Psychiatry

A STUDY ON " IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID CRISIS"

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ABSTRACT The pandemic spread by the novel corona virus identified in Wuhan China in the year 2019 has massive hit on every aspect of individual life. Like many other countries India had imposed nationwide complete lockdown on March 2020. Since India was facing Lockdown for the first time in its history and the stringent measures taken to implement lockdown had effects on all aspect of society including physical as well as mental health of general population. The present study was conducted using online method to know the impact on mental health during COVID 19 pandemic. The prevalence of the anxiety disorder as per GAD 7 was 33.4% among the study participants and 19-30 yrs of age group of participants and females are more affected. People have tried different method to cope with the stress during this period.

KEYWORDS : Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD),COVID

INTRODUCTION
Corona virus is the large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from common cold to more severe disease such as Middle East respiratory Syndrome (MERS).The novel corona virus identified in Wuhan China in the year 2019 hit the pandemic in the world.

A pandemic affects individuals and society and causes disruption, anxiety, stress, stigma, and xenophobia. The behaviour of an individual as a unit of society or a community has marked effects on the dynamics of a pandemic that involves the level of severity, degree of flow, and after effects[1]. Rapid transmission of the SARS−CoV−2 resulted in the enforcement of regional lockdowns to stem the further spread of the disease. Isolation, social distancing, and closure of educational institutes, workplaces, and entertainment venues consigned people to stay in their homes to help break the chain of transmission[2].

.It is well known that a restriction to free movement connected to social isolation is one of the main features that influences psychological well-being. From previous serious but not as widespread epidemics (e.g. Ebola, SARS, HIV) we know of adverse psychosocial consequences not only for the infected but also for the non-infected population. [3,4]

India, being a second most populous country in the world had taken steps control the pandemics in early phases. The Government of India had imposed nationwide complete lockdown on 25th March 2020.Since India was facing Lockdown for the first time in its history and the stringent measures taken to implement lockdown had effects on all aspect of society including physical as well as mental health of general population. According to National Mental Health Survey 2015-16   estimated prevalence of common mental problems in the country was 13%. [5,6,7]

The people sitting at their homes were facing a lot of mental issues during this pandemic. So, the present study was conducted to know the effect of COVID 19 pandemic on psychosocial stress on individuals mental well being.

AIM & OBJECTIVES
To study the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on psychosocial stress and associated measures to overcome the effect of corona on individual mental wellbeing.

OBJECTIVES
1.To estimate the prevalence of anxiety among the participants.
2.To estimate the socio- demographic correlates of anxiety disorders among Indian population during COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak.

METHODOLOGY
Study Design: It was an observational cross sectional study.

Study participants:
Consist of the individuals aging between 10 to 50 years of age, who were grounded in their homes during the period of lockdown due to COVID pandemic.

Data Collection:
Due to ongoing pandemics the study was conducted using online Google questionnaire Google questionnaire was framed and circulated to participants through e-mails or whatsapp. The standard GAD-7 Scale questionnaire was used to detect anxiety levels among the participants. The said questionnaire consist of 7 questions to evaluate the anxiety level among the participants. Total score of the GAD 7 scale is 42 and cut off 10 and above was taken for anxiety disorder[8].

Data Analysis:
Response from the participants were recorded on Google Excel sheet and same information was used to generate graphical displays.

Results:
A total of 322 participants had responded from Punjab , Himachal and J&K. Majority of the participants (78%) were below 30 yrs of age and 45% of them were females. Most of the participants were from urban area(78%) and unemployed (52%). Around 80% of the responders were unmarried which showed that anxiety among them is more than married people. The Economic-downturn affects unemployment as well as education, and this could be the reason why unmarried people have more anxiety then married people. The total participants were made of around 52% students , and most of the age group of 19-30 yrs. The students face anxiety of education especially their exams and career since the economy has been in downturn.
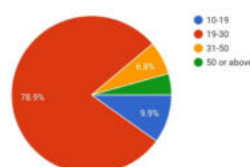

Fig.1 Age distribution the participants.
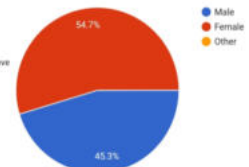
**Fig.2 Gender Distribution of the participants**

The prevalence of Anxiety among respondents were 33.4% based on the cut-off point of 10 or above on the GAD-7 scale. A total of 104 participants were facing moderate to severe anxiety during lockdown. The female experienced more anxiety than males and about 23% people have troubles falling asleep which is associated with anxiety. There were about 63% people who were stressed about the effect of COVID on their job and 58% even feared watching on social media.
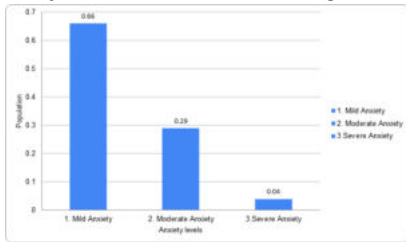
Fig. 3 Level of anxiety among the study participants

