

The Severity of Anxiety in Professionals Remotely Working from Home during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Description

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on public mental health besides playing havoc with one's physical health. Previous study aims to the existing gap in research concerning the impact of COVID-19 on professionals working from homes. The dramatic of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the global stage has left everyone feeling vulnerable and helpless. It originated in a wet market of Wuhan, China and then spread to infect the whole world.

It has affected as of 15 November >60 million with >1 million deaths worldwide, India accounting >9 million cases with a death toll exceeding 1.2 lakh. COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic by the WHO in March 2020. Many countries implemented various anti-epidemic measures, such as restricting travel for foreign nationals, closing down public spaces and offices, shutting down the entire transit system. Lockdown was inevitable to prevent the exponential rise of COVID-19. The WHO has also expressed its concern over the pandemic's mental health and psycho-social consequences. This unprecedented experience of 'home quarantine' under lockdown caused high prevalence of anxiety and depression as noted by an earlier Canadian study on the effects of quarantine after the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic. COVID-19 with its rapid transmission, high mortality rate and concerns about the future causes anxiety.

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a double-edged sword. Besides physical illnesses mental health is impacted consequent to physical distancing, self-isolation, fear, uncertainty, and a prolonged period of WFH. Coronavirus doesn't affect the brain directly but is catastrophic to mental health of all especially women in this situation. The individuals may experience

symptoms of psychosis, anxiety, trauma, suicidal thoughts, and panic attacks. Recent studies have similarly shown that COVID-19 affects mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, stress and post-traumatic stress symptoms. According to the Microsoft's latest Work Trend Index one-third of workers in India are facing increased burnout due to lack of separation between work and personal life. Anxiety, when above normal, weakens body's immune system and consequently increases the risk of contracting the virus.

WFH during the COVID-19 restrictions increased moderate to severe anxiety levels with females suffering at higher rates than their male counterparts. In these remotely working women, being married, staying in a joint family and having children heightened this increased moderate to severe anxiety risk.

COVID-19 pandemic has created an emergency like state globally. This contagious virus has not only raised concerns over general public health, but on causing a number of psychological and mental disorders. Lockdowns and remotely working from homes has adversely impacted the mental health of these professionals and disproportionately so of women. Depression is one of the most common symptoms of many serious mental illnesses faced during WFH. It is the second leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults. Suicidal acts result from a combination of biological, psychological, sociological, cultural and environmental factors.

It is imperative to assess how much women and men are affected differently and it's impact on their mental health to create effective and just policies to develop targeted working modifications, psychological and therapeutic interventions to improve the mental health of vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.