Article

An inquiry into the psychological repercussions considering COVID-19 pandemic

Sooraj Kumar Maurya[1],*, Amarbahadur Yadav[2]

[1] Department of Philosophy, Zakir Husain Delhi College (Evening), University of Delhi, New Delhi 110002, India
[2] Department of Economics, Zakir Husain Delhi College (Evening), University of Delhi, New Delhi 110002, India
* Corresponding author: Sooraj Kumar Maurya, sooraj.au998@gmail.com

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has instigated global lockdowns, profoundly altering daily life and resulting in widespread closures, except for essential services like healthcare and grocery stores. This scenario has notably intensified mental health challenges, particularly among children and adolescents. Influenced by a myriad of factors including developmental stages, educational backgrounds, existing psychiatric disorders, and socioeconomic status, the pandemic's impact extends beyond the immediate health crisis. This paper critically examines the multifaceted effects of the pandemic on mental and physical health across various age groups. It highlights the increased incidence of stress, anxiety, and depression, underscoring the pandemic's deep psychological footprint. Additionally, the paper explores the societal implications, from altered family dynamics and educational disruptions due to the shift to online learning, to workplace transformations. These changes have led to a mix of adaptive responses and adverse effects, including heightened domestic tensions and mental health issues. The paper also delves into the ethical challenges faced by medical professionals during this crisis, balancing urgent patient care with ongoing medical research and mental health considerations. This analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic's extensive impact on health and society, emphasizing the importance of addressing mental health as a crucial component of the response strategy.

Keywords: pandemic; philosophical counseling; psychological issues; mental health; human behaviour; social distancing

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed a pandemic due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which quickly became a global epidemic that affected every part of people's lives. Lockdowns, social isolation, mask requirements, and quarantine protocols were only some of the drastic measures taken by governments worldwide to contain the epidemic (Barrios and Hochberg, 2020). While absolutely necessary for public health, these interventions inevitably altered cultural mores, daily lives, and interpersonal dynamics. Social isolation was used as a main tactic to stop the spread of the virus. Although required, this action significantly reduced people's opportunities for social interaction, which had far-reaching consequences on how they related to one another and their surroundings (Brooks, 2020). The effects of these mandated adjustments were far-reaching and not limited to matters of physical safety. Among the most dramatic repercussions was the rise and aggravation of mental health difficulties. The isolation and decreased social connection that occurred as a result of the pandemic containment tactics contributed to increased stress, sadness, and anxiety among people all around the world.

The Indian government's response to the issue involved a range of national and regional measures. Lockdowns and quarantines were implemented around the country in an effort to contain the virus and lessen its devastating effects on the country's diverse population. The psychological effects of these actions were substantial, but they were necessary to prevent the spread of the virus. The mental health landscape in India, following global trends, experienced an increase in cases of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress, particularly among those confined to quarantine (Barry, 2010). Those who did not get the virus but nevertheless had to deal with the uncertainty and instability brought on by the crisis paid a heavy psychological price for the epidemic. The psychological toll of the epidemic was reflected in a range of reactions that mirrored the bereavement process. People went through a gamut of feelings, from initial shock and rage to bargaining and depression and, finally, acceptance. All throughout the world, people are grieving the loss of routine, of physical connection, and, in many cases, of loved ones, and this emotional journey reflects that (Chen et al., 2019). The epidemic had a multifaceted and ever-changing psychological effect, characterized by a series of non-coherent stages that individuals successfully traversed. The emotional trajectory did not adhere to a linear pattern; instead, individuals frequently experienced fluctuations in intensity, which mirrors the perpetual and capricious changes in the external circumstances of the world.

Furthermore, significant diversity existed in the psychological impact of the pandemic; crucial determinants included age, socioeconomic standing, preexisting mental health disorders, the strength of social support systems, and socioeconomic status. As a result, the epidemic acted as a catalyst for certain individuals to engage in introspection and progress, whereas for others, it further compounded pre-existing mental health issues or initiated the emergence of entirely novel ones. The infrastructure crisis in mental health care has highlighted the critical significance of providing accessible, culturally sensitive, and high-quality services that acknowledge and value the variety of experiences and backgrounds.

