



'CORONA' A MAJOR CAUSE OF STRESS

DEBASHREE SINHA

COVID-19

- * A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new strain of coronavirus.
- * The disease caused by the novel coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, China, has been named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) – ‘CO’ stands for corona, ‘VI’ for virus, and ‘D’ for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as ‘2019 novel coronavirus’ or ‘2019-nCoV.’
- * The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold.

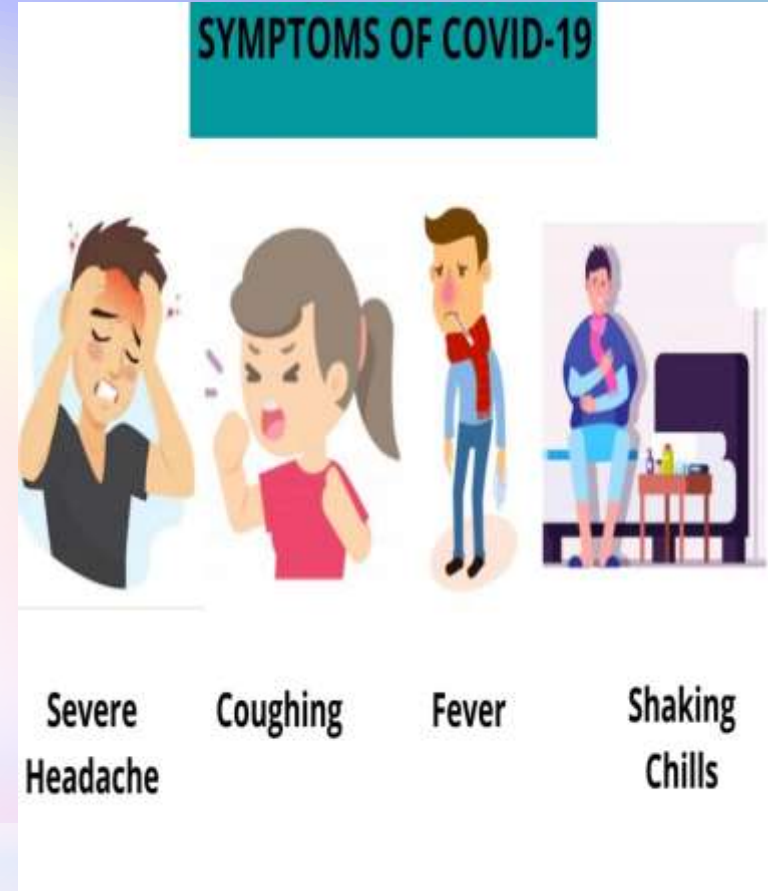


ORIGIN

The new virus, a global threat (Wang, 2020) caused by a novel corona virus first detected in December 2019 around a seafood market in the Chinese city of Wuhan Hubei Province (Nishiura, 2020) is by far the largest outbreak of atypical pneumonia since the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003.

SYMPTOMS

The new virus with symptoms of infection including fever, chills, cough, sore throat, breathing difficulty, myalgia, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea was named as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome – Corona Virus (SARS-CoV2) or novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), was designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11th February 2020 as coronavirus disease –19 (abbreviated “COVID-19”) and officially declared it as a pandemic on 11th March 2020 (WHO, 2020).



LOCKDOWN



- * Closer home, a nationwide lockdown has been enforced in India to tackle the spread of the Coronavirus, and people find themselves enmeshed in varying degrees of quarantine - either self-isolation at home or mandated quarantine to prevent contagion.
- * In lockdowns, public spaces are closed, movement outside homes are restricted and major roads of transport might be closed, all of which might negatively affect our physical-psychological health.

Prolonged social isolation

Our primary strategy to reduce the spread of the virus - adds another layer of risk. Our bodies are not designed to handle social deprivation for long. Past studies suggest that people forced to “shelter in place” will experience more depression. Those living alone and lacking social opportunities are at risk. Loneliness breeds depression. Families, who must navigate unusual amounts of time together in confined spaces, may experience more conflict, also increasing risk.



