



PATTERN OF PSYCHIATRY MORBIDITY DURING THE LOCKDOWN PHASE OF COVID-19

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ABSTRACT **Background:** Burden of mental disorders is expected to rise during the COVID 19 pandemic due to the prolonged lockdown. Hence this study was conducted to assess the burden of psychiatric illnesses during this immediate post lockdown period.

Methods: A cross sectional study in the Department of Psychiatry at a tertiary care teaching hospital during the period of August 2020 to October 2020. A total of 487 psychiatric outpatient cases were included. Data was entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 18.

Results: Depression, manic and hypomanic types were common mood disorder reported. Anxiety disorders like obsessive compulsive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder and panic disorders were reported among 3.5%, 1.2% and 6.4% of cases, respectively. Schizophrenia and Substance abuse disorder was reported among 19.1% and 13.8% of cases respectively.

Conclusion: Burden of different psychiatric illnesses reported during the immediate post lockdown was found to be similar as before COVID 19 pandemic scenario.

KEYWORDS : Psychiatric disorders, COVID 19, lockdown

INTRODUCTION

Health policy is a much essential document which needs to be designed and revised periodically. With the prevailing COVID 19 scenario, drafting the health policy will be a challenge for the policy makers because the burden of disorders prevailing during the pandemic may differ from the usual time. More importantly, the diagnostic techniques, treatment guidelines and vaccination options for COVID 19, are being revised from time to time. Similarly, the burden of different disease which was prevailing in the society may likely to rise. Especially mental disorders were expected to be high due to the anxiety about the disease.

Mental health is an important component of health without which holistic health could not be achieved¹. A review of epidemiological studies on psychiatric disorders documented that nearly 10% of the total population suffer from mental and neurological problems requiring professional help at any point of time². Before the pandemic situation itself, Ministry of Health and Family welfare of India reported the lifetime prevalence of mental disorders nearly 12% which is likely to increase to almost 15% by the year 2020³. As the mental disorders require prolonged treatment, the outcome of the disease mainly depends on early diagnosis and prompt support through family, counseling or other necessary rehabilitations. Hence it is necessary to assess the burden of psychiatric illnesses during this immediate post lockdown period in order to draft the mental health policy, accordingly.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted as a cross sectional study in the Department of Psychiatry at Sri Muthukumaran Medical College Hospital and Research Institute, Chennai, a tertiary care teaching hospital during the period of August 2020 to October 2020. Study population includes patients who attended the outpatient department of psychiatry. Cases above the age of 18 years and from both genders were included in the study. Active cases of COVID 19 were excluded from the study. A total of 487 cases were included in the study.

All participants were thoroughly explained about the study and its need in their native language and informed written consent were obtained from them. Principal investigator collected the demographic details and their psychiatric related disorder were diagnosed and noted in a proforma. Data was entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18. Descriptive statistics and chi

square tests were used, appropriately to calculate the statistical significance. P value of < 0.05 was considered as statistically significant.

RESULTS

In the present study majority of the study participants (29.6%) belong to age group 31-40 years and 54.2% were females and 45.8% of the study participants were females (Table 1).

Table 1: Proportion of cases in different age groups

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18-30 years	39	8.0
31-40 years	144	29.6
41-50 years	129	26.5
51-60 years	103	21.1
> 60 years	72	14.8
Gender		
Male	223	45.8
Female	264	54.2

In the present study, 26.9% of cases were new cases, who came to psychiatry outpatient department (OPD) for the first time whereas 73.1% of cases were review cases (Table 2).

Table 2: Proportion of new psychiatry cases reported

Type of case	Frequency	Percentage
New case (who reported to psychiatry OPD for first time)	131	26.9
Review case	356	73.1
Total	487	100

The most common psychiatric disorder reported in this study was mood disorders among which depression (31.2%), manic type (14.2) and hypomanic type (2.7%) (Table 3). Suicidal thoughts was reported by 24 (4.9%) of cases and suicidal attempts was reported among 6 (1.2%) of cases, in the past six months.

