

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic Disease Exposed with Mental Health in Turkey

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Abstract: *Aim:* The aim of the study was to investigate the knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) of COVID-19 in community.

Subjects and Methods: This is a cross-sectional community-based survey and conducted among the population of Turkish on their level of awareness of COVID 19. The survey based on structured questionnaire methods were conducted to survey the KAP level about COVID-19. A multi-stage stratified random sampling method was performed between March to June 2020, a total of 5500 persons were approached and 4422 (63.7% of males and 36.3% of females) (80.4%) participants completed the questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis.

Results: Of the total number of subjects surveyed, 90% of subjects recognized the term "COVID-19". Educational level increases awareness of COVID -19 virus. The majority 89% use medical masks and gloves to prevent against COVID-19 virus. Most people believe that there is no effective treatment or vaccine for COVID-2019, although, early prevention may help most patients contracted from the infection. In addition, a wide majority think that risk of COVID-19 is higher than AIDS or Cancer (70.6%). Over 88% people are afraid to travel due to COVID-19 virus and also majority 87% fearing to contact relatives or friend with COVID positive.

Conclusion: The survey revealed a high level of fatigue, stress and fear among the respondents. The recent experience with COVID-19 provided lessons on policy making.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, fear, depression, OCD, fatigue.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of COVID-19 has spread across worldwide countries. People and all type professionals exposed to corona 2019 (COVID-19) disease could feel fear, depression and fatigue. The COVID-19 disease is considered highly infectious, and the most common symptoms within 2–14 days include fever, fatigue, dry cough, myalgia, and dyspnoea, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing [1-2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as an international concern to be a pandemic [2]. In Turkey, the number of COVID-19 cases stably increases, resulting in total 185,245 cases, which 157,516 recovered and currently total 4.905 deaths as of June 19, 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global public health emergency and it poses a challenge to psychological resilience among the public. COVID-19 not only represents the appearance of a new virus, but it has also become an economic burden and psycho-social problem. Due to the pandemic many workplaces including factories, schools and universities have closed down. Preventive measures such as physical distancing from interpersonal relationships, wearing mask, self-isolation, travel restrictions and lockdown and the need for medical devices and products have been significantly increased [3]. In the face of such a global pandemic, many people might have faced with fear of health and safety for themselves, families and loved ones, as well as their jobs or finances. Meanwhile, the elderly, people who have chronic illnesses, diabetes, obesity and hypertension are more at risk.

The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic disease on mental health have been reported by several authors

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and have caused widespread concerns particularly related to fear, fatigue, depression and anxiety [4-5]. Fatigue, anxiety and fear concerning COVID-19 pandemic disease may be related to experiences of isolation and social exclusion can result risk of developing mental health problems [5-7]. Further, psychological factors are related to how people cope with the threat of infection, losing loved ones or fear of losing them may cause increased level of psychological distress.

METHODS AND SUBJECTS

This is a cross-sectional study at conducted at the community in Istanbul. A multi-stage stratified random sampling method was performed between March to June 2020, a total of 5500 persons were approached and 4422 (80.4%) participants completed the questionnaire. Data about the level of awareness of COVID19 were collected through a specially designed questionnaire. This study was approved by the Clinical Research Ethics Committee of Istanbul Medipol University, Institutional Review Board (Research Protocol and IRB# 10840098-604.01.01-E.14180).

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 25.0. Armonk, NY:IBM Corp) was used. The differences in proportions of categorical variables between 2 or more groups were tested by a Chi-square test. The level $p < 0.05$ was considered significant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of subjects who recognized the term "COVID-19" and considered COVID-19 risk is higher than for AIDS or Cancer. Most people believe that there is no effective treatment or vaccine for COVID-2019, although, early prevention may help most patients contracted from the infection. In addition, a wide majority think that risk of COVID-19 is higher than AIDS or Cancer (70.6%). Over 88% people are afraid to travel due to COVID-19 virus and also majority 87% afraid contacting people with COVID positive.

The isolation can help people to be affected from COVID-19 virus. Individuals who come in contact with those who have been infected with the COVID-19 virus should be immediately isolated, meanwhile the observation period of isolation is considered 14 days. The majority of participants consider the best methods of detecting COVID-19 was antibody tests, respectively.

The most effective ways of managing the COVID-19 pandemic crisis are effective isolation, mobility restrictions and physical social distancing measures. Although the physical distance and use of mask have been one of the most efficient interventions to control the spread of the infection in Turkey as described by WHO [2]. In any case, as one of the biggest challenges of this global pandemic mental health seems to be primarily urgent and essential in managing the current crisis [7].

Most common psychiatric problems faced during the pandemic are reported as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), depression, anxiety, stress, fear of filth, feeling infected and extreme washing and cleaning are the frequent ones [4-6]. Fear of COVID-19 infectious disease infection and excessive washing of face and hands are probably the commonest symptom of OCD and might be worsening with the worldwide spread of the virus. In current study, majority of participants feels mentally exhausted due to COVID-19 virus (57.9%). Further over 67% participants feel fatigue from the COVID-19 virus.

