

## PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### Dear Editor,

Human civilization's existence is being troubled by the emergence of COVID-19 disease, and it's expeditiously spread impacting every sphere of society. Prophylactically, lockdown, and social distancing are the current strategies to curb the spread; nevertheless, it is pivotal to contemplate the implications of COVID-19 in a broader population's mental health (Jakovljevic 2020a,b). The consequences of COVID-19 with interventions are provided in Table 1. By the end of March 2020, the disease has engulfed 188 countries worldwide, resulting in the closure of schools, colleges, and universities, affecting 91.3% of students (Nicola. et al, 2020). Due to the closure of all outdoor activities, including sports, clubs, and routine meetings with friends, various types of disorders in children, such as sleeping disorders and eating disorders, have increased parental anxiety. Recent studies revealed that the children have also been encountering psychological and emotional problems because of the trepidation of being infected and the dread of their loved ones' death or their death (Cluver et al. 2020). Furthermore, several studies showed that one of serious implication of school closure is the increased rates of violence incidences against children. Media hype and fear have increased the stress for both parents and children, becoming challenging to pursue and long-term hypothesis. These challenges are heightened for those living in crowded households and having a low income. In addition, unemployment, loss of business, and wage cuts have resulted in heightened parenting stress as a result of the crisis's economic impact. Many cases have been reported of suicides by the children due to the financial constraints of their parents. A 14-year-old high school girl student from Kerala state in India has ended her life as her daily wager parents lost their jobs and could not buy a smartphone for her online classes (Naha 2020). A similar case of suicide of the 17-year-old daughter of a poor laborer was reported from Punjab state, who hanged herself due to distress over not having a smartphone for her online classes (Bhasin 2020). Another suicide case was reported from Punjab state, where a diploma of pharmacy course student committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in his residence who was depressed over the postponement of exams (Goyal 2020).

In this difficult time, the trepidation of those parents whose child is immunocompromised and having chronic disease, have escalated. Parents should keep attention regarding special care for these children, and they should effort to prevent the infection in their child by avoiding contact with sick people. Their medicines, exercises, and telehealth consultations must be on time. Parents or other caretakers should spend more time with them. In case the child is very small or both parents are working outside of the home or busy work from home, they should talk to grandparents to look after children, or ask for a mature babysitter from a trusted circle. Working or single parents should negotiate their situation with colleagues and boss during this time for flexible schedules and expectations; otherwise, they will remain ignorant of your responsibilities.

On the other hand, this hard time can be utilized as an opportunity to build a stronger relationship between parents and children. WHO, UNICEF, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and other national and international organizations are amalgamating together to provide child care resources and guidelines for the parents. The main focus of these resources is to deal with children's behavioral disorders, superintend the parenting stress, and create a positive and healthy relationship. In particular, these resources are structured based on vigorous shreds of evidence collected from different middle-income and low-income countries. By utilizing these resources and its effective implementation, parents should engage their children in exploring their hobbies such as online crafts, dance, cooking classes, etc. to keep their mind and bodies active. As pandemic creates mental calamity for all, so the emotional custody of children should be navigated by experts whenever it is required. Children's daily routine should be planned for various activities, including meals, sleeping, online classes, and entertainment, etc. with limited media exposure.

Working parents should share their responsibilities; if you are unable to focus on small work such as housekeeping, similar to your previous standard, then practicing self-compassion is essential. As a parent, it is advisable to plan some single time for yourself, because your mental and physical health directly impacts your children.

**Table 1.** The consequences of COVID-19 with interventions

COVID-19 repercussions	Stressors	Interventions
Mental Health/ anguish	Anxiety Depression Fear Worry Insomnia Hypersomnia Changes in behavioral	Yoga/meditation Well structure daily schedule Well connected with family and friend Counseling Positive attitude Cognitive behavioral therapy
Social impacts	Child abuse Domestic violence Lack of interpersonal relations over-crowded settings on the workplace where physical distancing is not feasible	Counseling Monitoring communication Give to other their individual space Physical distancing
Economic impacts	Job loss/fear to job loss Unemployment Salary cut Unable to manage family requirements	Right to employment Proper management of family budget priority to needs not to wants
Health Services	Pre-existed health issues Unable to visit hospitals	Online consultation with expert doctors Mobile hospitals Self-care Telemedicine

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