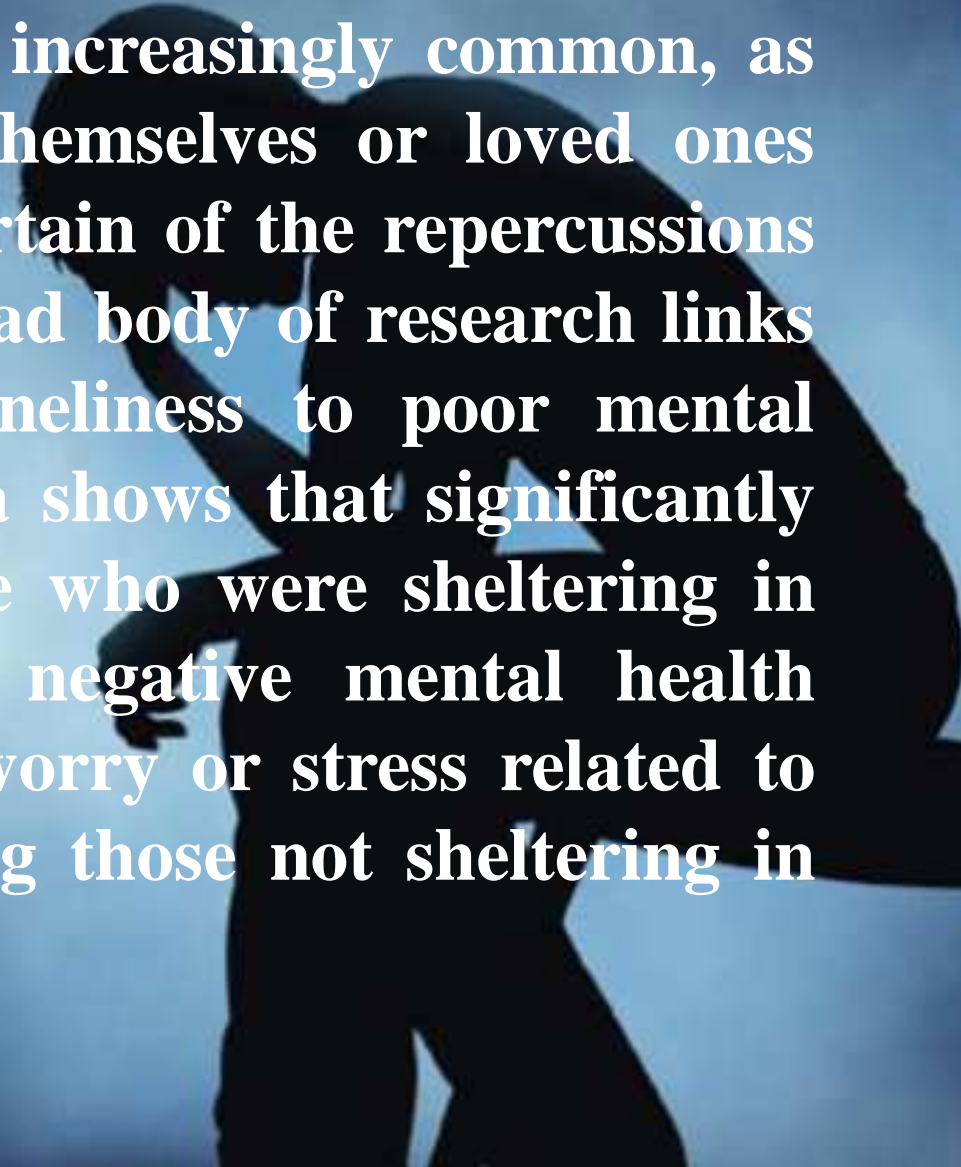
Financial Distress



As the pandemic wears on, it is likely the mental health burden will increase as measures taken to slow the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, business and school closures, and shelter-in-place orders, lead to greater isolation and potential financial distress. Though necessary to prevent loss of life due to COVID-19, these public health measures expose many people to experiencing situations that are linked to poor mental health outcomes, such as isolation and job loss.

