COVID 19 Pandemic and Mental Health
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for
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Main Points

- What do we know about mental health after a pandemic?

- What type of mental health sequel can we expect after the COVID 19 pandemic crests?

- What can we do for ourselves and our patients?

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What Do We Know About Mental Health After a Pandemic?

Mental Health Aspects of Pandemics

- There is limited evidence on mental health aspects of pandemics and the mental health aspects of pandemic prevention measures, such as social distancing, school closures or work from home (Galea, Merchant & Lurie, 2020)

- I could not find any studies that evaluated the mental health consequences of social distancing interventions

- There is no meta analytic evidence synthesis on mental health aspects of pandemics or pandemic prevention measures

- Historical US records from the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic document wide spread resistance to mask wearing and social distancing (D. Clark, NBC News, 2020)

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2003 SARS Pandemic

- There is limited evidence on mental health aspects of pandemics
- There is no meta analytic evidence synthesis on mental health aspects of pandemics
- The best evidence resulted from small studies of the 2003 SARS pandemic
- High risk groups included SARS survivors with approximately 50% mental health disorder diagnosis years after the exposure
- Healthcare workers who cared for SARS patients with elevated PTSD symptoms and psychological distress years after their occupational exposure

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2003 SARS Pandemic (2)

- Studies of hospital employees in Beijing who worked during the 2003 SARS pandemic found increased alcohol use, abuse and dependence rates (Wu, Liu, Fang, et al., 2009), 10% reporting severe PTSD symptoms (Wu, Fang Guan et al., 2009) and increased levels of depressive symptoms (Liu, Kakada, Fuller et al., 2009) after the SARS occupational exposure

- A population based study in Taiwan found that the people with quarantined friends and family had elevated depressive symptoms two years later (Ko, Yen, Yen, Yang, 2006)

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What Type of Mental Health Sequel Can We Expect After The COVID 19 Pandemic Crests?

Likely COVID 19 Mental Health High Risk Groups

- COVID 19 Survivors

- Hospital workers who directly treated COVID 19 patients

- Family and friends of COVID 19 infected and those quarantined for COVID exposure

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The Stress Related Effects of COVID 19 Will Be A General Increase in Mental Health Disorders Among Those Affected

- Trauma is a risk factor for virtually all mental disorders (particularly depressive, anxiety, dissociative and personality disorders)

- Some trauma survivors are resilient, some develop PTSD and others develop other mental disorders

- The variety of symptoms that trauma survivors express (mood, cognitive, perceptual, somatic), make it difficult to classify

- Post Traumatic Stress defies categories, the authors conclude that Post Traumatic Stress is currently best conceptualized as a specifier for other mental disorders (Guina, Baker, Stinson, Maust, Coles, Broderick, 2017)

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Complicated Grief May Also Increase

- Complicated grief is a recently recognized condition that occurs in about 7% of bereaved people

- People with this condition are caught up in rumination about the circumstances of the death, worry about its consequences, or excessive avoidance of reminders of the loss

- Unable to comprehend the finality and consequences of the loss, they resort to excessive avoidance of reminders of the loss as they are tossed helplessly on waves of intense emotion

- People with complicated grief need help, and clinicians need to know how to recognize the symptoms and how to provide help

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Will COVID 19 Have An Effect On General Population Mental Health?

- A study of 25.6 million U.S. adults over 8 years found overall healthcare and outpatient expenditures, and outpatient visits significantly increased as psychological distress increased from no/low to mild-moderate to severe ([1]Pirraglia, Hampton, Rosen, Witt, 2011)

- .A study of 21,510 U.S. adults found mental distress was significantly and positively associated with the probability of any health expenditure as well as the dollar value of that spending ([2]Nguyen, Chan, Keeler, 2015)