Upon examining the intricate and diverse psychological reactions to the pandemic, it becomes apparent that a holistic and personalized strategy for providing mental health assistance is crucial. A comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted elements that impact mental health is imperative. This emphasizes the necessity for mental health services that are adaptable and culturally proficient in order to cater to the changing and diverse requirements of the populace (Chen et al., 2019).

The extended continuance of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light a significant issue referred to as "pandemic fatigue". Due to the ongoing crisis and the prolonged duration of the epidemic, there has been a significant decrease in the motivation of individuals to consistently comply with public health guidelines (Salameh et al., 2020). Further complications have been added to the pre-existing complex psychological terrain of the pandemic as a result of this phenomenon, which has implications for both the private and public health sectors.

A noteworthy element that surfaced amidst the pandemic is the critical significance attributed to social support networks in alleviating mental health difficulties. Notwithstanding the necessity for maintaining physical distance, individuals have resourcefully utilized diverse methods, such as technology, to sustain interpersonal relationships (Salari et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it is critical to

acknowledge that despite these adaptive modifications, the digital divide has not been completely closed; consequently, not every sector of society has had equitable access to the advantages of the internet.

The psychological consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are considered to be equally significant in nature as its physical effects. Although the worldwide effort to restrict the spread of the virus was crucial, it unintentionally resulted in significant repercussions on mental health, which require a thorough reevaluation of societal strategies pertaining to mental health concerns (Grover et al., 2020). It is crucial to recognize and confront the psychological repercussions in order to cultivate resilient communities and individuals who are able to adjust to the persistent difficulties and unpredictability associated with surviving the pandemic and its consequences. The acknowledgment and mitigation of psychological ramifications will be crucial in influencing the development of adaptive approaches for a resilient global community in the aftermath of a pandemic.

2. Eventual outcome on health

The COVID-19 pandemic, officially recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO), has resulted in a worldwide health emergency that has significant consequences, encompassing both public health and socio-economic aspects (Tee et al., 2021). The global epidemic has resulted in significant human suffering, presenting unprecedented challenges to public health, food security, and the corporate landscape. The epidemic has resulted in substantial economic and social consequences, leading to a heightened risk of food poverty and a surge in the population of slum dwellers, perhaps experiencing exponential growth (Timming et al., 2021). The global implementation of lockdown measures aimed at mitigating the transmission of the virus has resulted in several unanticipated outcomes. The factors contributing to this phenomenon encompass increased levels of weariness, less engagement in physical activities, limited availability of diverse nutritious foods and health-related services, as well as a change in dietary habits resulting in higher calorie intake and the possibility of developing obesity (Asmundson and Taylor, 2020a). These dietary modifications, commonly known as 'carbohydrate cravings,' have been implicated in a perilous loop of health hazards, which encompass an increased susceptibility to more severe consequences associated with COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has broader physical health ramifications that go beyond the immediate impacts of the virus. The implementation of lockdown measures has resulted in a notable decrease in the accessibility of medical services for routine procedures. The constraints imposed on individual mobility, in conjunction with concerns regarding the transmission of the virus within healthcare settings, have led to the postponement or avoidance of medical treatment for a range of ailments, encompassing chronic cardiovascular disease, unattended cardiac incidents, and deferred cancer therapies. In addition, access to non-emergency medical care for problems such as dental infections, bleeding hemorrhoids, and unstable hypoglycemia control has been restricted or unattainable, resulting in further health concerns (Asmundson and Taylor, 2020b).

The adverse effects on physical activity and overall health have been precipitated by the implementation of lockdown measures in response to the epidemic, as indicated by restricted mobility and disrupted dietary systems (Duan and Zhu, 2020). The long-term consequences of limitations on physical activity and changes in dietary habits have significant implications for overall health and well-being. The intricate nature of the public health repercussions of the epidemic is heightened by this multifaceted effect.

The global health crisis has not only resulted in concrete health consequences but has also had a significant psychological impact on populations worldwide, thereby adding to the complexity of its overall effects. The implementation of critical measures, including social isolation and quarantine protocols, which were crucial in preventing the spread of the virus, has simultaneously led to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among people worldwide (Singh et al., 2020a).

