

Need of Psychological Counselling in CoV-19 Pandemic Scenario in 6 Countries and Challenges

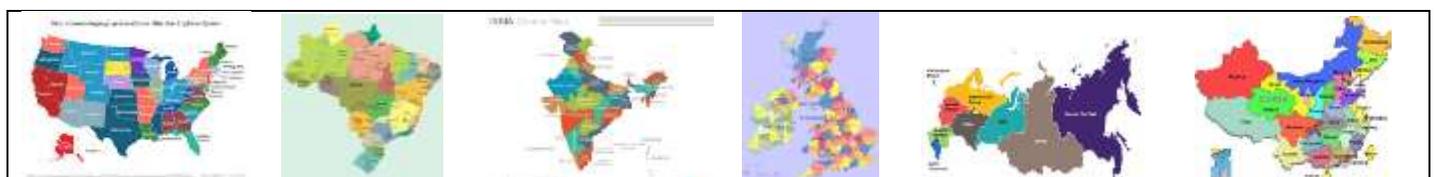
US, Brazil, India, UK, Russia & China

20th July 2020

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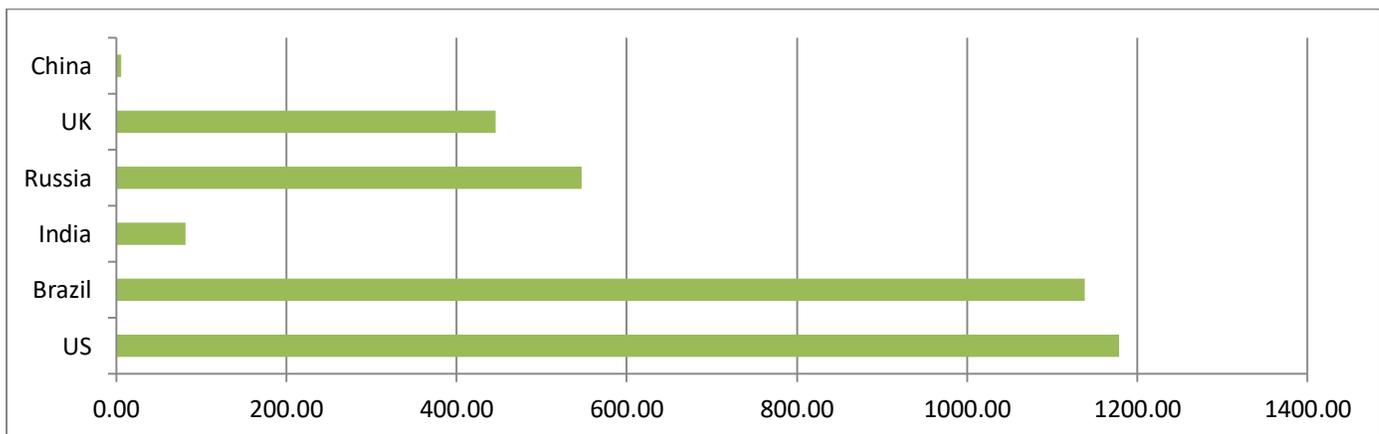
Need of Psychological Counselling in CoV-19 Pandemic Scenario in 6 Countries and Challenges

CoV-19 hit the world like a Tsunami in this year and that changed the way we work, live and do business. Let us look into the facts to understand the background, psychological implications, psychological help available and the way forward.

Background

Many of the people in few countries suddenly lost their loved ones in short window between Jan to July 2020 .US alone witnessed around 37.7 lakh people got infected and 14.2 lakh deaths, Brazil witnessed around 20.4 lakhs cases and around 7.7 lakhs deaths, India witnessed around 10.5 lakh cases and 26400 deaths and Russia witnessed around 7.5 lakh cases and 12,200 deaths. UK witnessed 2.9 lakh Cov-19 cases and 45,000 deaths and China reported 83000 cases and 4600 deaths.

Number of CoV-19 cases reported per lakh



The number of cases in India may increase when the number of tests will increase.

