Covid-19 and Psychiatric Patients

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Pandemic Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing the face of psychiatry permanently.
Pandemic Impacts

• Psychological impacts of epidemic during the 2003 SARS outbreak and the 2014 Ebola outbreak.

  • Post-traumatic stress symptoms
  • Confusion
  • Anger

• People with a pre-existing mental health problem would be more vulnerable to experience adverse psychological effects.
Precipitating Factors

- Prolonged economic crisis
  - Homelessness
  - Suicide rates
  - Substance use disorders
- Social isolation
Precipitating Factors

• Household dynamics
  • Domestic violence
    • living alone or with young children not attending nursery or school
• The uncertainties around the virus
Psychological Outcomes

• Post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS)
• Depressive thoughts
• Despair
• Anxiety
• Loneliness
• Suicidal thoughts (stigma, …)
Psychological Challenges

- Medication/Appointments and COVID-19
- Eating disorders and COVID-19
- Autism and autism spectrum disorders
  - Stick to the social distancing, lockdown and isolation guidelines
  - Manage the changes and disruptions to their routine
  - Managing challenging behavior
Psychological Challenges

• Schizophrenia patients are at higher risk of:
  
  • Being contaminated
    
    • Oral hygiene deficits, poor self-care
  
  • Mortality
    
    • Diabetes type II, Pulmonary chronic disease, Hypertension/coronary heart disease, Smoking, Lower access to adequate medical care
Psychological Challenges

• Schizophrenia patients are at higher risk of:
  • Suffering a psychotic relapse
    • Stressful life event, changes of routine, interpersonal anxiety due to
      prolonged quarantine, Fear of contracting the disease, Lack of access
      to regular psychosocial interventions or medication
Psychological Challenges

Neurocognitive and Neurodegenerative disease

• About 36% of cases develop neurological symptoms
  • Dizziness, Headache, Impaired consciousness, Seizure
  • Olfactory (85.6%) and Gustatory (88.0%) dysfunctions.
  • Cerebrovascular ischemia
  • Guillain-Barré syndrome, Miller-Fisher syndrome (3–10 days)
Psychological Challenges

Neurocognitive and Neurodegenerative disease

• Direct viral encephalitis
• Systemic inflammation
• Peripheral organ dysfunction (liver, kidney, lung)
• Cerebrovascular changes
Psychological Challenges

Neurocognitive and Neurodegenerative disease

- One third of patients at the time of discharge have evidence of cognitive impairment and motor deficits.
- Experience neurodegeneration in the following years (Delayed pandemic)
Psychological Challenges

• Staying well and monitoring health at home
  • How can they stay well?
  • How they can monitor mental health at home?
  • How can a carer for someone with dementia monitor their symptoms?
  • How can they cope better with staying home?
  • How can they get help for problems with smoking and drinking?
  • How do they stop feeling overwhelmed by all the news about COVID-19?
New Psychiatric Presentations

• New type of mass trauma
  • Significantly affects every aspect of individuals’ daily lives
  • Global in scope
  • Individuals witness the imminent life-threatening danger through electronic media and television in most cases.

• COVID-19 related delusions

• Social anxiety due to the fear of spread
New Psychiatric Presentations

Brain biotypes and human connection

• COVID-19 stands to threaten all layers of Maslow’s Hierarchy
  • Physiological needs
  • Safety
  • Love and belonging
  • Esteem need (Feel respect for our self and others)
  • Self-actualization
New Psychiatric Presentations

Brain biotypes and human connection

• “Rumination” brain style

• “Anhedonia” brain style

• “Threat dysregulation” brain style
New Psychiatric Presentations

• “Rumination” brain style
  • Repetitively and passively focusing on the experience of distress
  • Dependency and neediness, being perseverative on worries and negative events, aggressive
  • Sense of vulnerability to illness and health-related anxiety
  • Increased need for social support while simultaneously encouraging social friction
New Psychiatric Presentations

• “Anhedonia” brain style
  • Failure of experiencing pleasure from activities or stimuli once enjoyed.
  • Anticipatory reward deficits
  • By “vicious cycle,” sources of stimulation become increasingly limited
  • In Pandemic, experience an even greater degree of amotivation to connect with others.
  • Experience exacerbated threat to their core need for human connection during COVID-19
New Psychiatric Presentations

• “Threat dysregulation” brain style
  • Bias towards attending to threatening stimuli in their environment
  • Hyperactivation of the amygdala and hypoactivation in the prefrontal cortex
  • Withdraw from social relationships and connections
  • Think and act more negatively towards others