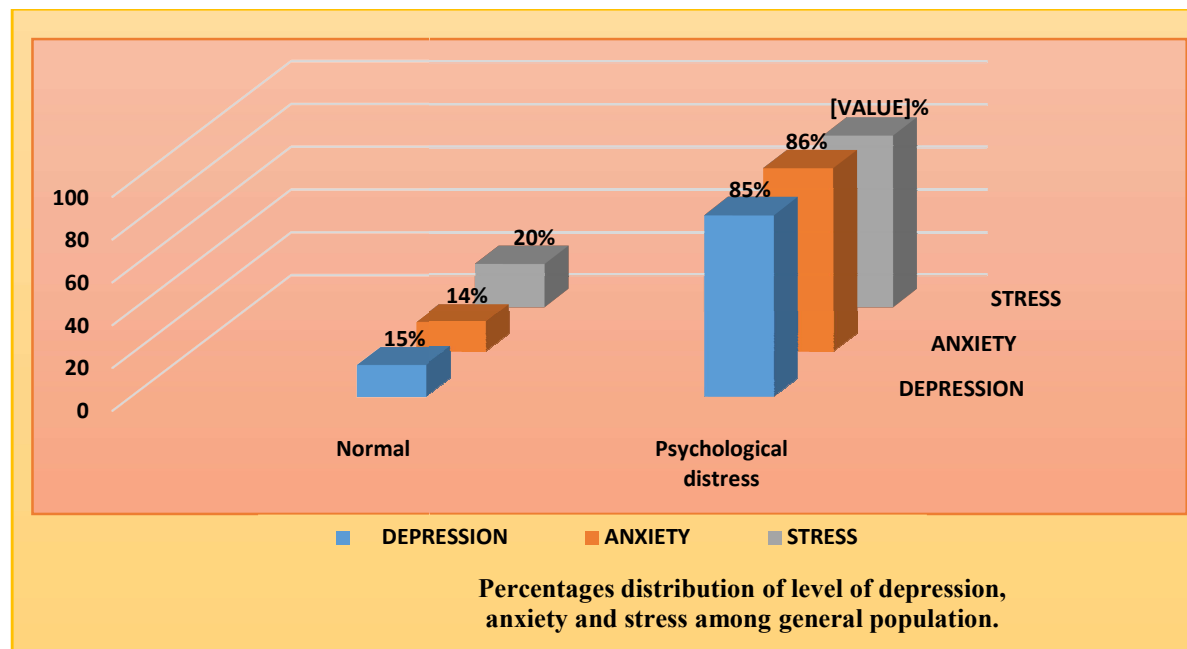


Table 2: Relationship between depression, anxiety and stress among general population.

N=250

SI No	Study Variable	Coefficient Of Correlation "r" Value	'P'Value Inference
01	Depression Vs Stress	0.809	Sig: (2-tailed)0.000 p<0.01 ** SS statistically significant
02	Stress Vs Anxiety	0.758	
03	Anxiety Vs Depression	0.728	

(SS- statistically significant at $p < 0.01$)

Table 2: The relationship of psychological impact among the general population on screening in the perspectives of depression, anxiety and stress on COVID-19 were identified. Regarding relationship between stress and anxiety the Pearson correlation "r" value is 0.758 which is statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, similarly on relationship between anxiety and depression $r = 0.728$ which is also statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ and the relationship between depression and stress $r = 0.809$ which is also statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

DISCUSSION:

Rajkumar R. P. (2020). COVID-19 and mental health: A review of the existing literature. Stated that the existing literature on the COVID-19 outbreak pertinent to mental health was retrieved via a literature search of the PubMed database. Published articles were classified according to their overall themes and summarized. Preliminary evidence suggests that symptoms of anxiety and depression (16–28%) and self-reported stress (8%) are common psychological reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic, and may be associated with disturbed sleep. A number of individual and structural variables moderate this risk. In planning services for such populations, both the needs of the concerned people and the necessary preventive guidelines must be taken into account.

The present study findings was supported by a similar study conducted by Samrat Singh Bhandar et.al (2021) with a total of 541 participants responded to the questionnaire. The median (IQR) of the DASS-21 item scale was found to be 16 (4-32). The percentage of the respondents who reported stress was 35.5% (n=149) anxiety, 32% (n=135), and depression, 34.7% (n=146).

Another study by Varshney M, Parel JT, Raizada N, SarinSK (2020) also stated that there were a total of 1106 responses overall approximately one third of respondents had significant psychological impact (IES-R score > 24). Higher psychological impact was predicted with younger age, female gender and co-morbid physical illness. Presence of physical symptoms and contact history predicted higher psychological impact, but did not reach statistical significance.

IMPLICATIONS:

1. The findings of the current study have certain implications, provision of targeted high-quality, timely, crisis-oriented psychological interventions for communities affected for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Enhanced awareness and diagnosis of mental disorders at the primary care level and improved access to psychological interventions are needed.
3. The urgency of appointing specially trained professionals like counselors and special educators to work along with the government officials and NGOs are required to provide timely support to the people who are in need and when required.
4. The use of electronic devices and applications to provide counseling can reduce the psychological damages caused by COVID-19, and can consequently promote social stability
5. Follow-up studies can be helpful in clarifying the mental state of the population in future due to covid-19.

LIMITATIONS:

1. The present study is limited to only on assessment of correlation between depressions, anxiety and stress in general people on covid-19.
2. The data are completely self-reported from the general public.
3. It's just a preliminary study with small sample size on general population, their impact on various aspects of day to day activities were not measured.
4. Snow-ball sampling technique was used due to covid-19 pandemic and lockdown concern.

CONCLUSION:

In less than a few months, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an emergency state globally. This contagious virus has not only raised concerns over general public health, but has also caused a number of psychological and mental disorders. According to our analysis, it can be concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic can affect mental health in individuals and different communities. Therefore, in the current crisis, it is vital to identify individuals prone to psychological disorders from different groups and at different layers of populations, so that with appropriate

psychological strategies, techniques and interventions, the general population mental health is preserved and improved. Public health emergencies can drastically affect individual's psychological health, which requires the attention, help and support of society and families.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST: NONE

SOURCE OF FUNDING: NIL

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