Predictive Margins with 95% CIs
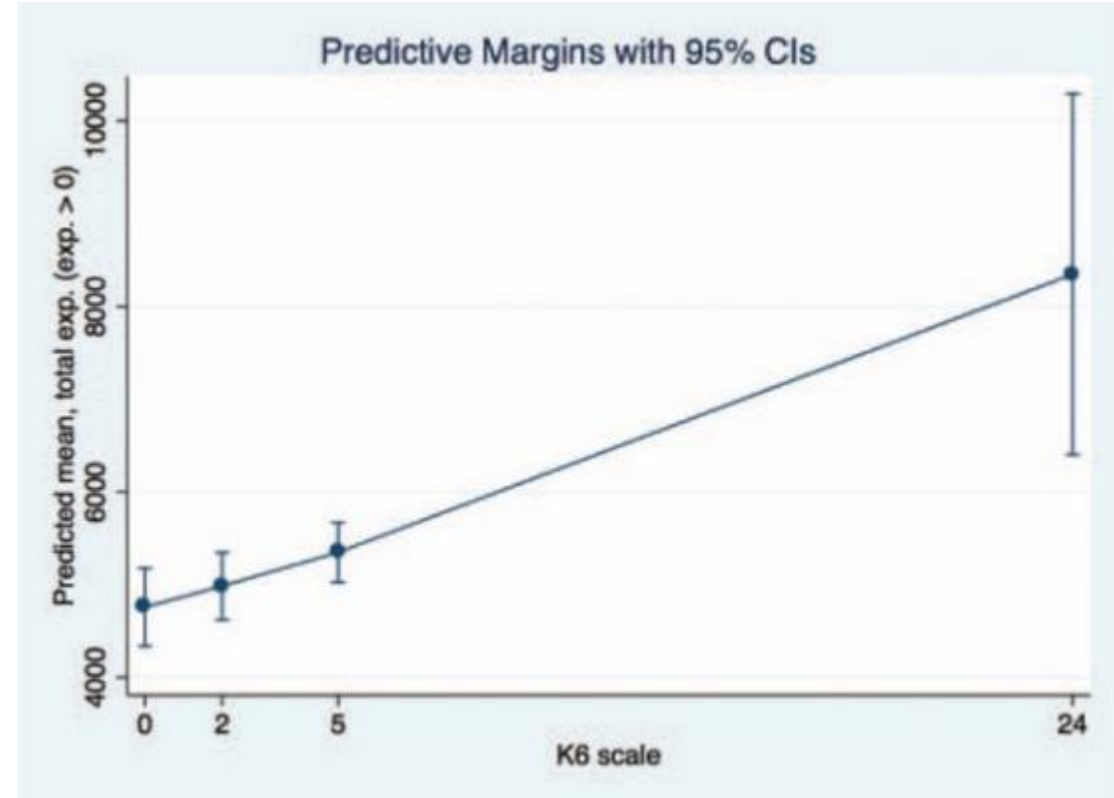
Population General Distress Drives Healthcare Utilization

- Concerns about finances is a major factor in population general distress

- What is unknown is how the COVID 19 economic shutdown will affect population general distress and healthcare utilization

- Another unknown is how much and how long will concerns about COVID 19 affect the general population distress

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What Can We Do For Ourselves And Our patients?

The Evidence Base for Mental Health Disaster Response

- **There are no evidence supported interventions for addressing mental health aspects of people affected disasters or events such as major accidents or terrorist attacks** (Kornør, Weisæth, Winje, Ekeberg, Daae, Swensen, Tinderholt Myrhaug, Ormstad, 2006; Kornør, Winje, Ekeberg, Johansen, Weisæth, Ormstad, Steiro, Fretheim, 2007; North & Pfefferbaum, 2013)

- **40% of people distressed by a disaster or event have a pre- existing mental health condition**

- In post disaster settings, a systematic framework of case identification, triage, and mental health interventions should be integrated into emergency medicine and trauma care responses

North & Pfefferbaum, 2013

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The Evidence Base for Mental Health Pandemic Response

- In an era of heightened concern over bioterrorism and a potential influenza pandemic, hospital preparedness for responding to infectious disease outbreaks is essential

- During such outbreaks, mental and behavioral health problems may constitute an important part of the demand placed on hospitals

- **Objective:** This paper summarizes available literature addressing hospital preparedness for mental and behavioral health interventions in the event of an infectious disease outbreak and identifies the barriers to improvement (Terhakopian & Benedek, 2007)

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The Evidence Base for Mental Health Pandemic Response (2)

- **Methods:** A systematic literature review using the MEDLINE database

- **Results:** The review indicates that little literature documents recent hospital performance in or readiness for disaster mental and behavioral health interventions

Terhakopian & Benedek 2007

The Evidence Base for Mental Health Pandemic Response (3)

- The problems related to financing such preparedness are likely contributors to this finding and must be overcome if improvements are to be made

- **Conclusions:** More research is needed to categorically examine the preparedness of hospitals for mental and behavioral health interventions during times of disaster

Terhakopian & Benedek 2007

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General Crisis Intervention Principles Have Been Developed by Expert Consensus

▪ There are no evidence based crisis intervention techniques; however, there are established principles developed by expert consensus:

1. **Promoting a sense of safety**

2. **Promoting calming**

3. **Promoting self efficacy**

4. **Promoting connectedness and**

5. **Promoting hope**

Hobfoll, Watson, Bell, Bryant, Brymer, Friedman, Friedman, Gersons, de Jong, Layne, Maguen, Neria, Norwood, Pynoos, Reissman, Ruzek, Shalev, Solomon, Steinberg, Ursano, 2007

