



AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY TO ASSESS STRESS AMONG AYURVEDA PRACTITIONERS DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The COVID – 19 pandemic is found to create immense stress in different strata of society. The study was conducted to assess the stress among Ayurveda practitioners during the COVID-19 scenario. The study conducted was an observational study. A questionnaire in the form of a Google doc was distributed to the study population by snow ball method. The sample size was fixed to be 60. The responses received were statistically analyzed. The study identified that some Ayurveda practitioners has confront considerable amount of stress in their daily life during the scenario of COVID-19. Fear and anxiety about the novel disease and what could possibly happen as a result of the disease is the basic cause in inducing the stress. Ayurveda Practitioners who are exposed to patients in a daily basis is one among the highly risked community in getting infected. The psycho somatic as well as financial well being of the whole world has been affected with COVID-19 and the lockdowns. In such a scenario, the stress among Ayurveda practitioners who are one among the critically exposed group to corona virus should be considered and adequate strategies should be created to ease the situation. Timely intervention should be done to aid Ayurveda practitioners in managing stress during the time of COVID-19.

Keywords: Stress, COVID-19, Ayurveda practitioners

INTRODUCTION

Mental health concerns and treatment usually take a backseat when the limited resources are geared for pandemic containment.¹ The corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.²

Fear, worry and stress are normal responses to perceived over real threats, and at times when we are faced with uncertainty or the unknown. So, it is normal and understandable that people are experiencing fear in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.³

Bereavement, isolation, loss of income and fear are triggering mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones. Many people may be facing increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia, and anxiety.⁴

Studies show that high levels of loneliness, stress and burn outs are faced by physicians during COVID-19. As a result, the rate of stress and mental health problems amongst doctors has been increased.

Physicians face a greater risk of exposure, work load; moral dilemmas etc. during patient care and have to deal with a continuously changing clinical practice environment like tele-medicine. The risk factors contributing to poor mental health outcome for Doctors include their level of exposure to diseases, being quarantined and personal fears. Many of the health symptoms faced by them include depression, anxiety, insomnia and distress.

As COVID-19 is a newly evolved pandemic, Doctors has to function simultaneously as learners and care givers. Simultaneously they are having less autonomy and control in their work – setting.

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 amongst Ayurveda Doctors and developing appropriate strategies to address these stresses is the need of the hour.

Aims and objectives

To understand and assess level of stress among Ayurveda practitioners during COVID-19.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Inclusion criteria

Ayurveda doctors in Kerala
Age –Between 25 – 60 years
Ayurveda doctors practicing during COVID-19 pandemic

Exclusion criteria

Ayurveda practitioners who have stopped OPDs during COVID-19 pandemic
Those affected with physical or mental illness

Study design: Observational study

A self-explanatory questionnaire was made with 20 questions to assess stress. The questionnaire had a three-point Likert scale. A Google doc was made including the questionnaire. This was

given to different Ayurveda practitioners coming under the inclusion criteria using snow ball method.

RESULTS

Among the 60 individuals participated in the study, 20 were academicians and 40 were practitioners.

		YES	MAYBE	NO
1	Do you have thoughts of being in danger?	20%	36.7%	43.3%
2	Do you often think about the possibility of self-illness?	13.3%	70%	16.7%
3	Do you have worry about family infection?	36.7%	51.7%	11.7%
4	Do you have poor sleep quality?	6.7%	20%	73.3%
5	During the past six months, did you ever feel the need of psychological guidance?	11.7%	11.7%	76.7%
6	Do you have worry of being infected?	23.3%	40%	36.7%
7	Do you have any fears?	21.7%	25%	53.3%
8	Do you have confidence in the victory of the pandemic?	70%	26.7%	3.3%
9	Do you think that the current outbreak is serious?	75%	13.3%	11.7%
10	Have someone close to you been infected with COVID-19?	40%	0%	60%
11	Do you have an excessive urge to wash hands again and again?	18.3%	6.7%	75%
12	Are you experiencing increased conflicts with people close to you?	30%	23.3%	46.7%
13	Do you have uncertainties regarding your job?	28.3%	15%	56.7%
14	Do you have concern for your own safety?	48.3%	18.3%	33.3%
15	Do you have fears of what the future will bring?	31.7%	30%	38.3%
16	Do you think that you won't be able to cope up with COVID-19 scenario?	6.7%	15%	78.3%
17	Do you have financial worries?	28.3%	33.3%	38.3%
18	Have you maintained daily regular routines in the past six months?	51.7%	21.7%	26.7%
19	Do you have more verbal arguments with people near you?	21.7%	11.7%	66.7%
20	Have you tried to avoid COVID-19 news as far as possible?	26.7%	16.7%	56.7%

DISCUSSION

The role of stress in the etiology of several diseases is well recognized in Ayurvedic science and modern medicine.⁵

The world is crippling due to pandemic corona virus disease (COVID-19) which is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS- CoV-2).⁶

In the study, the response to stress in Ayurvedic physicians during COVID-19 was the subject of concern. Individuals living in this era have not experienced a pandemic like COVID-19. So, the socio economic as well as psycho- somatic response in facing this situation is novel. Even then, the current study shows that a wide range of response has been given by different individuals of the same class in facing COVID-19. This may be may be due to the difference in prakriti, satwa, sara etc. in the study population.

The concern regarding one's own safety and worry about family infection was recognized as the major stress factors in Ayurveda physicians who participated in the study. Conflicts with people who are close, fear of future, financial worries, defying constant emotional and physical enduring were seen as significant stressors in some of the study population. These stressors generated can be due to the imbalance created in the socio-economic status in the society during lock down periods.

Stress in long term can produce lasting, low level stress that continues to pour out extra stress hormones over a long period. This causes depletion of body's reserves, weaken body's immune system and other problems.⁷

Stress among health care professionals can also depends on the type of job (i.e., the type of medical practice, specialty etc), the organization, the personality of the doctor, the interpersonal relationships within and outside the health care fraternity and work-life balance⁸

CONCLUSION

The present study identified that some Ayurveda Doctors working during COVID-19 has confront considerable amount of stress in their daily life. Timely intervention should be done to aid them in coping this situation.

Limitation of the study

The study was completed in a small sample size. Due to lockdown, the data collection couldn't be done personally. So, data collection was done through Google docs.

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