Within the particular context of India, a variety of psychological repercussions ensued from the implementation of both nationwide and localized strategies— including elevated levels of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, especially among those who were quarantined (Di Fazio et al., 2022). The observed emotional reactions throughout this time period exhibited similarities to the stages of mourning, highlighting the profound and extensive psychological repercussions resulting from the strict lockdown protocols implemented in an effort to contain the epidemic (Di Fazio et al., 2022). The results of this study shed light on the complex relationship between the physical and psychological aspects of the epidemic's consequences, underscoring the need for all-encompassing approaches to health in the event of subsequent pandemics or public health emergencies. In the pursuit of addressing the post-pandemic era, it is critical for societies to develop resilient and adaptable public health interventions, which necessitate a nuanced comprehension of the complicated repercussions.

The mental health consequences of the pandemic are compounded by the occurrence of 'pandemic weariness,' a phenomenon characterized by a diminished inclination among individuals to comply with public health norms as a result of the protracted duration of the crisis (Di Fazio et al., 2022). The aforementioned phenomenon has significant consequences for both the personal welfare of individuals and the efficacy of public health initiatives. Moreover, the global health crisis has emphasized the need of communal assistance and interpersonal relationships in upholding psychological well-being. Despite the obstacles presented by the practice of physical separation, people and communities have demonstrated resourcefulness in preserving social connections through the use of inventive strategies. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this situation has also brought attention to the existence of a digital divide, wherein specific segments of the population face restricted availability of digital resources. Consequently, this exacerbates sentiments of isolation and loneliness within these marginalized groups.

Hence, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in notable physiological and psychological consequences. Comprehending and effectively mitigating these impacts are crucial for the development of resilient communities. In light of the ongoing global pandemic and its subsequent consequences, it is imperative to adopt a comprehensive

healthcare strategy that addresses the interplay between physical and mental well-being.

3. Psychological impacts on different age group

3.1. Children

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented catastrophe in the field of child education and well-being. A major issue that arises from this situation is the potential escalation of child slavery, child marriage, and other types of abuse as a result of interruptions in schooling and social structures. Save the Children reports reveal a concerning situation where almost 9.7 million children worldwide may not have access to education this year, worsening what is being referred to as the greatest severe educational disaster. The educational disruption has a greater impact on girls, as they are frequently burdened with additional home duties. This further widens the gender gap in education and overall well-being. An exemplary illustration of this gender discrepancy is apparent from field studies, whereby girls have reported a heightened involvement in domestic tasks and caring duties amongst the pandemic. The added responsibility has impeded their capacity to further their education and engage in personal growth. The pandemic has disrupted traditional learning and placed young girls at a higher risk of falling behind in education and becoming exposed to exploitation, causing them extra stress and responsibilities. In order to alleviate these significant effects, there is an increasing demand for comprehensive policies that specifically cater to the requirements of children, especially in economically disadvantaged and unstable states. Advocates advocate for the alleviation of debt and the augmentation of investment in child welfare, underscoring the essentiality of addressing the needs and viewpoints of children in plans for recovering from the pandemic. This approach is crucial in protecting a generation from the enduring repercussions of the pandemic (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023a).

Furthermore, it is vital to comprehend the encounters of children and adolescents throughout the lockdown period as it significantly impacts their psychological welfare. Research highlights the need of cultivating understanding regarding the distinct difficulties encountered by adolescents amidst the pandemic and formulating tactics to aid them in adjusting to the altered circumstances (de Figueiredo et al., 2021a). Governments and pertinent agencies are initiating responses to address these needs. For instance, certain nations have implemented extensive programs aimed at rehabilitating behavior and promoting well-being. These programs prioritize early detection, control measures, and techniques that involve the community (de Figueiredo et al., 2021a). The programs are based on principles of empowerment, allocation of resources, and collaborative efforts, with the goal of providing comprehensive support to children and adolescents impacted by the pandemic.

The psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children are significant and varied. The interruption in education, heightened family obligations, and possible susceptibilities provide significant risks to their holistic growth and welfare. Addressing these issues necessitates collaborative endeavors from international and regional organizations to guarantee that the requirements and perspectives of youngsters are given utmost importance in endeavors related to recovery and

rehabilitation. As the world deals with the consequences of the epidemic, it is crucial to prioritize the safeguarding and development of the most susceptible group in society, namely children. This involves guaranteeing that they have the necessary resources and assistance to flourish in a world that has recovered from the pandemic.

