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Utilization of Teleconsultation: Mitigation in handling mental disorders in the COVID-19 era

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Ethical statement

This article did not have any research ethical consideration as authors did not perform research with human or animal subjects.

Data availability

This article has no data openly available.

Title Page

Utilization of Teleconsultation: Mitigation in handling mental disorders in the COVID-19 era

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Utilization of Teleconsultation: Mitigation in Handling Mental Disorders in the COVID-19 era

COVID-19 pandemic caused many cases to the unwanted thing, e.g., death. This condition suddenly occurs, when all the countries are not ready to face this. A virus with a size of 100 nanometers can paralyze the world conditions nowadays. Thousands of cases are spread around the world, and millions of people are isolating themselves. Some countries are experiencing lockdowns and global citizens are now enveloped in fear, worry and anxiety (Ahorsu et al., 2020). Who knows when this condition will end? All are waiting for drugs that can provide solutions to this disease.

The social impact of this pandemic is a change in community behaviour. This condition triggered panic buying, public panic will worry about limited food supplies so that demand increases. A rare phenomenon happening in the world. Various reports in the media related to the spread, the danger of this virus to the unavailability of drugs for this disease. In addition, psychosocial consequence of the COVID pandemic is fear on all individuals worldwide (Pakpour & Griffiths, 2020).

Broad media coverage of the current epidemic can affect the physical and psychological response of the community to the threat of infectious diseases, which may add to the worries (Ho, Chee, & Ho, 2020). Excessive anxiety can cause immunity to decline until eventually got sick. Those who are sick or quarantined may experience shame, guilt or bad stigma in the community. In addition, following this pandemic gave effect several communities seem to develop a new mutual discrimination within the Asian/Chinese societies (Lin, 2020).

This pandemic has an impact on people's mental health. A survey was carried out in China during the COVID-19 initial outbreak. The study found that 53.8% of respondents rated the psychological impact of this outbreak as moderate or severe; 16.5% reported experiencing moderate to severe depressive symptoms; 28.8% reported moderate to severe anxiety symptoms, and 8.1% reported moderate to severe stress levels (Wang et al., 2020). Other studies also report a high psychological prevalence with longer quarantine duration correlated with depressive symptoms (Hawryluck et al., 2004).

Another impact of the outbreak occurred in the economic field. Many closures of service providers and industries that result in financial losses, the risk of unemployment which certainly increases negative emotions for individuals (Van Bortel et al., 2016). Likewise, health workers as well as health service providers are able to cause depression due to fatigue while on duty. A study reported that health workers who served the earliest patients, such as medical staff and ambulance workers, showed increased depression and anxiety (McAlonan et al., 2007). Some countries that experienced this outbreak earlier (China and Singapore), took steps in the form of emergency psychological crisis interventions for people affected by COVID-19. The psychological defence is a supporting factor for the recovery of COVID-19 patients. It is therefore important to encourage prevention of these mental disorders.

Nowadays, people really need an understanding of mental health to be psychologically prepared. This can be done by the government by providing psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is able to provide counselling services in the community through teleconsultation. This service can use several online-based facilities, video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, WeChat or via phone for free. Technically, the government can provide a call center (assistance hotline) to facilitate services. The virtual platform will be very useful for patients who are infected and treated in

isolation rooms including those who are isolated at home, health workers and the public who need information. Psychotherapy can interact and support the patient's condition and health care workers. Mental health service development lessons have been implemented in China where online mental health services were available during COVID-19 (Liu et al., 2020). Surely the confidentiality of participants data must be kept properly.

The social conditions of the people who are now panicked and paranoid need an education from a psychiatrist. Education about mental health is very much needed, especially about a positive mindset, stress management and relaxation techniques. The focus of the current government is more on preventing physical and biological transmission and handling of COVID-19 cases, but the handling of the social impact of the outbreak is still limited. The government needs to collaborate with all parties. Mental health teams are needed to provide mental health support to patients, health workers and the community. Strengthening psychological defences can help countries fight against this virus. Implementation of this idea can be done through the provision of voluntary psychotherapy, call center support (free cost) and online-based facilities, video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and WeChat.

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Author's Response To Reviewer Comments

Close

Dear Editor

Based on your suggestion, i have add the following references into the manuscript.

Ahorsu, D. K., Lin, C. Y., Imani, V., Saffari, M., Griffiths, M. D., & Pakpour, A. H. (2020). The Fear of COVID-19 Scale: Development and Initial Validation. *International journal of mental health and addiction*, 1-9.

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Date: May 15, 2020
To: "Haerawati idris" haera@fkm.unsri.ac.id
From: "Masood Zangeneh" masood.zangeneh@gmail.com
Subject: Article

Dear Ms idris:

Congratulations, your article titled "Utilization of Teleconsultation: Mitigation in handling mental disorders in the COVID-19 era" is approved. Your article will appear in Volume (TBD) Issue (TBD) of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION (IJMA). We hope to receive more submissions from you.

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Editor-in-Chief
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Haerawati Idris <haera@fkm.unsri.ac.id>

Article Feedback

1 pesan

Masood Zangeneh <em@editorialmanager.com>
Balas Ke: Masood Zangeneh <masood.zangeneh@gmail.com>
Kepada: Haerawati idris <haera@fkm.unsri.ac.id>

12 Mei 2020 19.41

Dear Ms idris:

COMMENTS FOR THE AUTHOR:

This is an interesting commentary but the authors need to add some more references. Please add the following references.

