



## COVID-19: A Long-Term Tale of Mental Health Extortion

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### To the Editor,

I read with interest the study by Shweta et al. on the Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on the mental health of children and adolescents, which has brought to light a situation that is causing alarm among all.<sup>1,2</sup> I aim to share my views about the difficulties and challenges that children and parents encounter at the Department of PMR at Kalawati Saran Child Hospital, which is affiliated with Lady Hardinge Medical College in New Delhi. The psychological stress of being confined in homes and institutions may be worse than the virus's physical torment. School closures, a lack of outdoor activity, and irregular eating and sleeping habits are all likely to disrupt children's typical patterns, leading to monotony, discomfort, agitation, aggravation, and a range of neuropsychiatric symptoms. The Covid-19 outbreak had a significant impact on these children, making them more aggressive and less social. Despite the fact that most children have extra time to connect with their parents as a result of the lockdown<sup>3</sup>, but SARS-CoV2 is more likely to damage unattended children with intellectual impairments and problems, such as autistic spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

In the statement, it is said that children's appropriate well-being is dependent not only on dietary and medical treatment, but also on good parental companionship, as the notion of nuclear families has posed a threat to their mental well-being in recent decades. A vicious cycle of psychological stress, forced home-stay due to a pandemic, and lifestyle changes will compound the detrimental effects on a child's overall health.<sup>4</sup>

Children confined during pandemics, according to Sprang and colleagues, may acquire a variety of symptoms linked with psychological stress and disorders, such as anxiety, acute stress disorder,

adjustment disorder, and post-traumatic stress symptoms.<sup>5</sup> Children with intellectual disabilities, as we all know, require particular care and attention from an early age. A child's physical and cognitive maturation occurs when he or she develops from 3 to 10 years old.<sup>6</sup>

To reduce the psychosocial effects of COVID-19 on children and adolescents, proactive and focused therapies may be given. Parents, doctors, psychologists, social workers, hospital managers, government officials, and non-governmental organisations all play important roles in the mission's success. Teaching children how to manage with anxiety and other mental health issues may help them grow into confident and resilient adults, making our society a better place for everyone. In order to recognise early indications of mental health concerns, caregivers and instructors must be educated about the possible mental health challenges of children and adolescents in the aftermath and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We acknowledge the enormous sacrifice of our children and family that gives us the strength to continue our tireless effort to combat this pandemic.

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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