



## IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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**“Children are our most valuable natural resource” - Oliver Wendell Holmes**

**ABSTRACT:** The COVID-19 pandemic means that many of us are staying at home and doing less in terms of social interactions and exercise. This can have a negative effect on your physical and mental health. As countries introduce measures to restrict movement as part of efforts to reduce the number of people infected with COVID-19, more and more of us are making huge changes to our daily routines.

**Keyword:** Impact, Covid 19, Mental & Physical Health

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### INTRODUCTION:

The new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues take time to get used to. Adapting to lifestyle changes such as these, and managing the fear of contracting the virus and worry about people close to us who are particularly vulnerable, are challenging for all of us. They can be particularly difficult for people with mental health conditions.

In the World wide according to the Global population of children- This statistic shows the population of children aged 1 to 14 worldwid

from 1950 to 2100.

In 2100, the population of children globally is expected to be about 1.9 billion. In India, as per the provisional Census 2011 figures, India has recorded an aggregate child population of 158,789,287 which comprises of a rural child population of 117,585,514 and an urban child population of 41,203,773.

During Covid 19, the unforeseen disruption of the social committee and norms or regulation has affected the physical and mental health of the peoples which is including children, adolescent and other persons. The mental and physical health of children's and adolescent has been influenced through the various ways like unrivalled



condition or situation unexpectedly changed a way they are typically grow mental and physical health, learn, play, behavior, interaction with each other and control emotions. Children who are having previously mentally and physically illness like behavior disorder, mood disorder, depression, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and cerebral palsy, visual impairment, hearing impairment, and children with learning disabilities could be adverse impact during this stressful situation or condition. Mental illness and physical disease are leading the cause of disability in the worldwide in the children and adolescents. The sudden and unexpected changes induced by the lockdown are likely to create new difficulties and needs for children with disabilities and their parents. The pandemic is likely to have a large impact on the health of these children, including their physical, mental and social wellbeing. About 15 to 20% of children and adolescents in the world have mental health disorders or conditions. Nearly 55% of mental disorders start to affect the children by the age of 10 to 14. If left untreated, a child's mental development has been found to be drastically and detrimentally impacted. It is well established that mental health is one of the essential parts of human development and determines the outcome of a child's educational attainments and the potential to live fulfilling and productive lives.

Mental illness can affect children at any point during their childhood, but it most significantly affects them during adolescence. Among the several mental illnesses that can be prevalent in childhood, depression is one of the major leading causes of mental illness amongst children.

In 2016, an estimated 54,548 deaths were due to children and adolescent depression or suicide, which is the third leading cause of morbidity in this group. This emphasizes that adolescence is a period of vulnerability for the onset of mental health conditions. During COVID 19 has impact the children and adolescent around the world that is unprecedented situation or condition. The necessary guideline is provided by the government to prevent from covid 19 infection has been isolate and maintain social distance planning to protect from risk of infection. Various countries have followed the measures during lockdown and this period government has been closure of schools or colleges, educational activities and other physical activity. These circumstances are leading to stress, depression, anxiety and a feeling of hopelessness or helplessness in the children's and adolescent.

Due to the closing of schools, students' interaction and communication with school mates, play, exercises, and peer- activities are hindered, which have proven vital for the growth, development,



and learning of the young human minds. The children who are at most significant risk are the youngest ones as their brains are still developing and are being exposed to high levels of stress and isolation, which can lead to permanent abnormal development. Children exposed to stressors such as separation through isolation from their families and friends, seeing or being aware of critically ill members affected with coronavirus, or the passing of loved ones or even thinking of their own death from the virus can cause them to develop anxiety, panic attacks, depression, and other mental illnesses and physical illness.

The objectives of this review article are

1. To understand the impact of COVID-19 on mental and physical health of children an adolescent.
2. To identifying factors contributing adverse effect to their mental and physical health to propone interventions based on the guidelines and evidence-based practices.

**Review: Over all view of mental and physical health impact on children and adolescent**

The outbreak of COVID-19 has disrupted the lives of many publics across the world. The pandemic of covid 19 virus has imposed a sense of uncertainty, depression, stress and anxiety, and physical disease, as the world was unable to

predict or prepare for this crisis. It has caused a tremendous stress level among children, adolescents, and all students in general, primarily due to the closure of their schools and other activities. This stress may lead to mentally as well as physically undesirable adverse effects on the physical, learning and psychological health of children and adolescent. Children exposed to these incidents can precipitate the development of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, mood disorders, and other mental illnesses and physical illness like hearing and visual impairment and other disease. Distressing events such as separation from family and friends, seeing or being aware of critically ill members affected with coronavirus, or the passing of loved ones or even thinking of themselves perhaps dying from the virus would have a detrimental effect on the mental health. Additionally, the healthy daily routines of children have been disrupted due to the COVID-19, which contributes to the additional stress and sleeping difficulties that many children face. Uncertainty of their future ambitions, academics, personal relationships, and inactivity due to the pandemic poses a significant threat to their mental well-being and putting them at risk of drug abuse. COVID-19 can seriously leave a negative impact on children's mental health, just like other traumatic experiences humans may face. It can



lead to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. These causes are anxiety and fear in children because the virus threatens not just them but also their families and surroundings, especially as they see their parents working from home, leading to fear and shock.