Feeling of anxiety and restlessness

Feelings of anxiety are increasingly common, as people are fearful of themselves or loved ones falling ill and are uncertain of the repercussions of the pandemic. A broad body of research links social isolation and loneliness to poor mental health; and recent data shows that significantly higher shares of people who were sheltering in place (47%) reported negative mental health effects resulting from worry or stress related to coronavirus than among those not sheltering in place (37%).

A silhouette of a person in a crouching or hunched position, suggesting anxiety or stress. The person is facing left, with their head down and hands near their face. The background is a light blue gradient.

Negative mental health



With the world battling one of the biggest health emergencies in recent times, the coronavirus has brought with it a mental health pandemic as well. The uncertainty of the lockdowns across the world along with the fear and anxiety of the disease has taken a toll on mental health of a greater number of people. Negative mental health effects due to social isolation may be particularly pronounced among older adults and adolescents, as these groups are already at risk for depression or suicidal ideation.

Depression

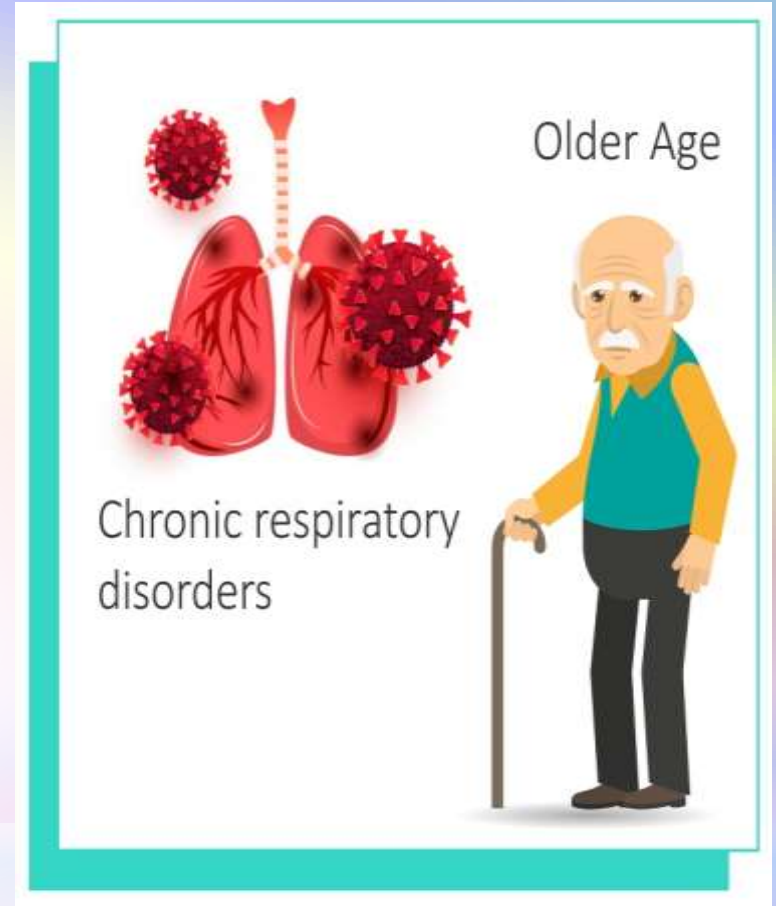
In present situations where personal choices of activities are constrained, such as during periods of social isolation and lockdown, this natural mood regulation is impaired which might result in depression. The current lockdown strategies used by different countries to control the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to cause even more depressions. Research shows that feelings of helplessness, loneliness and fear of being socially excluded, stigmatised or separated from loved ones are common in any epidemic, while prolonged stress, boredom and social isolation, as well as a lack of outdoor play, can lead to a higher number of mental health conditions in children, such as anxiety and even depression.



Vulnerable populations

We know that over 95% of these deaths occurred in those older than 60 years. More than 50% of all deaths were people aged 80 years or older.

We also know from reports that 8 out of 10 deaths are occurring in individuals with at least one underlying co-morbidity, in particular those with cardiovascular diseases/hypertension and diabetes, but also with a range of other chronic underlying conditions.