Inadequate health insurance coverage

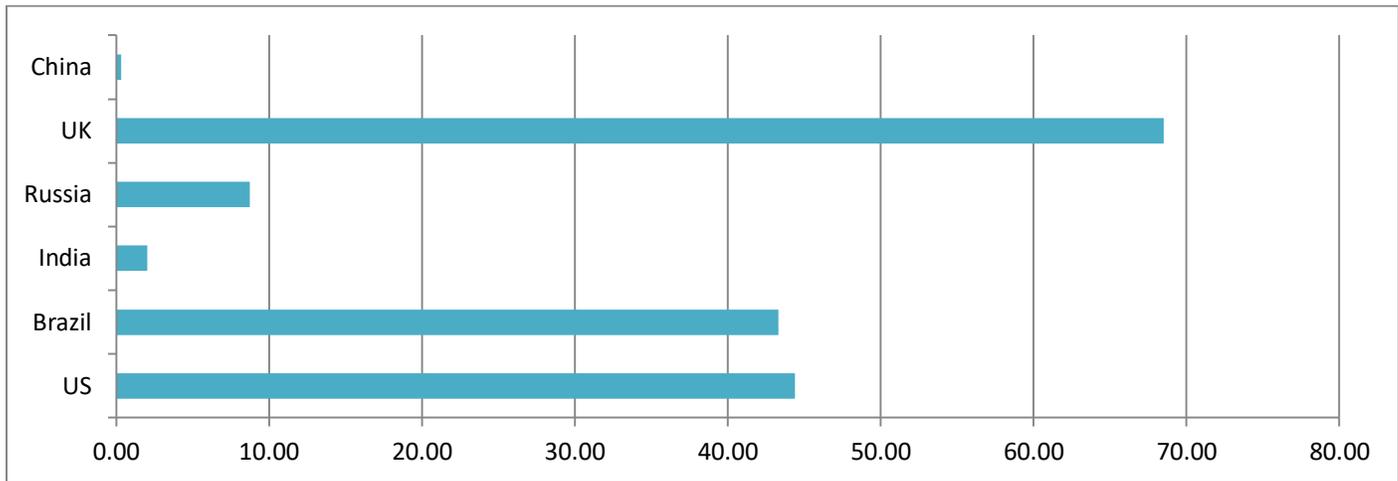
Around 80 core people in India don't have health insurance coverage. The cost of getting admitted in a hospital is costing around 1.5 lakhs to 5.5 lakhs for patients in private hospitals in most of the states in India. This can be a big financial blow to those who cannot afford health insurance and getting admitted for CoV-19 treatment of one or more family members. Among those 50 core people who got health insurance coverage, many are not adequacy covered. Many of them who got admitted, treated and recovered are not getting full reimbursement from insurers (due to technical clauses involved in the policy documents). Anticipated medical expense is increasing the anxiety of most of the people in India who are getting admitted; their family members quarantined at home, their asymptomatic primary contacts etc.

Inadequate treatment facilities in crowded cities

Many metro cities like Chennai, Mumbai and Bangalore are struggling to provide beds for the CoV-19 patients. It is not rare that 3 patients from one home may get admitted in 2 to 3 hospitals. This is also adding to the mental stress of the people who are on observation or quarantined or patients currently at their homes.

Accessibiity and affordability of the medical care is the cause of anxiety of many of the citizens in India.

Number of CoV-19 deaths reported per lakh

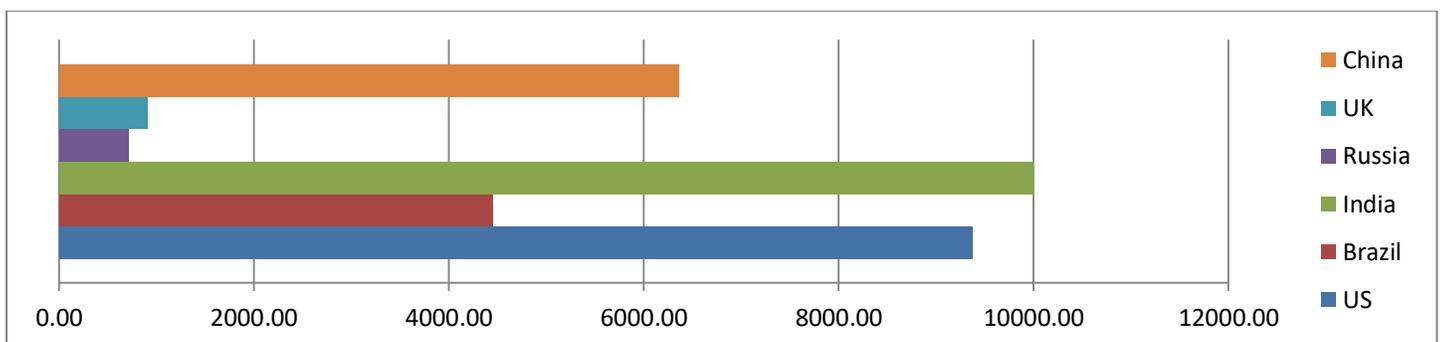


Think about the people who lost their loved ones unexpectedly and the impact of that in families. Most of them may face symptoms of depression and psychological fluctuations. Children who lost their parent or parents or the senior citizens who lost their children or grandchildren may face helplessness and anxiety.

Raising unemployment

The unemployment rates were high in many countries in last 3 years. Various sources are revealing that around 13 crore people in India lost their jobs in this year. In China it is 8.9 crore, US it is 3 crore , in Brazil it is around 80 lakh , in Russia it is 10 lakh and in UK it is only 6 lakh people who lost their jobs suddenly in this year. Many of them need to face this tough challenge to support their families.

Approximate number of people who lost jobs (per lakh)



Many of these jobs have been lost permanently. To find a new job or suitable placement (especially for people who are above 40 years of age) is going to be tougher in India. Most of them have to start businesses or agricultural production or satisfy with the jobs they may get (which will not be able to leverage their expertise and pay them for the experience and qualifications).