### **Evidence of mental and physical health impact from the past outbreaks of covid 19 virus illness:**

Previous studies on severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), and Ebola have revealed that the disease causes severe emotional distress during the outbreaks. Unfortunately, studies were not adequately conducted on the children and adolescents during the past outbreaks to measure its impact on their mental health, but several parallels can be drawn. The situation of COVID-19 is comparable with the MERS and SARS, as similar claims made about the severity of MERS caused fear, worry, depression, and anxiety and physical illness among the public. A study on the SARS survivors with psychiatric disorders concluded that about 28% of the patients showed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and 19.6% of them had severe depression. This finding corresponds to the increased the depression and suicide deaths among SARS survivors, consisting of children, adolescent and

older adults from Hong Kong in 2003 and 2004. Among those MERS survivors, lower quality of life and poor hygienic condition was also noticed. Physical illness connected to the previous established outbreaks.

### **Factors affecting on mental and physical health of children and adolescent:**

During this pandemic covid 19 viruses, children, adolescent and their families have been exposed to direct or indirect factors that could exposure depression, stress and emotional disturbance and physical illness. The children's and adolescent and their parents are forcefully stay at homes and occupational workers are work from home. Several families lost their jobs or occupation and faced many financial problems during covid 19.

During this pandemic children's, adolescent and parents are consistently depression, fear, stress and anxiety due to not only getting infectious disease but also strictly stay at home and work through online as well as children's and parents. Most of families are faced the problem due to loss of job and financial loss and difficulties are arise to feed their children's. Many families are based on the school feeding children who are not having sufficient supplies of food at their family. However, these pandemics many families are loosed of loved one person and some families are isolated from their children or parents. Many



parents are working as frontline workers and health workers in the pandemic situation, their children are depressed, and stress, fear and anxiety and some parents are terminated from the organization.

**To intervene to alleviate the psychologically or mentally stress as well as physically tense:**

To encourage the children's, adolescent and families are towards the modification of behaviour and adopt the physical and mental exercise. Parents can directly influence the mental and physical health to their children's and adolescent. Parents are directing to their children about the guideline of the WHO and said that strictly followed them. The WHO have provided guideline and directing to the public that avoid rush public, maintain distance between other people and wear the mask during in and outside from the home and any person have some difficulties regarding this disease can avoid the close contact to other family member and facilitate the medical services. According the WHO to maintain the better hygienic condition consistently through repeated hand wash and use the protective wear mask. It has also provided the guideline to take off from the watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media, because consistently being information by news of the pandemic can be distressing. During

this pandemic, keep exercising regularly, practicing yoga or meditation, eating healthy, taking adequate and proper sleeping properly, and avoiding alcohol or drugs is key to maintaining the mental and physical health. It is also crucial that parents provide enough support to their children and help them to process the information about the pandemic because these interventions could help minimize their anxiety or fear maintain and keep mentally and physically healthy and stay safe.

According to the John Hopkins model is "RAPID" that include in the psychological test are following:

- R-Rapport and reflective listening, implemented throughout the interaction
- A-Assessing and evaluating the psychological needs
- P -Prioritizing the needs based on severity
- I-Intervening to mitigate distressing factors
- D-Disposition and distribution of intervention to stabilize the survivor

**Providing the counsellor to the children and adolescent by the educational system:** The educational system is emphasized the counsellor or providing and supporting counselling for the students through the online counselling according health care guideline and follow them. The



counsellor must be a licensed and have a master degree and experience in counselling that provide the counselling to the students that how to manage with covid 19 related depression, stress, fear and anxiety and trained the students in the coping skills and also providing individual and group therapy to the students. This service is provided to the students demand and based on the needs to improve in the mental health and support in psychological stress that objective is improving mental and physical health and feel stress free environment and live happy and healthy life style. The educational system can establish the team work that make a strategy for identifying the infected person and contaminated area that control the spread covid virus and follow the guideline according to the centre for disease control prevention. In this team include the following members are health care professional backgrounds and experiences, such as counsellor, clinical psychologist, dietician, public health department, physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, administrators, health and human services, international services center, human resources, admission offices, enrolment, and billing department, athletic department, and teachers. To reduce the distress experienced by students and faculty related to information technology issues, a technical team should be available continuously, and learning tutorial

videos should be shared with the end-users. The faculty should support the students and their parents through clear communication and assigning clear expectations and time to time providing psychological support and enhance the healthy life style.

