

How to cope with anxiety due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Abstract

BACKGROUND: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our daily lives. It has not only changed our daily routines and practices but also our behaviour to various situations. Social distancing which is necessary to break chain of spread of COVID-19 pandemic is creating a feeling of loneliness and anxiety moreover daily reports and statistics of deaths and people tested positive are creating a sense of fear in the population. A sense of discomfort and fear created due COVID-19 and the inability to cope with the situation is COVID anxiety. People already suffering from depression and anxiety may be more vulnerable to COVID anxiety. Vaccination which was the need of hour is available now but there are many myths and misconceptions related to vaccination in general population.

CONCLUSION: During these uncertain times people are facing all kinds of emotions including grief, fear, sadness, worry, anxiety and having a positive outlook and attitude is very important during these times we cannot succumb to the pressure we need to fight back and emerge stronger and set an example for the future generations.

KEYWORDS: Anxiety, corona virus, vaccination, social distancing and mental health

1 Introduction to COVID anxiety

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our daily lives. It has not only changed our daily routines and practices but also our behaviour to various situations. Social distancing which is necessary to break chain of spread of COVID-19 is creating a feeling of loneliness and anxiety moreover daily reports and statistics of deaths and people tested positive are creating a sense of fear in the population. Lack of oxygen cylinders, remdesivir injections, no space for cremation or burial grounds, no ventilator beds in hospitals and people losing their loved ones have triggered the anxiety and fear among people. A sense of discomfort and fear created due COVID-19 and the inability to cope with the situation is COVID anxiety. ¹

2 analysis of current situation

A. medical situation

Current situation of the month April is eye-opening as there is a drastic rise in COVID positive patients and incompetence of our current health care system to cope with it. People are dying in the worst conditions and social media and news channels reporting such conditions can cause a sense of fear among general population. People already suffering from depression and anxiety may be more vulnerable to COVID anxiety. Our frontline workers and doctors may lose hope and can have mental and emotional breakdowns and the fact they themselves having the fear of contracting the virus while treating patients make the situation even worse. Doctors are staying away from their near and dear ones and daily witness deaths of people though they are trying their best to save the patients. At such an alarming situation there is sense of pressure on the government also coping with situations where only limited amount of oxygen is available creating a sense of panic in population. ¹

B. General situation

People losing **their** near and dear ones creates a sense of grief in population and also the fear of getting infected by the virus and fear of not getting any hospital bed and treatment scares people. There are suicidal cases also reported due to such kind of situation. People have started questioning their spiritual beliefs and have lost hope in their God in the current situation. ²

C. migrant workers

Migrants from all over the country have lost their jobs during lockdown and have a responsibility to feed their family and have no more any source of income to feed their family which makes them more vulnerable to the situation. ³

D. students

Students during this uncertain period are finding it very difficult to focus on their studies and are unmotivated due to uncertainty in their future. **Exams** have been postponed and **cancelled** to a period of time when situation gets **normalized which** is hindering to quality of education the young generation of India is getting. Due long hours of online classes there is increased strain on eyes of students and due to no physical activity students are becoming lethargic and obese which can lead to many health problems in the future. As there is no in person meeting held due to COVID students find it hard to learn social skills and tend to become more isolated which can lead them to **over think situation** and affect their mental health. ⁴

E. businessmen

Many business have had a downfall due to lockdown so they are dealing with debts and losses which are adding to stress they have during COVID times and affecting their mental health. ⁴

F. Positive patients

People contracted with virus find it difficult to have a positive outlook during this situation they have a fear of losing their life and isolation make them more vulnerable as they are not able to meet their near and dear ones

As they need, they need their support to deal with the situation to stay isolated for 15 days with heavy doses of medication with no in person interactions and care affects patients in a major way. ⁵

H. Economy

Our economy is facing a downfall due to which our government is under pressure moreover people not following rules during these times increase the stress over government even more. ⁶⁻⁸

H. fear of vaccination

Vaccination which was the need of hour is available now but there are many myths and misconceptions related to vaccination in general population .people have fear whether

the vaccination is safe or not and are scared about their side effects which is preventing people from getting vaccinated which makes them more vulnerable to COVID. ⁹⁻¹²

3 symptoms indicating you are facing anxiety due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ⁸

- Insomnia or lack of sleep
- Breakdowns and emotional outbursts
- Feeling unmotivated
- Inability to follow your daily routine
- Feeling stressed and overburdened
- Nightmares
- Disturbed sleep cycle

Some tips to deal with COVID anxiety are as follows :

1. Listen and believe only to authentic source of information
2. Practicing Meditation and yoga will help to a great extent
3. Having a balanced diet
4. Following all protocols for prevention of COVID 19
5. Sleeping well
6. Keeping in touch with our near and dear ones through online sources
7. Make sure your friends and family are fine and are not suffering from any kind of stress
8. Exercise indoors
9. Pursue any kind of indoor hobby to keep yourself positive and creative during the period
10. Talk to a friend or a Family member when you feel low
11. Relax and have positive attitude
12. Connect with people and organizations through social media
13. Help financially or in any other way to combat this pandemic situation
14. Accept and understand the situation
15. Be kind to yourself and others
16. Don't shy away from asking for help
17. COVID Patients need keep strong willpower
18. Practice gratefulness and mindfulness which would make you feel better
19. Do a pre-planning in case you get contracted with the virus to avoid panicking at the time
20. In case of **severe** symptoms of anxiety; depression and fear do consult a specialized doctor.

4 Conclusion

During these uncertain times people are facing all kinds of emotions including grief ,fear, sadness, worry, anxiety and having a positive outlook and attitude is very important during these times we cannot succumb to the pressure we need to fight back and emerge stronger And set an example for the future generations .

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