3.2. Adolescent

The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated a multifaceted crisis, deeply affecting the emotional health of adolescents worldwide. This demographic, already navigating the complexities of puberty and identity formation, faces amplified challenges due to the pandemic. The factors contributing to the emotional turmoil among adolescents are diverse, ranging from deeply traumatic experiences to the more subtle effects of prolonged isolation.

Adolescents during the pandemic are exposed to a variety of traumatic experiences. Prolonged home detention, intra-family abuse, and excessive exposure to distressing content on the Internet and media have become prevalent, contributing to increased psychological stress. Such conditions pave the way for severe psychological issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychotic episodes, and other mental illnesses that parallel the grieving process. The unique nature of the pandemic, characterized by uncertainty and a continuous stream of distressing news, exacerbates these conditions, potentially leading to a deterioration in the mental health of adolescents. The imposition of lockdowns and quarantine measures, while essential for public health, has negatively impacted the psychological well-being of adolescents. The lack of physical schooling and social interaction has led to reduced physical activity, erratic sleep patterns, and unhealthy dietary habits. These lifestyle changes have a direct correlation with mental health, contributing to increased feelings of anxiety and depression among adolescents. Furthermore, the abrupt alienation from peers and interruption in education adds to the stress, potentially triggering a range of emotional responses, including paranoia, anxiety about family well-being, and concerns over academic and career prospects. The mental health consequences of these changes are profound. Adolescents are experiencing a heightened sense of uncertainty and fear, significantly affecting their cognitive development and social skills. The lack of regular interaction with peers and mentors during crucial developmental stages can lead to feelings of loneliness, which is a key factor in the onset of mental illnesses during puberty (Pfefferbaum and North, 2020). Additionally, the pandemic has raised concerns over family members' health and financial stability, further adding to the psychological burden on adolescents.

A study conducted during the initial weeks of the pandemic-induced isolation revealed a significant increase in depression and anxiety symptoms among adolescents (Pharr et al., 2012). These findings underscore the urgent need for focused mental health interventions targeting this age group. The prolonged nature of the pandemic necessitates a reevaluation of mental health strategies for adolescents, ensuring that their unique needs are addressed effectively. The current scenario calls for targeted interventions by healthcare professionals and policymakers. There is an imperative need to provide adolescents with adequate mental health support, including counseling and therapy services, to help them navigate these challenging times. Furthermore, it is

crucial to develop strategies that enable adolescents to maintain a sense of normalcy, such as structured online learning programs, virtual social activities, and regular physical exercise routines.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the emotional health of adolescents. The combination of trauma, prolonged isolation, and lifestyle changes has resulted in increased instances of psychological disorders among this demographic. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, involving healthcare professionals, educators, parents, and policymakers. As the world continues to grapple with the pandemic, it is crucial to prioritize the mental health of adolescents, ensuring that they receive the support and resources needed to emerge resiliently from this crisis.

3.3. Adults

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant disruptions in the educational and social lives of adolescents and young adults, leading to notable psychological impacts. This section examines the extent of these impacts, focusing on the shift from traditional learning environments to prolonged home confinement and its effects on the mental health of this demographic.

The transition from traditional learning environments, which primarily featured personal interactions with peers and educators, to a prolonged state of home confinement has been abrupt and widespread. This shift has significantly affected over 91% of the world's college students due to the suspension of academic institutions (Pierce et al., 2020). The absence of a stable classroom environment has disrupted the regular academic and extracurricular schedules of students. Such disruptions have led to a decrease in engagement and participation in academic activities, contributing to feelings of confusion and distress. Additionally, the lack of physical activity and limited social interaction have further exacerbated these effects, resulting in moodiness, increased attention-seeking behavior, and a greater focus on familial conflicts.