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Crisis Counseling for General Practice

- **Background:** There is a high prevalence of psychological trauma exposure among primary care patients
- General practitioners are well placed to provide appropriate support for patients coping with trauma
- **Objective:** This article outlines an evidence-based early response to psychological trauma
- **Discussion:** Psychological first aid is the preferred approach in providing early assistance to patients who have experienced a traumatic event

Wade, Howard, Fletcher, Cooper, Forbes, 2013

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Crisis Counseling for General Practice (2)

- General practitioners can be guided by five empirically derived principles in their early response: promoting a sense of safety, calming, self efficacy, connectedness and hope

- Structured psychological interventions, including psychological debriefing, are not routinely recommended in the first few weeks following trauma exposure

- General practitioner self care is an important aspect of providing post-trauma patient care

    Wade, Howard, Fletcher, Cooper, Forbes, 2013

Beacon on Social Distancing

- "Man is by nature a social animal" penned Aristotle in his treatise *Politics*, and since that time, scientists have confirmed that humans are indeed social animals

- Our brains are quite literally wired to be social

- Therefore, when we are called upon to engage in "social distancing" during the coronavirus pandemic, it's not our nature to do so

- What, then, does it mean to "socially distance"? Does it mean not going to parties? Not going on a date or taking a trip?

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Beacon on Social Distancing (2)

- Concrete guidelines can answer these questions. Below are links to help you guide your "social distancing" behavior

- What about social isolation?

    There is no avoiding social distancing to control this pandemic

    Of course, **the people who are most threatened by the pandemic—people older than 60 and those with preexisting conditions—are the ones most vulnerable to isolation**, however, all of us face loneliness   as we agree to social distance to bring coronavirus under control

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Beacon on Social Distancing (3)

- Isolation and loneliness are significant mental health challenges, and so we need to take care of both our mental and physical health (indeed, our mental and physical health are intertwined)
- Following are some tips to help you stay connected during this public health emergency

Mitigate your own risk

- If you're young and healthy, take recommended health precautions seriously
- Young people are some of the highest risk for transmitting the virus to others
- Wash your hands frequently; stay away from crowded public spaces (keep a distance of six feet between you and others); and leave the house only when necessary

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Beacon on Social Distancing (4)

Get together outdoors and not in tight crowded spaces

- Take a walk in the park or the woods
- Do not go to a movie or eat in a restaurant
- Be sure to check with your community's guidance as some areas are advising against this type of activity

Virtual connection

- During times like these, virtual connection is critical For people who are not technology savvy, be sure to provide needed technical support
- Use technology such as video chat or FaceTime, share dinner that way or have a virtual book club meeting

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Beacon on Social Distancing (5)

- **Be proactive about staying in touch**

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves to make that telephone call, text or video chat

Now may be the best time to reach out to that long-lost friend

- **Keep yourself busy**

If you have a focused project, you have less time to think about your social isolation

Is there a project around the house you've been meaning to do, such as clean out the garage?

How about Sudoku, a crossword, or a puzzle?

- **Limit media overload**

Too much news about the coronavirus can accelerate our sense of isolation

Watch a movie or read a book that connects you to the human experience and the resiliency people can have to overcome challenges

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Beacon on Housebound

- You're working from home until further notice. The same is true for your spouse. Yesterday, you learned that your children's school system is shutting down until public health officials have a better understanding of the coronavirus. And let's not forget about the family dog who takes up a lot of space sprawled in the living room

- This quarantine-like scenario adds a new dimension to "family time". As much as you love your family, all of that togetherness can become taxing after days—or even weeks—of doing it

- Below are some tips on how to navigate the uncharted waters of living many of the 24 hours under the same roof so that you and your family members can keep a healthy mental equilibrium

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Beacon on Housebound (2)

Set expectations

Meet with your family to discuss your individual roles on how to make this situation work well for everyone

What is expected of everybody? For example, what does the work and school day look like while at home? When does the work/school day start and end? Can your children engage in social media activity during the "school day"?

