

The Impact of Covid-19 on Anxiety Levels in the General Population of the United States: An Exploratory Survey

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Abstract : Objectives: The study evaluated the impact of COVID-19 on anxiety levels in the general population in the United States. Methods: The study used an online questionnaire. It adopted the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD-7) instrument. It is a self-administered scale with seven items used as a screening tool and severity measure for generalized anxiety disorder. The participants rated the frequency of anxiety symptoms in the last two weeks on a Likert scale, which ranges from 0-3. Then the item points are summed to provide the total score. Results: Thirty-two participants completed the questionnaire. Among them, 24 (83%) females and 5 (17%) males. The age range of 18-24-year-old represented the most respondents. Only one of the participants tested positive for the COVID-19, and 39% of them, one of their family members, friends, or colleagues, tested positive for the coronavirus. Moreover, 10% have lost a family member, a close friend, or a colleague because of COVID-19. Among the respondents, there were ten who scored approximately five points on the GAD-7 scale, which indicates mild anxiety. Furthermore, eight participants scored 10 to 14 points, which put them under the category of moderate anxiety, and one individual who was categorized under severe anxiety scored 15 points. Conclusions: It is identified that most of the respondents scored the points that put them under the mild anxiety category during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also noticed that severe anxiety was the lowest among the participants, and people who tested positive and/or their family members, close friends, and colleagues were more likely to experience anxiety. Additionally, participants who lost friends or family members were also at high risk of anxiety. It is obvious the COVID-19 outcomes and too much thinking about the pandemic put people under stress which led to anxiety. Therefore, continuous assessment and monitoring of psychological outcomes during pandemics will help to establish early well-informed interventions.

Keywords : anxiety and covid-19, covid-19 and mental health outcomes, influence of covid-19 on anxiety, population and covid-19 impact on mental health

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