The prolonged nature of this isolation has led to increased anxiety among adolescents and young adults, particularly concerning the cancellation of examinations and other academic events (Asmundson et al., 2010a). The uncertainty surrounding academic progress and future prospects has contributed to heightened levels of stress and anxiety. Moreover, the extended period of isolation has also impacted the physical well-being of students, as they are unable to engage in outdoor activities or maintain regular social interactions with their peers. Behavioral responses to the pandemic, such as impulse purchasing and stockpiling, reflect a survival mechanism in times of crisis (Ali et al., 2020). These behaviors are indicative of the heightened stress and uncertainty experienced by young individuals during the pandemic. Additionally, the increased reliance on social media for connection and information during periods of confinement has led to a higher risk of exposure to inappropriate content and susceptibility to online bullying or violence. This situation is particularly concerning, as social and protective systems are less effective during campus shutdowns, leaving young individuals vulnerable to various forms of harm, including cyberbullying.

The long-term implications of these disruptions on the mental health of adolescents and young adults are a matter of concern. The prolonged disruption in their educational and social routines may lead to lasting effects on their psychological well-being. It is crucial for policymakers to consider less disruptive forms of social distancing and to implement strategies that support the mental health of young individuals during such crises. Educational institutions, families, and mental health professionals must collaborate to provide the necessary support and resources to help adolescents and young adults navigate these challenges and mitigate the long-term impacts on their mental health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the lives of adolescents and young adults, leading to various psychological impacts due to changes in their educational and social environments. The prolonged nature of home confinement, coupled with the uncertainty and disruption of academic routines, has contributed to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and behavioral changes among this demographic. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving educational reforms, mental health support, and family engagement to ensure the well-being of adolescents and young adults in the face of ongoing and future crises.

3.4. Elderly people

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted various demographic groups, with the elderly being particularly vulnerable not only to the physical health effects of the virus but also to its psychological repercussions. This section aims to explore the psychological impact of the pandemic on the elderly, especially those with chronic health issues, and to evaluate the necessary interventions to support their mental well-being. Elderly individuals, often classified as high-risk due to their susceptibility to COVID-19, face heightened levels of fear and anxiety. This demographic, particularly those with pre-existing chronic conditions, experiences increased psychological distress, manifested as depression, frustration, and feelings of helplessness (Ahmed et al., 2020).

The cognitive impairment and existing health problems prevalent in this age group exacerbate their psychological vulnerability. Additionally, many older adults who were already experiencing social withdrawal and loneliness find their conditions worsened under pandemic-induced isolation. Despite these challenges, there are strategies that the elderly can employ, either independently or with the assistance of caregivers, to maintain their psychological health. Engaging in regular physical activities, adhering to established routines, developing new hobbies, and participating in events that provide a sense of achievement are essential (Ai et al., 2021).

Maintaining connections with the community, whether through technology or safe social interactions, is crucial for their mental well-being. For those unfamiliar with digital communication tools, guidance and support are vital to facilitate their engagement in these new forms of interaction. The global response to COVID-19, including social distancing and the prevention of group interactions, while effective in controlling the spread of the virus, has inadvertently intensified mental health issues among the elderly (Asmundson et al., 2010b). As this demographic is prone to prolonged periods of social isolation, their mental health requires particular attention

and care. Recent studies have identified social isolation as a critical public health concern, significantly elevating the risk of various health problems, including neurological and psychological disorders (Grolli et al., 2021). Therefore, the mental health challenges faced by the elderly during the pandemic need to be addressed with targeted interventions and support.

The emotional responses of the elderly to the pandemic, such as anxiety and anger, warrant careful examination. These emotions are natural defenses against threatening situations but can evolve into key components of behavioral disorders if not properly managed. The pandemic has heightened these emotional responses, leading to increased symptoms of anxiety and depression, particularly among the elderly and those with existing mental health conditions (Grolli et al., 2021). Previous health crises, such as the SARS epidemic, have shown that such emotional disturbances can escalate to severe mental health issues, including depression and, in extreme cases, suicide. The COVID-19 pandemic presents a significant threat to the psychological well-being of the elderly, particularly those with chronic health conditions. The increased vulnerability of this demographic necessitates focused and specialized care to address their unique mental health needs. Strategies for maintaining mental health, global initiatives focused on elderly care, and understanding emotional responses are crucial in providing comprehensive support. As the world continues to navigate the challenges of the pandemic, ensuring the mental health and well-being of the elderly must be a priority in public health strategies and interventions.