Develop and stick to a routine

Get up and greet the day as you normally would. Dress for the day as usual. Start the work and school days at their normal hours. Take breaks, do your chores and other daily activities as you normally would. Treat the workday as a workday and let weekends be special

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Beacon on Housebound (3)

- **Be physically active. Physical activity is important for everyone, particularly younger children and teens**

- When the family is working from home or going to virtual school, it is easy to fall in the habit of staying confined at home and neglecting physical activity

- Encourage your children to be outside as much as possible (but not with others) If you don't have access to a yard or the outdoors, keep moving in your home as exercise helps to boost mood

- There are many exercises you can do on your own—planks, jumping rope, push-ups etc.,—or you can follow exercise regimens found on the internet

- **Be sure to set aside time for physical activity**

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Beacon on Housebound (4)

Set daily goals

- You can get things done at home

- In fact, a work-from-home scenario—without the normal commute—opens up time to accomplish those tasks you've long been avoiding, such as organizing your closet or cleaning out the garage

Don't take things too personally

- If you find your spouse or children are sticking to themselves alone in a room, don't jump to any conclusions

- They probably just need time to themselves, which may seem more apparent as you are together much more than you normally are

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Beacon on Housebound (5)

- **Take advantage of the time.** As the adage goes, time is our enemy. Normally, we don't have enough time to do the things we want, such as being with our loved ones
- However, as this public emergency moves closer and closer to a quarantine—mandated or self-imposed—you may have more time, and if you handle the situation right, **you might actually look back on this time as a period of togetherness and growth**
- Watch more movies as family; play family games; or learn a new craft or skill together, such as making the perfect soufflé
- These tips are a good place to start for a healthy family dynamic during times such as these
- However, if you need further advice or guidance, call your company's employee assistance program, which specializes in addressing work/life and other common challenges

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Beacon on Media Coverage

- When an outbreak such as the coronavirus (COVID-19) happens, it's tempting to immerse yourself in round-the-clock coverage
- News about the virus's impact may make you feel helpless and afraid. How do you stay informed without feeling overwhelmed by anxiety?
- **Look for overexposure**

Here are some signs that worry about COVID-19 is getting to be too much:

1. Thinking about the virus all the time
2. Getting upset about what will happen
3. Having trouble keeping up with daily tasks
4. Snapping at loved ones
5. Getting more tired than usual but can't sleep

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Beacon on Media Coverage (2)

- Too much media exposure can be overpowering
- Take a step back and make changes to help you and your family manage your anxiety about the virus

- **Take care of yourself**

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Beacon on Media Coverage (3)

How you or your loved ones respond to COVID 19 news is key

Here are some tips:

- **Learn about the virus-** Look for trusted healthcare sources for information (the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, Mayo Clinic, etc.), and stick with only one or two of them to get updates
- Limit the number of times each week that you check in
- **Keep on task-** Try to read or listen to the news when it's not in the way of your daily routine. Skip catching up on the media update right before bed

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Beacon on Media Coverage (4)

- **Talk with a trusted peer** Family members or friends may make you feel less alone in your concerns. Even if you don't see eye-to-eye, listen to what they have to say and why
- **Check in with your loved ones** to make sure they are coping well with concerns about the virus
- **Help others and be a role model (from afar)** Call people Smile and wave from a safe distance. Work from home to help others in need (for example, help an elderly person pay bills online)
- **Take care of your kids**
- Kids are curious by nature and will ask about distressing news. Don't brush the topic off or make it taboo

Beacon on Media Coverage (5)

- **Learn what you can about COVID-19 so you feel comfortable talking about it -**This will help you put it in perspective for them
- **Talk about plans that are in place to help keep everyone safe**
- Let them know the steps you are taking as a family to stay healthy, as well as what governments are doing to help prevent the virus's spread
- **Be a good role model-** Your children will look to you to decide if their fears are grounded
- Model good hygiene, reasonable precautions, and a calm attitude

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Beacon on Media Coverage (6)

Use your resources

- For immediate crisis counseling for emotional distress related to the virus, contact the <u>SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline</u> 24/7 at 800-985-5990

- You may also call your company's employee assistance program, which specializes in addressing mental health and other life challenges

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Main Points

What do we know about mental health after a pandemic?

Very limited data, mostly from SARS 2003; pandemic survivors and hospital workers directly involved in treatment have increased risk of multiple types of mental health disorders years after pandemic

Main Points (2)

What type of mental health sequel can we expect after the COVID 19 pandemic crests?

- Increase in a variety of mental disorders among COVID 10 survivors and the medical personnel that directly treated COVID 19 patients
- A possible increase in complicated grief
- An unknown but likely negative effect on population distress and healthcare utilization

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Main Points (3)

What can we do for ourselves and our patients?

Practice:

1. **Promoting a sense of safety,**
2. **Promoting calming,**
3. **Promoting self efficacy,**
4. **Promoting connectedness and**
5. **Promoting hope** with all of our communications to coworkers, patients family and ourselves

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Thank You

Contact Us

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