Effects on Young Adults



- * Young people's formal education, where they have access to it, has been severely impacted by the pandemic. According to the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 107 countries have implemented nationwide school closures, impacting over 861.7 million children and youth.
- * Young people are also affected by closures of non-formal education opportunities, which deprives them of social engagement with their peers and educators. Prolonged periods of closures and movement restrictions may lead to additional emotional unrest and anxieties.
- * Adolescent and youth, especially adolescent girls and young women, who already tend to face very high levels of domestic and intimate partner violence, may experience even higher levels of violence driven by quarantine and isolation.
- * Many vulnerable young people, such as young migrants, young refugees, homeless young people, those in detention, and young people living in crowded areas such as townships or slums, live in conditions that put them at greater risk of contracting COVID-19.

A piece of brown cardboard with a jagged hole in the center. The hole is roughly horizontal and has irregular, torn edges. To the right of the hole, a piece of the same cardboard is rolled up into a cylinder, with one end open. The background is a solid, textured brown color.

Coping Strategies

Stay informed—but don't obsessively check the news

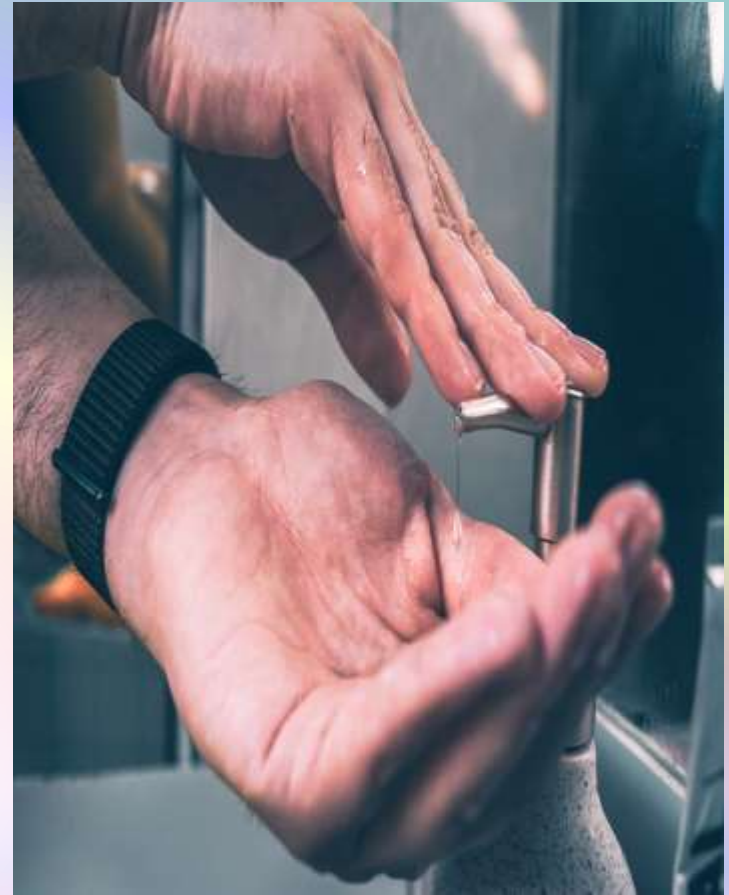
It's vital to stay informed, particularly about what's happening in your community, so you can follow advised safety precautions and do your part to slow the spread of coronavirus. But there's a lot of misinformation going around, as well as sensationalistic coverage that only feeds into fear. It's important to be discerning about what you read and watch.



Focus on the things that we can control-

We can't control how severe the coronavirus outbreak is in our city or country, but you can take steps to reduce our own personal risk (and the risk we'll unknowingly spread it to others), such as:

washing hands frequently (for at least 20 seconds) with soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Stay connected—even when physically isolated

Make it a priority to stay in touch with friends and family. If you tend to withdraw when depressed or anxious, think about scheduling regular phone, chat, or Skype dates to counteract that tendency.

