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Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Assessing Challenges and Coping Strategies through a Systematic Review

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Background and Aim: The Prevalence of COVID-19 and its impact on mental health has posed a significant challenge for healthcare systems worldwide. In addition to their responsibilities such as rapid diagnosis, controlling, and slowing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare systems were required to adopt strategies to mitigate the psychological effects of this disease on society. This article aims to examine and review mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic and strategies adopted by various countries.

Materials and Methods: All published articles on impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and coping strategies from February to October 2020 were reviewed across four databases and one search engine. A total of 394 articles that met inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected using a 15-point tool developed by Miton and colleagues. Ultimately, 25 articles were analyzed.

Results: The most prevalent mental health issues identified in reviewed articles were depression, anxiety, and stress. Additionally, vulnerable and high-risk groups were recognized as women, individuals with pre-existing health issues, youth aged 18 to 29, frontline healthcare workers, and those without income.

Conclusion: Despite various policies in different countries, majority of people suffered from mental health challenges arising from COVID-19. During an outbreak, collaboration between health system authorities and media in providing accurate and effective information, as well as offering preventive measures, can facilitate an improvement in mental health within community. Furthermore, it is essential for health systems to pay attention to mental health infrastructure and to design comprehensive strategies to address future crises.

Biography

Seyedeh Mahboobeh Hosseini Zare is a senior healthcare professional and researcher with a Ph.D. in Health Service Management and over 20 years of experience in healthcare quality, strategic planning, elderly care, and digital health transformation. She has held key leadership roles at the University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences, including Head of R&D, Executive Director of a rehabilitation center, and member of accreditation and strategic planning committees. Dr. Hosseini Zare has led and contributed to several national projects on remote rehabilitation, cost-effectiveness of services, and healthcare system reform. Her research interests include mental health, social determinants of health, quality of work life, and rehabilitation programs. She has authored over 17 peer-reviewed articles and serves as a reviewer for leading medical journals. Recognized for her contributions to healthcare innovation, she has received multiple national awards in accreditation, digital health, and process improvement.

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