Reduction in individual monthly income

Many of those people who are still on the payrolls of the companies are also facing possibility of reduction in their income. In India around 65% the companies in the private sector have taken steps for salary cut of the remaining employees to adjust their expenses with the reduced revenue in their business. The employees who had availed loans (for education, vehicle, housing, personal loans etc.) and business owners (who availed business loans) have to readjust their lifestyle to pay back & close the loans. This situation may force mentally weak people to commit crimes for survival or short term gains.

Psychological implications

The people who lost their loved ones, jobs or those who are searching for getting into a new job as well as their family members need to go through are suffering together. High levels of anxiety and hopelessness they may have to handle.

Those who may have to pay loans or need to step down their lifestyle may suffer from low self-esteem, anxiety and some of them may go through depression. In this context the happiness and peace in families and organizations may decrease. There is high possibility of manifesting that in behaviours and emotional expressions of anger, violence, sadness, frustration, hopelessness, fear etc.

Unfortunately most of these people who need psychological counselling and support to get back to their normal life, may not have access to good friends or reliable relatives, who have time and maturity to listen, empathize to share these psychological traumatic situations and provide them guidance to come back to normal happy stage.

The implication of same could be more number of alcoholics, drug addicts, orphan children, divorced couples, destroyed families, unattended senior citizens. This situation can cause more crimes, suicides poor performance in work place, reduced profits for the organizations, losing customers, closure of businesses, unpaid loans , corruption, reduced GDP growth etc.

Professional psychological support available

Strategy

The strategy to encounter the psychological trauma in CoV-19 is to progress through following process: **Psychological First-aid to Rapid adaptation Counselling to Psychological support to APD (Anticipated, Plan and Deter) training** and finally to **Improve mental health system**.

The professional support is available through Psychological counsellors, if needed with the help of psychiatrists and social workers in India.

In addition to this, help of NGOs and Govt. agencies are mobilized by governing bodies in multiple countries. They have started offering free psychological counseling to the people who are affected by CoV-19 pandemic situation.

Availability of professional psychological help

Many of these countries don't have enough trained and certified psychologists specialized in counselling in all small towns to take care of those who require professional support. For example for a population of 130 crore people in India, there are only 1000 psychologists , 4000 psychiatrists and 3000 social workers.

In US there are around 106,000 psychologists, 36320 psychiatrists, 1,20,000 social workers for a population of 32 crore. 18 crore people in Brazil have around 12,500 psychologists, 10,400 psychiatrists 1,93,830 social workers. 14 crore people in Russia have around 35 psychologists, 25,000 psychiatrists 6,500 social workers. 6.6 core people in UK have around 38,000 psychologists, 11,000 psychiatrists and 106,000 Social workers.

Psychological Support Professionals	India	US	UK	Brazil	Russia	China
No. of Psychologists per one lakh	0.08	33.13	57.58	6.94	0.03	0.06
No. of Psychiatrists per one lakh	0.69	11.35	16.67	5.78	17.86	2.14
No. of Social workers per one lakh	0.46	37.50	160.61	107.71	4.64	25
Total no. of qualified professionals	1.23	81.97	234.85	120.44	22.53	27.20

The way forward

Because of the geographical separation and strict lockdown restrictions ,it is difficult to schedule physical meeting for face for face Counselling sessions, for many of the people who may be in need. . Many of the participants would like to receive psychological counseling in their mother tongue or in English. However this gap in demand and supply can be minimized by increasing the time availability and reach of the qualified counselling psychologists through telephonic or virtual counseling.

The online counselling opportunities are growing in India. Owners of Micro Enterprises and those who lost their jobs or facing wage reduction are availing these options (at time with family members). The big companies have huge Human Resource (HR) team to take care of this. They are up skilling their members for employee counselling. Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) owners started taking help of HR consulting companies, social workers, voluntary organizations (like Rotary clubs) and Industrial associations to counsel their employees for coping up with the changes needed in workplace and to manage business crisis.

Governments of countries like India, US, China and Brazil need to take care of this scenario by creating new job opportunities in new and existing sectors. For example, to get the manufacturing jobs and opportunities from other countries (especially from China), India is focusing on rapidly increasing their power production (to support industries), China is focusing to increase production of medical equipment and pharmaceutical products and US is focusing to build 3D printing capabilities (to produce wide range of specialist products quickly - may be at low cost and less quantities with high quality).

Homo sapiens survived two lakhs years in earth by overcoming all kinds of difficult situations. This CoV-19 pandemic is one among those challenges and humans will overcome and convert this also into opportunities for growth. What is important is to stay mentally and healthy during this pandemic period and explore new possibilities of growth in multiple areas (science, technology, literature, arts, business, collaboration, relationships, education, communication, agriculture, food etc.).

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TransCat People Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
Secretary, Rotary Club of Bangalore Sneha (2020-21)

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