Furthermore, most of the guidelines are available to the public, healthcare providers, physicians, nurses, researchers and public health individuals by WHO [2]. Therefore, the public strictly should obey governmental rules and regulations regarding the preventive measures, managements and quarantine. Especially, isolation had very substantial negative impact on behaviors', social, education and economy of peoples.

Currently majority over 50% people believe that treatment against COVID-19 pandemic and psychological moods are considered vitamin C and D supplement, herbal medicine, honey, lemon, mint, selenium, black seed oil, anise seeds, cinnamon and ground cloves. However, the combination of above mentioned component maximizes the effect, and this combination should be recommended, since they do not have any side effect. Meanwhile, Favipiravir is an oral antiviral approved for the treatment of COVID-19 in Turkey. It selectively inhibits RNA polymerase, which is necessary for viral replication, which has commenced with a phase 3 clinical trial started in June 2020.

There are several measures to prevent against COVID-19 pandemic disease; firstly, people should avoid interacting with travellers coming from affected areas. Secondly, the public should read and obey official public guidelines and announcements produced in the country about COVID-19. Thirdly, people should

Table 1: Socio-Demographic, Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of COVID-19 Participants (N = 4422)

Variables		COVID-19 risk is higher than AIDS or Cancer		P Value significance
		Yes n(%)	No n(%)	
Recognize COVID-19 are fever, fatigue and dry				
	Yes	2745(87.9)	1193(91.9)	< 0.001
	No	379(12.1)	105(8.1)	
Age Group	<40	680(28.9)	460(34.9)	
	40-49	660(28.1)	370(22.9)	< 0.001
	=>50	153(6.5)	70(5.9)	
Gender	Males	2029(64.9)	787(60.6)	0.007
	Females	1098(35.1)	511(39.4)	
Educational level				
Occupation status	Primary Preparatory	581(18.6)	189(14.1)	
	Secondary	865(27.7)	278(6.0)	0.001
	University	1678(53.6)	831(63.9)	
	Sedentary	1654(7.1)	609(46.9)	
	Businessman	173(7.1)	78(6.0)	
	Manual Labor	577(9.9)	215(16.6)	
	House Wife	280(10.6)	87(6.7)	0.001
	Student	440(9.2)	309(23.8)	
Monthly Income				
	<5000	1218(39.0)	596(45.9)	< 0.001
	>5000-14999	1049(33.6)	347(26.7)	
	>15000	857(27.5)	355(27.3)	
Do you wear medical masks and gloves to prevent against COVID-19 virus?				
	Yes	2810(89.9)	1150(88.6)	0.001
	No	314(10.1)	148(11.4)	
Are you afraid travel due to COVID-19 Virus				
	Yes	2768(88.6)	1056(81.4)	0.001
	No	356(11.4)	242(18.6)	
Are you afraid contacting people with COVID-19 positive?				
	Yes	2729(87.3)	999(77.0)	0.001
	No	395(12.7)	299(23.0)	
Mentally feel exhausted				
	Yes	1810(57.9)	553(42.6)	< 0.001
	No	1314(42.1)	745(57.4)	
I get tired and fatigue				
	Yes	2097(67.1)	434(33.4)	0.001
	No	1027(32.9)	864(66.6)	

avoid going to crowded places such as shopping malls, cinemas and football matches and must keep as a physical distance as isolation, and finally, they should wash their hands and/or use disinfectants when they reach office or home after being outside. The most recent epidemiological study publications have provided several valuable lessons for policymaking by WHO [2].

The important role of mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic has been vital. The current situation proved that mental health providers such as psychiatrists and psychologists carry a very important role as to provide health education and guidance for disease prevention to the public as well as to spread awareness about the common psychological impacts of the pandemic. Mental health professionals in Turkey and worldwide have carried out various psychological services since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic such as psychiatric treatment, psychotherapy and counselling; psycho-education that involves teaching coping strategies to deal with the pandemic related psychological problems; helping and supporting patients with COVID-19 and their caretakers and health authority physicians and workers. The current pandemic crisis demonstrated the importance of such psychological services for public health.

Furthermore, Turkey has helped at least 125 countries with humanitarian aid during the COVID -19 pandemic, who asked for support for their struggle against the COVID-19 outbreak. During this pandemic phase, Turkey realized the importance of effective international cooperation in the face of global crises, though painfully. When considering the severity and the global nature of the outbreak, Turkey took early action on delivering help to other countries. So far, Turkey has met 125 countries' requests for masks, protective equipment, mechanical ventilators, medical equipment and devices as donation.

CONTRIBUTORS

AB, EM, MA and CCB were designed study. All authors approved the final version.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

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