4. Factors affecting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people

4.1. Loneliness and isolation during lockdown

The pandemic-induced lockdown has had a profound effect on the mental health of children and young people, with loneliness emerging as a significant issue. It was also highlighted by many current researchers that there is a link between isolation and depression, noting the critical role of social interaction in psychological well-being. A study revealed that a majority of students aged 18–24 experienced intense feelings of isolation, higher than in other age groups (Orben et al., 2020). This isolation is particularly concerning during developmental stages crucial for brain development and self-identity formation. For instance, teenagers who previously engaged in sports or cultural activities found themselves bereft of these vital social interactions, exacerbating feelings of loneliness and disconnection.

4.2. Educational concerns and future uncertainties

The pandemic has also disrupted the educational landscape, causing widespread anxiety among children and young people. Concerns about academic performance, school attendance, and future prospects have become predominant stressors. This situation is exacerbated for youth in the juvenile justice system, where educational disruptions are coupled with broader socioeconomic challenges, increasing anxiety about future opportunities and stability. For example, high school students preparing for college entrance exams faced uncertainty and stress due to exam postponements

and changes in the college admissions process, impacting their mental well-being (Bierman et al., 2021).

4.3. Supporting mental health and well-being

In response to these challenges, the role of family support has been crucial. It was also emphasized in many researches that a regular communication through video calls and physical exercise positively impacted children's mental health (Bauer et al., 2021). However, this was less effective for younger children, who require more tangible forms of interaction and engagement. In a case study, a family implemented a routine of daily outdoor activities and virtual playdates, which significantly improved the mood and behavior of their preschool-aged child, highlighting the need for age-appropriate support mechanisms.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of children and young people. The experience of loneliness, educational worries, and the need for effective support systems have brought to light the complex psychological challenges faced by this demographic. Addressing these issues requires a nuanced approach that takes into account the unique needs and developmental stages of children and young people, ensuring their mental health and well-being during these unprecedented times.

5. Navigating the Post-Covid-19 world: Strategies and responses

The COVID-19 pandemic has been pivotal in global health, fundamentally altering our approach to public health policy, infection control, lifestyle habits, and international cooperation. As a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, societies worldwide are currently going through a period characterized by enormous challenges and changes. There has been a global shift toward new living and working methods and an increased emphasis on health policy and infection control measures. These characteristics mark this time.

5.1. Global health policies and infection prevention

The onset of COVID-19 highlighted critical gaps in global health policies and infection prevention strategies. The pandemic underscored the urgent need for international collaboration to curb the spread of the virus (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023b). This global cooperation requires aligning efforts across nations and adhering to guidelines set by authoritative bodies like the World Health Organization (WHO). Such unified efforts are crucial in ensuring consistent and effective responses to health crises. The WHO, in particular, plays a central role in setting standards and providing guidance. These efforts go beyond merely managing the current pandemic; they involve preparing for future outbreaks by establishing robust surveillance systems, enhancing laboratory capacities, and ensuring global access to essential medical supplies and vaccines.

5.2. Lifestyle changes and holistic approaches

The pandemic also brought about significant lifestyle changes, accelerating the shift towards remote work and digital communication. This transition has implications

for physical and mental health. In recognizing the importance of holistic health practices, many have turned to activities like yoga, which not only boosts physical immunity but also enhances mental well-being. These lifestyle changes underscore a broader societal recognition of the importance of mental health. The pandemic has elevated the discourse around mental well-being, stress management, and the role of regular physical activity in maintaining a balanced lifestyle. This holistic view of health is critical in addressing the comprehensive needs of individuals in a post-pandemic world (Auerbach and Miller, 2020).

5.3. Transnational cooperation and public health infrastructure

A key lesson from the pandemic is the need for robust public health infrastructure and transnational cooperation. To establish a global immune system policy is essential to combat with this global issue. This involves routine health monitoring by national governments, coordinated by international health organizations like the WHO and the FAO. Such cooperation is imperative in managing global health challenges, ensuring equitable access to healthcare resources, and preventing the duplication of efforts. It also involves sharing best practices, research, and data on a global scale to enhance the effectiveness of health interventions. Strengthening public health infrastructure also means investing in healthcare systems, workforce training, and research to better prepare for future health crises.

