

The Impact of Covid-19 Quarantine Policy on Mental Health among Adolescents

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Abstract. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, governments have implemented a variety of public health measures (social isolation, quarantine, lockdown, and curfews) to stop the spread of the coronavirus infection. These actions have significantly slowed the epidemic's spread, but they will also have some unfavorable impacts. According to reliable data, the experience of quarantine has a significant psychological impact on people of all ages, and its impact on mental health is very concerning, especially for adolescents. With reference to the body of existing literature, this paper seeks to investigate the effects of lockdown measures, such as isolation, in response to the COVID-19 epidemic on teenage mental health.

Keywords: COVID-19, Quarantine, Mental Health, Adolescent.

1. Introduction

The new coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak started in Wuhan in late 2019, expanded quickly, and infected thousands of people. The Chinese authorities responded swiftly to the outbreak, but with so many individuals are moving about, each infected person in this situation has the ability to influence a significant number of close connections across a considerable amount of time and space. Some potentially infected people traveled around the world, including on international flights, and spread the virus to other countries. Subsequently, COVID-19 has been discovered around the world, WHO declared that the COVID-19 a pandemic and became a global concern on 11 of March 2020 [1]. Governments all over the world have implemented equivalent lockdown measures in response to the terrible COVID-19. Several nations apply border closures and entry restrictions. Most nations used non-pharmaceutical measures in the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic to stop SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from spreading. Measures such as quarantine and staying at home were regularly used and implemented [2]. For example, China attempted to implement an unprecedented city-level quarantine in Wuhan in January 2020, prohibiting intercity travel and severely limiting city traffic.

Quarantine is defined as Separating and limiting the mobility of those who have been exposed to or may be exposed to a contagious disease. Research shows that quarantine can be useful in minimizing the scope of contamination, preventing the spread of infectious diseases, and may also shorten the time it takes for infected individuals under observation to receive a diagnosis. Nonetheless, quarantine has a negative societal impact. Those who are quarantined could struggle financially and feel anxious. Fearing forced mass quarantine, some find ways to flee or conceal their travel history. The rights of an individual or society to freedom of movement and association may be restricted as a result of quarantine. As mentioned above, people who congregate in centralized isolation settings may be at an increased risk of infection. Additionally, quarantine can lead to a person's financial instability, social stigma, and deteriorated mental health [3]. Among these, the effect of isolation on people's mental health, particularly the effect on adolescents, merits research. A survey of 7,980 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 who were isolated during the Wuhan pandemic revealed that anxiety was prevalent in 21.7 percent of participants and depression was prevalent in 24.6 percent. Evidently, long-term home limitations could be harmful to adolescents' mental health due to a radical shift in lifestyle and a variety of pressures, including boredom, frustration, and fears of infection [4]. Therefore, the focus of this study will be on how quarantine impacts adolescents' mental health.

2. Social activities

The COVID-19 epidemic has had an impact on each of our four pillars of health—physical, mental, social, and emotional—in distinct ways. Numerous studies have shown how crucial it is to connect and socialize in order to preserve excellent mental health. It has been demonstrated that social networks, community involvement, and engagement are related to both physical and mental health [5]. Social engagement and participation, especially for adolescents at their age are crucial.

The majority of teenagers are in adolescence, which is marked by increasing social sensitivity and a need for peer connection. The options for adolescents to interact with people in person outside of the home are drastically decreasing as a result of social isolation policies implemented globally to stop the spread of COVID-19 [6]. Confinement strategies like isolation prevent them from leaving the house and losing face to face contact with their friends and society, leading to social disengagement and perhaps anxiety. According to a survey of 322 adolescents who were isolated at home in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 epidemic, 67.08% of the participants reported having depression of varied degrees, 49.38% experienced anxiety, and 40.68% reported stress[7]. According to a cross-sectional study conducted in 2020 at Wuhan, more than 20% of teenagers reported feeling anxious during COVID-19 isolation [4]. In this study, participants were selected from 27 secondary schools and 11 senior schools, and online questionnaires were used to gather information about the students' psychological conditions throughout the quarantine.

The unexpected quarantine policy has drastically altered teens' way of life. They must deal with a variety of pressures, including boredom, fear of infection, and other things, which eventually cause anxiety. The behavior change brought on by quarantine is particularly difficult to accept for young people who are unable to go out, play sports, and make friends [4]. The majority of a teen's hours are typically spent at school or in other social settings, such gyms or entertainment venues. Except for the people they reside with, they must now spend months being confined to their homes while maintaining only online contacts with peers and adults [8]. This kind of circumstance may also have an impact on some teenagers' family relationships. Family conflicts are also more likely to occur because individuals and families stay at home for long periods of time due to quarantine. Even though staying home and spending time with family can be enjoyable, Teens who live too close from their families may experience anxiety. Because while kids must maintain a close relationship with their parents, they must simultaneously maintain a sense of separation from them. Teenagers might, however, easily feel anxious due to the deprivation of alone space over the long run because their interpersonal distance is no longer varied as a result of the epidemic prevention and control phase. It is important to note that teenagers are more likely than adults to experience mental health issues in the absence of social activities because they need to interact with others more than adults do, are less adept at managing their emotions, lack maturity and extensive social experience, and are more reliant on group activities.

3. Claustrophobia

Both home and centralized quarantines require people to stay in a fully enclosed space for an extended period of time. In this case, people who are isolated are prone to depression, anxiety, and even claustrophobia, especially adolescents who are psychologically vulnerable.