The various stressors of Anxiety found are-

| 1. Risk of getting coronavirus infection. |
| 2. Fear of going out to buy something during lockdown. |
| 3. Burden of managing Financial condition. |
| 4. Anxiety about exams and career related issues. |
| 5. Risk of family members health as corona virus mostly infects old age persons and children as they have less immunity. |
| 6. The news and social media which creates havoc about the increasing number of cases in India as well as in other countries too. |
| 7. The unemployment in India which has been increased during the pandemic crisis. |
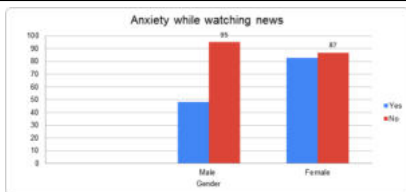
Fig 4 Gender wise distribution of the anxiety while watching news on TV or any other social media.

Table 1. Shows, 21% respondents were scared about their family members health and majority of the population were stressed of all the conditions listed in the table. People stressed due to longer quarantine durations , inadequate information , financial loss as well as risk of infection which may turn into anxiety , depression and high perceived stress.

TABLE-I List of the factors leading to stressful condition among the respondent

List of stressful conditions	Percentage of responses	(%)
COVID Risk	6.21	
Going out	8.07	
Social media	12.4	
Families Health	21.7	
Financial condition	5.9	
Exams	8.69	
Unemployment	6.83	
All the above	30.7	
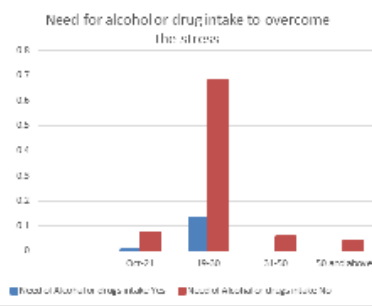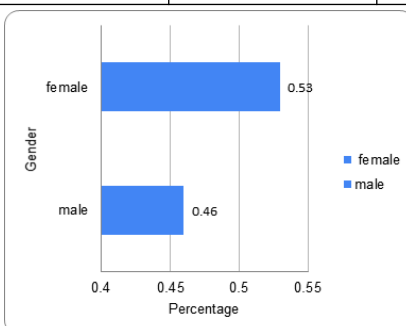
Fig. 5 Need felt for the psychiatric consultation.

It was also found that around 53% females felt the need of Tele-psychiatry during their daily life(Fig 5). Fig 6 showing that majority of the respondent who felt need for alcohol consumption or any other drug intake was from 19-30 yrs of age group.
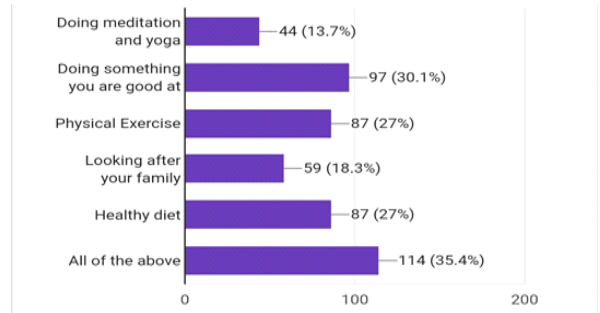
Fig.7 Measures taken by the respondent to overcome from persistent stress and anxiety

Fig 7 shows measures taken by the respondents to cope with persistent stress and anxiety during this phase of pandemic.

DISSCUSSION & CONCLUSION:
The present study provides insight into the different emtional and psycosocial responses of the participants with the restrictions imposed during the lockdown .the present study shows prevalence of anxiety disorder was 33.4% higher than the GOI survey conducted in year 2015-16.The study also revealed that anxiety was more among the women and young people the findings corroborates with studies from other country [9,10,11]. One reason why females need more therapy is because they ruminate about life stressors while men are more focused on problem solving. Females do multitask and not only take care of families but also work from home so needs more Tele-psychiatry to cope with situations. People have acquired different behaviours to cope with the stress conditions like doing exercise, yoga or meditation and taking healthy diet.

After collecting and collating the response from the respondents it is concluded that Indian population is affected by heightened psychological distress due to COVID 19 pandemic and thus higher prevalence of anxiety. The certain groups were more vulnerable to anxiety- specifically females, unmarried population in the age group of 19 to 30 years , reported poor sleep and job related stress.There is need to aware the people about the mental health of people through IEC activities and to aware people to whom to call or where to go for help like teleconsultation or online helpline numbers etc.

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