Table 3: Proportion of psychiatric disorders reported

Psychiatric disorders	Frequency	Percentage
Cognitive disorder		
Dementia	27	5.5

Mood disorders		
Depression	152	31.2
Hypomanic type	13	2.7
Manic type	69	14.2
Anxiety disorders		
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)	17	3.5
Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	06	1.2
Panic	31	6.4
Schizophrenia	93	19.1
Substance abuse disorder	67	13.8
Other psychiatric disorders	12	2.5
Total	487	100

DISCUSSION

Findings of this study was found to be consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Sunil Nayak et al and Rameshwar et al in terms of most affected age group and gender. Sunil Nayak et al⁴ conducted a study and reported that in their study majority of their study participants belonged to age group 20-29 years and 59.9% of cases were females. Most common psychiatric disorders reported were depression (29%), schizophrenia (18%) and substance abuse psychiatric disorder (11%). Vineet Kumar et al⁵ performed a study and reported that in their study 51% of cases were in the age group of 18-40 years. Schizophrenia was the most common psychiatric illness.

Manhas RS et al⁶ conducted a study and reported that 39.5% of cases had depression, 23.8% had substance abuse disorder, 21.6% had anxiety disorders, 7.6% had bipolar affective disorder, 5.8% had schizophrenia and 1.7% patients were of other psychiatric disorders. They stated that onset of psychiatric illness usually occur in young adults, mostly in males, living in nuclear families of the urban region.

Findings of the present study was found to be consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Kunal K et al⁷, Sharma BB et al⁸, Kohil C et al⁹, Fahmida et al¹⁰, Wig NS et al¹¹ and Shrestha et al¹² in terms of burden of psychiatric illnesses like depression, mood disorders, schizophrenia and substance use disorders. Kunal K et al⁷, Sharma BB et al⁸, Kohil C et al⁹ and Fahmida et al¹⁰ reported in their studies that depression was present in 40%, 42%, 30.1% and 6.58% of cases respectively. Kunal K et al⁷ and Wig NS et al¹¹ reported anxiety disorders in their study as 30% and 22% of cases among the cases attending psychiatric OPD. Kunal K et al⁷ in their study reported that schizophrenia was present in 10% of cases, Dubey KC et al¹³ reported 9.1% of cases of psychiatric diseases were schizophrenics and Wig NS et al¹¹ found 11% prevalence of schizophrenia among psychiatric patients.

Shaikh Mohsin et al¹⁴ performed a study and reported that depression, schizophrenia and substance abuse psychiatric disorder were reported among 29%, 18% and 11% of cases, respectively, who attended psychiatry outpatient department. Shrestha et al¹² in their study found that schizophrenia, mood disorders and substance use disorder were the common psychiatric illnesses reported among 50.1%, 33.5% and 9.3% of cases, respectively.

In contrast to the present study, Gurvinder PS et al¹⁵ conducted a study and reported that mood disorders (57.4%) were the common psychiatric illness reported in their study and neurotic, anxiety and somatoform disorders were found in 3.9% of cases. Similarly, Abdul GK et al¹⁶ performed a study and reported that mood disorder was the most frequent psychiatric disorder (29.3%) followed by neurotic, stress related and somatoform disorders (25%), suicide attempters (15%) and Psychotic disorder (12.9%). Harshal S et al¹⁷ performed a study and reported that mood disorders, neurotic stress-related and somatoform disorders were the most common psychiatric disorders constitutes for about 60.5% of the psychiatric illnesses reported in a tertiary care hospital.

Based on the findings of the present study and on comparing the literature of other study which were published in the past, before COVID 19 pandemic, there were not much difference noted in the proportion of different psychiatric disorders reported in the psychiatry outpatient department.

CONCLUSION

Burden of different psychiatric illnesses reported during the immediate

post lockdown was found to be similar as before COVID 19 pandemic scenario. Hence except for the individual patient treatment and counseling, no special clinics are needed to manage the crisis during the post lockdown period.

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