

COVID-19 And Mental Turmoil Among Medical Students; Unheard Challenges; Commentary on “Impact of COVID-19 on Medical Students’ Mental Wellbeing in Jordan”

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Introduction

Khaled Seetan et al has done great work in the recent article published in PLOS ONE entitled as “*Impact of COVID-19 on medical students’ mental wellbeing in Jordan*” in putting out the light over the least covered side in chaos of pandemic by tracing out the pressure that university students had to go through amidst this pandemic of COVID-19 [1]. The fact of sudden outbreak and shattered life aspects of every individual’s despite of their possession and the stability of countries they belong is no longer new. World has clearly visualized the pain, sorrow, helplessness and collapse of every single aspect that came as other side of global pandemic. However, it is strange to note the least efforts taken to cover the impacts over students in these past two years either due to incompetence’s of policy makers or neglecting this part while competing in the race of industrialization of vaccinations.

The author has insightfully covered the mental challenges that students had to go through covering the multiple dimensions of disturbance in interpersonal relationship among family members and peer groups, increased stress level, altered day to day activities including sleep-wake cycle, dietary patterns, exercise and overall life style which are key towards basic psychological functioning. In spite of overall coverage, the author has somehow failed to recommend the different approaches that could have been taken by medical students themselves and in collaboration with university and policy makers to sensitize the populations regarding upliftment of mental well being midway pandemics. These includes developing behaviors in regularity of daily routine categorized as primary routine necessary for carrying out basic biological needs and secondary routines as mandatory for uplifting mental functioning depicted in the form of motivation, circumstances, preferences along with exercises, indulgent into leisure/communal activities, and discrete interventions as required with works or study. Practice of these pattern enhances the productivity and might act as insulating cover towards the mental impacts of COVID-19

[2, 3]. Comprehensive care packages from university level with involvement of faculties and multidimensional groups shielding mental health of students play a vital role in teaching them skills, ways of connecting with people and appealing for support from professionals. Moreover, it helps to draw the attention of teams towards struggling students and extend hand for support towards comprehensive care, tracing the mental health issues and crisis of students at beginning stage [4, 5].

Mental challenges of students during COVID-19S

University students are prone for stress outburst going through and managing diverse responsibilities and needs and the uncertainties that came along with COVID-19 is fueling the mental exhaustion among them. For example, university students have tight schedule which they follow everyday right from they open their eyes till late nights along with part-time jobs to look after their financial needs. Now, as the global shutdown has been implemented, they are stuck at particular scenario with full leisure time and uncertainties. The burden of finance for universities fees, living expenses and accommodation is another load in their shoulder. Moreover, restricted class interaction among peer groups, teachers and school environment had reduced the satisfaction to work hard and stay motivated towards their study. Similarly, having limited access to internet, efficient digital devices and adjustment to new system of online port is adding frustration and wear out among them [6]. In the survey conducted, it was concluded that global pandemic COVID-19 has affected the mental well-being of students to extreme levels and major themes identified for summarizing the causes of this downfall are worries about own health and the health of loved ones, difficulty in concentration due to lack of accountability and motivations, distraction by social media, internet and video games, lack of interactive learning, monotony of life, changes in sleeping habits, social isolations due to reduced interactions with people, lack of in-person interactions, degraded academic performances due to online classes, altered eating pattern due to increased eating/snacking, inconsistent eating, emotional eating. Furthermore,

the themes included financial difficulties due to impacts on current or future employment and financial situations of their families too. Similarly, class workload due to online courses and class projects, increased and difficult assignments along with depressive thoughts of loneliness, insecurities, powerlessness/hopelessness and importantly suicidal thoughts that they have as a result of academic issues, problems with parents and fear from insecurity that they had to go through conclude the mental battle they had to go through during lockdown [7]. In addition to that medical student have another academic requirement of clinical posting but as a consequence of this pandemic, this has been halted creating the state of confusion regarding their clinical skills as they no longer can approach to patients and simulations adding them the extra burden of more expensive and intense training to re-gain the minimum levels of skill sets [8].

Discussion

The efforts of author Khaled Seetan et al to bring light over such crucial yet so neglected topic is commendable [1]. They cover the major and devastating mental trauma that students had to go due to Covid-19. The results of the study has been the unheard voice of different students from various part of world fighting their own battles while adjusting to green time unknowingly developing the mental health issues [9]. This call for proper plans of action to intervene from each possible sector dealing with students in any form in urgent basis. Intervening like collaborating mental health subjects in each stream and digital interventions like group exercise, meditation, accountability exercise via virtual methods and incorporating tele mental health services might be the needed backbone of our this generation of students in fighting the battle with mental health issues [10].

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the paper was written in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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