The counsellor should provide the support to the students and should take a comprehensive assessment of students, who are involve in risk factor like poor mental health, psychological or mental issues, crisis situation, bereavement during covid, injury to self and other family member, life threatening situation, panic attack, rejected by the parents, financial problem, job loss etc. the counsellor should alleviate the stress regarding covid 19 and cope with telephonic communication and advice the family members to that constantly monitor the children's and adolescent behaviour and their response. Assess the adverse effect of their children that how to impact during covid and who are unable to contact with their counsellor. In this condition, parents are providing psychological support to the children's and help them to cope with their psychological or mental issues and control their condition to provide the more psychological support and education regarding covid stress and depression. Also provide the assurance to the children that feel stress free and encourage them and build their confidence and keep healthy and stay safe with



the enjoyment life and think positively and motivate them etc.

**Evidence based suggestion and recommendation to the children's and adolescent and their parents:**

Mental and physical health is depending on the physical activity, playing activity, emotions, psychological, merely absence of disease and social well-being of the human being. Mental and physical health depend on the activity of the children's, behaviour, thought, emotions, feelings etc. it is depending on the children response regarding to the covid stress, and depend on the tolerance power of their children's and how to adopt it and what should be taken the decision or action. Physically fitness is significant to our life and as well as mental health of the children and adolescent to the whole life event. Physical illness is developed, it's depended on the person body condition like any disease, genetically problems, and body activity, and also depend on the increasing body weight.

Mental illness is developed due to disruption of thoughts, changes in emotion, behaviour, and other develop depression, stress, fear, anxiety and constantly exposure to the tense and other mental disease. Mental and physical health can cause sudden or acute condition and it may be long exposure then cause chronic condition and much

alteration face in live situations. Psychological and physical health is inter-connected on each during the working occupation and depends on the nature of the disease. Mental and physical illness is developed then showing severe symptoms and other complications are arise such as depression, fear, anxiety, disturb thought process and hypertension, diabetes etc. if the person is constantly exposure to the mental of physical illness, then develop chronic illness that condition can increase the risk of psychiatric disorder or physical disorder and developing other complications. We need to maintain the balance between psychological or mental and physical health in the children's, adolescent and other social well-being.

We need to make the empowering the health system and education system that protect the children generation future and maintain the mental and physical health through the tangible of the health department. During this pandemic, we need to have sufficient resources like manpower, material, medicines and other in the crisis situation. This pandemic, we need more selecting the human resources in the health system, educational system as well as mental health department and need more counsellor that relief from the anxiety, fear, depression etc to the children's and adolescent and community.



Comprehensive school mental health systems are following:

1. Well-Trained Educators and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
2. Family-School-Community Collaboration and Teaming.
3. Needs Assessment and Resource Mapping.
4. Multi-Tiered System of Support.
5. Mental Health Screening.
6. Evidence-Based and Emerging Best Practices.
7. Data.

Whose children's and adolescent have insufficient knowledge regarding covid then increasing the fear, anxiety and depression related to covid so we encourage the children's and tell him that what are the reasons for separation/ isolate or home quarantine for the peoples then children's have definitely decrease the anxiety level and fear or depression etc. so children's and adolescents are required more knowledge about covid through the newspapers, magazines, mass media, and other electronic sources that are reliable and authentic news regarding the covid that will help them to improve the information and why should take the reasons for the separation or home quarantine and uses the necessary precaution from the covid pandemic situations. Parents and siblings are encouraging their children's and more talkative or group discussion

regarding the covid-19 among the family members and always learn from the covid-19 that how to protect himself and what necessary action should take to prevent him. Throughout, the situation children are less fear, anxiety and depression from the covid-19 and other reason that improving the knowledge regarding this pandemic situation. Parents are taught the children's that provide the information to the friends and other circle of the children and exchange the knowledge between us, this process is improving the knowledge each other and learn from it.

During Covid-19 parents are given the deeply knowledge regarding this pandemic situation and their children and adolescent are learn the guideline or instruction of the government and follow them. Parents are build the confidence and trust between the children and educational system can provide more counselling and depend on the need of the students that reassure the children and educate him that how to control emotions, anxiety, fear and depression etc. the educational system have the opportunity that consistently monitor the children activity through telephonic from the parents information and provide psychological support and emotional support maintain mentally and physically healthy body. Schools are developed the online education program for the children to learn new thinking and



new possibilities and adopt the system according to the time needs and help the children to adjust in the surrounding environment.

### **CONCLUSION:**

During this pandemic situation, children and adolescents are less affected and most of the

children are learn and keep improving the knowledge regarding covid-19 and using the coping mechanism skills and decision making. We are analysis the many study of the covid-19 impact on the mental and physical health of the children and adolescent more developing stress, anxiety, depression, fear etc. so children's are disturbing daily living activities, less sleeping, less appetite and not controlling their emotions and nightmares etc.

Whose children's and adolescents are receiving psychotherapy and interact with the counselor, they are feeling mood relax and less fear, anxiety, depression from the covid-19 and act something to keep healthy like mentally as well as physically health through the various activities like exercise, yoga, meditation, focusing and concentration, spiritual beliefs, and playing games, music, dancing etc.

### **DECLARATION:**

This paper has not been submitted elsewhere or is under review at another journal or not published

in other journals. The authors have no affiliation with any organization, with a direct or indirect financial interest in the subject matter discussed in the manuscript.

### **FOOTNOTES:**

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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