

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) and Mental Health in the Community

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Introduction

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), SARS-CoV-2, or novel coronavirus is a new infectious virus causing a deadly outbreak of respiratory disease. This viral disease was declared as a global health emergency and a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020. It has resulted in more than 766,332 deaths globally since the first case report (WHO, 2020). According to the most recent data from the department of labor, more than 22 million people have lost their jobs due to the lockdown in the United State of America. Many have lost their beloved ones whom they were not allowed to be present in their funeral, which in turn can cause mental disorders including acute stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and/or suicide on the bereaved (Starace and Ferrara, 2020; USA,2020).

World health organization had announced that the COVID-19 outbreak has posted an emerging serious challenge for the mental health services around the globe. Confirmed and suspected cases of the COVID-19 may experience fear of severe disease consequences and the contagion. COVID-19 also affects both the management of mental health patients' follow up and of new cases who need psychiatry services. A population survey from India on March 2020 indicated that more than 80% of the Indian population needs mental health care during the outbreak of COVID-19 (Gao *et al.*, 2020).

Patients with a mental disorder also need strong psychosocial and family support, in addition to biological intervention. Thus, improper management of mental disorders and inability to identify it, early when combined with a lack of social and community support, can be despair and affects the overall quality of life (Wang *et al.*, 2020; WHO, 2020; Xiang *et al.*, 2020).

The different measures which have been taken to control the transmission of COVID-19 in the community, such as the closing of school, refraining gathering, social distancing, and being in quarantine have resulted in the emergence of mental health problems in the population as reported in previously published study (Brooks *et al.*, 2020). This may be due to idleness, excess fear of having COVID-19, and lack of strong family support during the quarantine. Persons may experience loneliness, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and stress-related disorders, which may lower treatment adherence (Shevlin *et al.*, 2020; WHO, 2020).

Psychosocial problems related to a coronavirus pandemic can cause mental and behavioral disorders. A preliminary public survey conducted in Wuhan China in 2020 on mental health problems during the COVID-19 outbreak reported that the magnitude of depression, anxiety disorder, and both depressions and anxiety disorder was 48.3%, 22.6%, and 19.4%, respectively (Gao *et al.*, 2020; Roy *et al.*, 2020).

Combination of mental disorder and COVID-19 can also increase the risk of the pandemic transmission in societies, hampering hormonal regulation in the body, increasing the burden on hospital and complicating the treatment option of COVID-19 (Rajkumar, 2020; Xiang *et al.*, 2020; Yao and Xu, 2020).

In Ethiopia, the transmission of COVID-19 is rapidly increasing all over the country, with the highest report from the capital city, Addis Ababa. The strong values of the society that includes living and sharing together are challenged due to the pandemic. These measures may limit their interaction with each other, which could lead to increased feelings of anxiety, loneliness, hopelessness, and suicide. A satisfying social relationship is essential for the mental and



emotional health of society (Asefa, 2020; Tekle *et al.*, 2020).

Copying strategies during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

It is normal to feel anxious and express an emotional reaction toward this pandemic. However, the pervasive experience and long-lasting emotional reaction may need special attention. Generally, the following tips may be important to maintain and prevent the further impact of coronavirus on mental health, according to WHO, 2020 (WHO, 2020).

Working on a healthy lifestyle: practicing adequate and regular sleep pattern is important for a restorative, homeostatic function and appears to be crucial for normal thermoregulation and energy conservation. Eat healthy food; avoid any substance and regular physical exercises (WHO, 2020).

Give attention to your body, feelings, and spirit:

Expression of emotional symptoms is common during this pandemic and it should be only for a short period and not pervasive. Talking about your emotion to the outbreak, sharing appropriate health information, and praying are important measures during an infectious disease outbreak (WHO, 2020).

Decreasing the frequency of hearing about the pandemics from different sources:

minimize watching, reading, and listening to news about COVID-19, which causes you to feel anxious or distressed. It is better to seek information only from trusted sources, which can help to take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and your loved ones (WHO, 2020).

Maintain healthy lifestyles in quarantine:

engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing, exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines, and eat healthy food. Stay connected through telephone, e-mail, social media, or video conference with a loved one and your children (WHO, 2020).

In addition to the recommendation of World Health Organization, one study suggested that a practical considerations for the current pandemic need to focus on the individual mental health status in the context of the larger social environment at household level,

with an emphasis on increasing awareness of the range of possible psychosocial responses during COVID-19 global pandemic such as anxiety and depression, providing access to psychological help, self-care and sustained engagement are pivotal to address mental and psychosocial aspects of COVID-19 (Chew *et al.*, 2020).

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Competing interests

The author declares that there are no competing interests

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