Ahorsu, D. K., Lin, C. Y., Imani, V., Saffari, M., Griffiths, M. D., & Pakpour, A. H. (2020). The Fear of COVID-19 Scale: Development and Initial Validation. *International journal of mental health and addiction*, 1-9.

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Article

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15 Mei 2020 21.43

Balas Ke: Masood Zangeneh <masood.zangeneh@gmail.com>

Kepada: Haerawati idris <haera@fkm.unsri.ac.id>

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Utilization of Teleconsultation: Mitigation in Handling Mental Disorders in the COVID-19 Era

Haerawati Idris¹ 

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many undesirable effects, including death. The COVID-19 outbreak occurred suddenly, and many countries were ill prepared to face it. Community behaviour has been altered due to the pandemic. Uncertainty surrounding the disease triggered panic buying; public panic caused additional worry about limited food supplies, and thus demand increased. World economies have also felt the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. Owing to the measures put in place to address the spread of COVID-19, many service providers and industries were closed, resulting in financial losses, and the risk of unemployment was elevated, which inevitably increased negative emotions in individuals. A psychosocial consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is worldwide fear. Because psychological defence is a supporting factor for the recovery of COVID-19 patients, it is important to encourage prevention of mental stress. Psychotherapy is able to provide counselling services to the community through teleconsultation. Strengthening psychological defences can help countries fight against this disease.

Keywords Mitigation · Teleconsultation · COVID-19 · Mental disorder

The COVID-19 outbreak occurred suddenly, and many countries were ill prepared to face it. Today, the world has been paralyzed by a virus 100 nm in size. Millions of cases have spread around the world, and billions of people are isolating themselves. Some countries are experiencing lockdowns, and global citizens are now enveloped in fear, worry, and anxiety (Ahorsu et al. 2020). Who knows when this condition will end? All the world over, people are waiting for drugs that can provide solutions to COVID-19.

Community behaviour has been altered due to the pandemic. This pandemic triggered panic buying; public panic caused worry about limited food supplies, and thus demand increased, which was a phenomenon that occurred worldwide. The media has been relating various

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reports about the spread and the danger posed by COVID-19 as well as the current unavailability of drugs to treat it. Unsurprisingly, a psychosocial consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is worldwide fear (Pakpour and Griffiths 2020).

Broad media coverage of the current epidemic can affect the physical and psychological response of the community to the threat of infectious diseases, which may increase people's worries (Ho et al. 2020). Excessive anxiety can cause a decline in the immune system's ability to stave off infections. Those who are sick or quarantined may experience shame, guilt or stigma in the community. In addition, in the wake of this pandemic, several communities have developed a new mutual discrimination within as well as against Asian/Chinese societies (Lin 2020).

This pandemic is having an impact on people's mental health. A survey was conducted in China during the initial COVID-19 outbreak. The study found that 53.8% of respondents rated the psychological impact of this outbreak as moderate or severe, 16.5% reported experiencing moderate to severe depressive symptoms, 28.8% reported moderate to severe anxiety symptoms, and 8.1% reported moderate to severe stress levels (Wang et al. 2020). Other studies also report a high psychological prevalence of longer quarantine duration correlated with depressive symptoms (Hawryluck et al. 2004).

World economies have also felt the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. The widespread closures of service providers and industries have resulted in financial losses and increased the risk of unemployment, which certainly increases negative emotions for individuals (Van Bortel et al. 2016). Likewise, health care workers and health service providers can become depressed due to fatigue while on duty. A study reported that high-risk health care workers, such as medical staff and ambulance workers, who treated infected patients showed increased depression and anxiety (McAlonan et al. 2007). Some countries that experienced this outbreak early on (China and Singapore) took steps in the form of emergency psychological crisis interventions for people affected by COVID-19. Psychological defences are a supporting factor for the recovery of COVID-19 patients. It is therefore important to encourage prevention of these mental health disorders.

Nowadays, people really need an understanding of mental health to be psychologically prepared. The government can help accomplish this by providing access to psychotherapy, which is able to provide counselling services in the community through teleconsultation using several online-based facilities/video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom and WeChat, or via phone for free. Technically, the government can provide a call center (assistance hotline) to facilitate services. The virtual platform will be very useful for patients who are infected and treated in isolation rooms, including those who are isolated at home, health care workers, and the general public who need information. Psychotherapy can provide reassurance to patients and help health care workers interact with and support patients. Mental health service development lessons have been implemented in China, where online mental health services were available during the initial COVID-19 outbreak (Liu et al. 2020). Maintaining the confidentiality of participants data must be addressed.

Owing to public stress and panic related to uncertainty regarding COVID-19, education about mental health is essential to improve social conditions, especially with a focus on achieving a positive mindset, stress management, and relaxation techniques. The focus of the government is currently on preventing physical and biological transmission and the handling of COVID-19 cases; however, the handling of the social impact of the outbreak remains limited. The government needs to collaborate with all parties. Mental health teams are needed to provide mental health support to patients, health care workers, and the community.

Strengthening psychological defences can help countries in the fight against COVID-19. Implementation of this idea can be done through the provision of voluntary psychotherapy, call center support (free of cost), and online-based facilities/video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom and WeChat.

Data Availability This article has no data openly available.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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