5.4. Preventive measures and embracing new normal

The pandemic necessitated the adoption of preventive measures such as social distancing and restrictions on mass gatherings. While these measures were disruptive, they played a crucial role in controlling the spread of the virus. They also led to a reevaluation of environmental and health practices, fostering increased awareness of sustainable living and the interconnection between human health and the environment. This reevaluation has implications for how societies and governments approach health and environmental policies. There is a growing recognition of the need for sustainable practices that not only protect the environment but also promote public health. The pandemic has shown that environmental health is inextricably linked to human health, and addressing one invariably impacts the other.

Hence, it can be said that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a watershed moment for global health, prompting significant changes in health policies, lifestyles, and international cooperation. The pandemic's challenges have highlighted the interconnectedness of global health systems and the importance of a unified approach to health policy and infection control. The shift towards holistic health practices reflects a broader understanding of health that encompasses physical, mental, and environmental well-being. The experiences of the pandemic offer valuable lessons for future health crises, emphasizing the importance of preparedness, resilience, and adaptability in the face of global health challenges.

5.5. Philosophical counseling and mental health during COVID-19 pandemic

The utilization of philosophical counseling has arisen as a valuable instrument in effectively navigating the psychological difficulties induced by the COVID-19 epidemic. In the face of unparalleled unpredictability and disruption, this technique provides a distinctive viewpoint that surpasses conventional therapy (Savage, 1997). The philosophical discussions allows individuals to confront existential inquiries, comprehend their experiences, and discover significance amidst disorder. The pandemic has sparked numerous emotional and psychological challenges, including increased anxiety and social isolation, as well as introspective questioning and a feeling of bereavement. Philosophical counseling enables individuals to deeply examine significant problems like existence, values, and purpose by probing fundamental topics. By promoting the development of analytical thinking, introspection, and the examination of one's personal beliefs, it facilitates the process of adjusting viewpoints and adapting coping mechanisms (Savage, 1997).

It is because: The philosophical counseling promotes introspection on concepts such as resilience, adaptability, and the essence of change. Through the exploration of philosophical principles such as Stoicism or existentialism, individuals have the ability to reinterpret and reevaluate challenging circumstances. This allows them to derive resilience by acknowledging and embracing the aspects of life that are beyond their control, while directing their attention towards the aspects that they can influence. This method does not prioritize offering immediate solutions, but rather promotes the cultivation of a more profound comprehension of oneself and one's situation. Furthermore, philosophical counseling advocates for a comprehensive approach to mental well-being. Through examining the fundamental inquiries and principles that form the basis of one's encounters, individuals can cultivate a more profound comprehension of oneself, fortitude, and direction. Consequently, this can have a beneficial impact on their psychological well-being and overall welfare among these difficult circumstances (Savage, 1997). The function of philosophical counseling in resolving mental health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic can be summed up as follows:

1) Existential concerns: Philosophical counseling offers a forum to tackle existential difficulties that have been intensified by the pandemic (Knapp and Tjeltveit, 2005). People participate in dialogues to investigate inquiries regarding the significance of existence and their role within the global context, seeking direction amidst ambiguity.

2) Perspective reshaping: The philosophical counseling encourages individuals to reevaluate their beliefs and viewpoints. Engaging in conversations about philosophical doctrines such as Stoicism or Existentialism helps to reframe difficulties and cultivate resilience in the face of hardship.

3) Self-reflection: According to current researches, engaging in philosophical dialogue promotes introspection, which helps individuals get a deeper knowledge of their thoughts and feelings. This self-awareness enables efficient exploration of cognitive terrains (Knapp and Tjeltveit, 2005).

4) Embracing uncertainty: Philosophical counseling, according to the current researches, the acknowledgment of uncertainty as an intrinsic element of existence. Embracing ambiguity fosters the development of flexibility and toughness in the face of unanticipated circumstances (Knapp and Tjeltveit, 2005).