***Social media can be a powerful tool—not only for connecting with friends, family, and acquaintances—but for feeling connected in a greater sense to our communities, country, and the world. It reminds us we're not alone.**



Take care of your body and spirit

❖ This is an extraordinarily trying time, and all the tried-and-true stress management strategies apply, such as eating healthy meals, getting plenty of sleep, and meditating. Beyond that, here are some tips for practicing self-care in the face of the unique disruptions caused by the coronavirus.

❖ Maintain a routine as best you can. Even if you're stuck at home, try to stick to your regular sleep, school, meal, or work schedule. This can help you maintain a sense of normalcy.



Relaxation practice

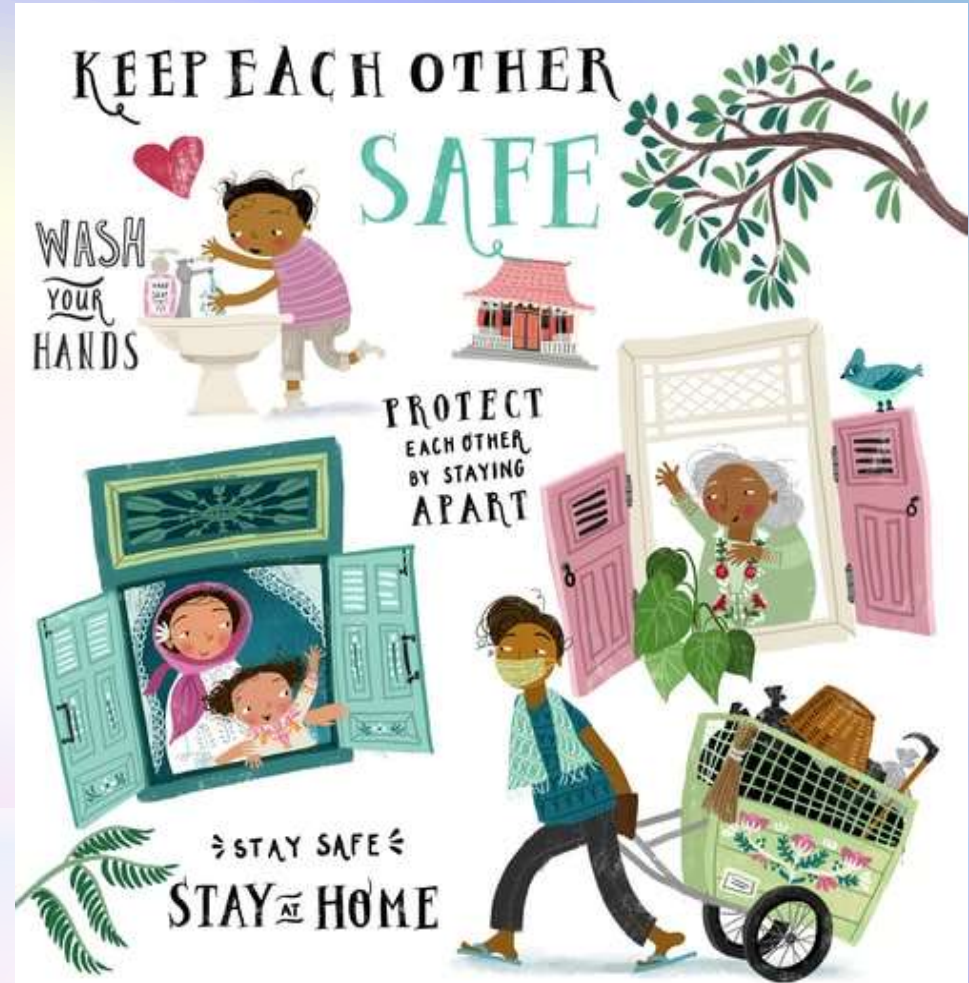
If you can't
go outside,
go inside.



When stressors place our nervous system out of balance, relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and yoga can bring us back into a state of equilibrium. Regular practice delivers the greatest benefits if we can manage even a little time every day.

Be kind to others

An infectious disease is not connected to any racial or ethnic group, so speak up if you hear negative stereotypes that only promote prejudice. With the right outlook and intentions, we can all ensure that kindness and charity spread throughout our communities even faster than this virus.



THANKING YOU