As the dread of small or confined spaces, claustrophobia is a condition. Most frequently categorized as an anxiety condition, this phobia is the most prevalent. Dread of suffocation and fear of bondage are the two distinct but linked anxieties that make up claustrophobia. By avoiding enclosed spaces, many who suffer from claustrophobia try to cope. The dread of being trapped in a confined space may be the real cause of a person's aversion to enclosed spaces, which prevents them from fleeing when they are in danger. The same subjective emotion, which is seen as an indication of claustrophobia, can be displayed by persons who are in quarantine and unable to contact with the outside world for whatever reason [8]. If patients suffer from claustrophobia, they will worry about being in cramped areas. They might not be able to concentrate or perform. In a small area, patients'

ideas could become overwhelming. They might not be sleeping because of your thoughts. The surrounding environment has a strong influence on how claustrophobia develops, and quarantine in an enclosed place is one of the main factors contributing to claustrophobia. Especially for teenagers who have already suffered from claustrophobia themselves, quarantine might exacerbate their mental health problems and lead to some terrible consequences such as suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Approximately 12.5% of people, according to statistics, experience claustrophobia. Claustrophobia is more prevalent in women than in males, and while it can strike anyone at any age, it typically strikes during puberty and youth [9]. The current study suggests that anxiety and claustrophobia decrease with age, which indicates that claustrophobia and anxiety are negatively correlated to the age. [8]. Teenagers are more delicate and sensitive on the inside than adults, and they are quickly upset by changes in the world outside. For example, the conditions of centralized isolation sites are bad. The environment of some isolation hotels is poor, the rooms are small, and the food is not rich. Because of this condition, it is simple for youngsters to develop resistance, experience anxiety and despair over time, and finally develop claustrophobia. Many times, quarantine staff and policies just take quarantine into account and don't take the ideas and opinions of the quarantined into account. Attention should be paid to teenagers' mental health during isolation, especially with regard to claustrophobia. If teenagers because it had a quarantine experience claustrophobia, produced a mental health problem, is likely to be his life will be troubled by the disease, if the disease is severe will make them feel fear in the plane or train or choking feeling. It will also give them strong resistance to quarantine policies in the future. As a result, because it causes claustrophobia and anxiety issues, the quarantine time has become a new hazard to people. Maintaining the safety and emotional health of persons in quarantine becomes crucial during this challenging period [8].

4. Education

One of the first steps the globe took to try to manage the COVID-19 spread was to shut down schools, which had an impact on over three-quarters of students worldwide. More than hundreds of million pupils still experience educational disruptions a year after the outbreak. Many schools remain completely or partially closed to prevent contact from face-to-face education, leaving young people's learning completely affected by the pandemic, changing their daily lives and potentially putting them and their families in a difficult position [10].

The goal of stopping offline classes is to cut down on adolescents' social interactions and stop the virus from spreading among students, which will stop the epidemic from spreading. However, there is some evidence to indicate that quarantine measures, such as closing schools and limiting teen social interaction, can result in mental health issues in a variety of ways. Teenagers now attend school online because of the epidemic, which limits their access to school amenities like different sports facilities. Schools contribute to the safety net that is put in place for kids, and their removal might result in an increase in abuse or neglect. Teenagers who take online courses at home are cut off from their peers and teachers on a social level. They could experience anxiety as a result of feeling alone and lacking social support [11]. According to a study on the mental health of British teenagers during school closures Among 612 girls and 389 boys aged 13 to 18, 47.4% of the girls and 59.6% of the boys showed symptoms of anxiety, and 19.4% of the girls and 21.9 % of the boys reported symptoms of depression [11]. School attendance due to isolation requirements prevents adolescents from receiving school mental health services as usual. In one American survey of visits, it was discovered that 12 to 17-year-olds' outpatient mental health visits rose by roughly 31% between the 2019 and pandemic in comparison to the same time period in 2019, the number of pediatric emergency department visits resulting from psychosocial issues increased by 69%, and pediatric mental health visits climbed considerably [10].

It is worth noting that for many teenagers, the learning efficiency of online courses is significantly lower than that of attending classes at school, because they are easy to have inattention without the supervision of teachers at home, which leads to the decline of their grades. However, the more

conscious students still have excellent grades. The sense of gap between front and back and the consequent pressure of parents can easily cause mental health problems in adolescents. Another important consideration is that socioeconomic disparities continue to provide challenges for the growth of online education. Online courses at home caused by quarantine need certain equipment and conditions to support. In the US, households receiving nutrition assistance programs, which make up about 12% of the population, are 9% more likely to have no Internet access at all and are 15% less likely to have high-speed Internet access [10]. Under such circumstances, conducting online classes during the isolation period will also cause the gap between the rich and the poor of young people, and mental health problems will occur in a long time.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the aforementioned research demonstrates that lockdown strategies like quarantine have a detrimental effect on adolescents' mental health and they have numerous and enduring impacts. Segregation policies can deprive teens of their outdoor socializing and face-to-face time with friends, and can leave teens who spend long periods of time in their rooms with terrible claustrophobia that will affect their daily lives for a long time to come. Long school closures can also cause anxiety in teenagers. Teenagers who are unable to obtain mental health services at school as usual may experience anxiety during prolonged school closures, which may increase the number of outpatient hospital appointments. However, quarantine is crucial in preventing the new coronavirus from spreading, therefore we must take action to lessen the harm this experience does to young people. This can be achieved through appropriate communication, encouraging young people to adopt healthy habits, strengthening positive relationships with their parents and so on. With these steps, the negative effects of isolation on teenage mental health can be reduced.

Therefore, more focus on people's mental health, especially that of young people, should be given in the face of COVID-19 prevention and management.

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