5) Mindfulness integration: Inclusion of mindfulness techniques into philosophical counseling improves emotional control and overall well-being. This combination facilitates the management of stress and anxiety, while also enhancing philosophical investigation (Knapp and Tjeltveit, 2005).

6) Coping strategies: According to current researches, philosophical counseling is effective in cultivating individualized coping strategies. These tactics entail reinterpreting difficulties and embracing philosophical principles to effectively navigate through challenges (Michopoulou, 2022).

Philosophical counseling provides a distinct opportunity for individuals to examine and tackle the psychological challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the active participation in philosophical discussions and the contemplation of existential inquiries, individuals can discover fresh viewpoints, cultivate fortitude, and negotiate the ambiguities of life with a more profound sense of purpose and comprehension (Michopoulou, 2022).

6. Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic and its resultant lockdown measures have had profound effects on various populations, including individuals with Down syndrome and children. The necessary social distancing and isolation measures, while effective in curbing the spread of the virus, have inadvertently impacted the mental health and cognitive well-being of these vulnerable groups.

6.1. Effects on children and young people

The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people, while less in terms of infection rates, has been significant in terms of psychological distress. Numerous cross-sectional studies have focused on the lockdown's effect on this demographic. Factors like age, educational status, pre-existing mental conditions, and confinement due to infection risks play a crucial role in determining the nature and severity of this impact. Young children, as research suggests, exhibit increased moodiness, disrupted sleep patterns, nightmares, reduced appetite, inattention, and separation anxiety (Michopoulou, 2022). The closure of schools and recreational facilities exposes children and adolescents to additional stressors. They face isolation, fear, and confusion, which can affect their educational achievement, psychology, and overall well-being. The risk is compounded by increased exposure to online gaming and social media, which can lead to obsessive behaviors.

6.2. Vulnerable groups and access to mental health services

Amidst the ongoing epidemic, children with psychiatric illnesses and those receiving special education and therapy interventions are more likely to experience an exacerbation of symptoms and behavioral challenges (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023c). These susceptible individuals' developmental trajectories have been

negatively impacted by the crisis-induced disruptions to regular therapy and educational regimens, which has made their problems even more severe (Singh et al., 2020b). In addition, children from economically deprived families are more vulnerable to violence and exploitation in the present pandemic environment (Keng et al., 2011). The inequalities in resources and support systems that now exist exacerbate the vulnerabilities of this population, highlighting the critical need for focused actions to protect their welfare. It is vital to emphasize the vital importance of improving children's and youths' access to psychiatric treatments in light of these worries. This calls for an all-encompassing approach that uses cutting-edge digital media in addition to conventional face-to-face modalities (Heidenreich et al., 2021). In order to meet the complex requirements of this group, a cooperative and interdisciplinary strategy involving experts such as psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, community workers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is essential (Menzies and Menzies, in preparation).

"Telepsychiatry" a technique for providing mental health services remotely using telecommunications technology, is a crucial component of this strategy (Menzies et al., 2019). It is critical to guarantee that telepsychiatry is widely available, especially to underprivileged and marginalized populations, in order to lessen the negative effects of the epidemic on children's mental health. This all-inclusive strategy supports the more general objective of encouraging fair access to mental health care services. Prioritizing the mental health needs of vulnerable children requires coordinated efforts, resources, and a commitment to a comprehensive strategy that tackles the multitude of obstacles they encounter as society negotiate the complexity of the current pandemic (Menzies et al., 2018).

6.3. Ethical considerations in medical treatment

One of the significant challenges during the COVID-19 crisis has been balancing infection control with medical ethics. The focus on broader public health measures often overshadows the individual needs, rights, and well-being of patients. This situation necessitates a careful evaluation when planning treatment strategies during an outbreak. Ensuring that the interests and dignity of individual patients are not neglected in the pursuit of broader infection control is a critical ethical consideration (Philosophical Therapy, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for a nuanced understanding of its impact on different populations, particularly those who are vulnerable like individuals with Down syndrome and children. Future research and policy interventions should consider these diverse impacts to develop more inclusive and supportive health strategies. The pandemic has also brought to the forefront the importance of integrating ethical considerations into public health decision-making, ensuring that individual patient rights are not compromised in the face of large-scale health emergencies (de Figueiredo et al., 2021b).

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