

Mental Health Professionals as The Torch Bearers in The Current Pandemic

Sir/ma'am,

In times of this prevailing uncertainty, when one's own health and that of others become one of the main issues of daily life and which makes us think how freedom was taken for granted.

In the past eleven months we have seen our healthcare workers on their toes giving the best they could. Another segment of healthcare industry that is working on front line of this pandemic and may continue to do so in the coming years is of our mental health professionals. As uncertainty, confusion, despair, lack of movement¹ are giving rise to stress, frustration, fear and string of other intense emotions yet to unfold once this pandemic is over, mental health professionals shall stand on the front line.

Often counted last, mental health professionals are working round the clock to provide support and care to those in need. Being there for people stuck and quarantined in home or in COVID wards, being available for doctors who are dealing with a situation never seen just read in books, being there for children who keep questioning why summer vacations started early. The pandemic has proved to be a corner stone for various things. For eg. Telemedicine technology, that has existed for almost two decades, gained attention when COVID-19 crisis stirred the debate of social distancing and healthcare that relaxed regulatory and legal bodies to provide digital consultations.

In order to resolve some of the most important concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, mental healthcare professionals are uniquely placed. Nevertheless, their capacity to offer professional treatment does not render them invulnerable to the

resulting psychological toll. It is possible that we do not yet sufficiently grasp the long-term mental effects of COVID-19.² on the basis of findings on how other pandemics have eventually impacted the psychological health of frontline workers.

Yet in spite of the darkness we have endured during this pandemic, we do believe that a light has been cast that will enlighten further about mental health. Mental wellbeing has become a more open topic of conversation as individuals strive to handle the worries and anxieties of themselves as well of people around them. Moreover, COVID-19 has shown us

Correspondence Address:

Aishwarya Raj

Clinical Psychologist,

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.

Email: aish24raj@gmail.com

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how closely physical health is related to mental health.

Mental health care has been one of the key factor in surviving this pandemic. It shall continue to do so in the short and long term in helping restore balance in the post-pandemic society. It is therefore necessary not only to look at our established knowledge base, but also to collect and evaluate data on the particular ways in which our health care staff are impacted by this pandemic.² This data would be useful to advise us on how best to intervene to improve COVID-19-related long-term mental health outcomes as well as to advise our actions in the case of potential pandemics.³

Thus, the mental health motto remains essential and it should be the foundation for resilience in our

society that is on the edge of perplexity, questions and novel situations due to this global pandemic.

It's time we thank our colleagues, fellow mental health professionals for the efforts they are putting day in and out. We are on the forefront and we shall remain so for years to come.

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