

Letter to the Editor

The psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on older people

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To the Editor,

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted people's mental and emotional well-being of people worldwide, and older adults have been no exception. The sudden onset of the pandemic and the associated lockdowns and social distancing measures have significantly impacted the psychological well-being of older adults, which is likely to be long-lasting [1].

One of the main psychological impacts of the pandemic on older adults has been social isolation. Older adults are more likely to live alone and have limited access to technology, which makes it difficult for them to stay connected with loved ones. This isolation can harm their mental health, causing loneliness and depression. In addition, the absence of regular face-to-face interactions with family, friends, and community members can also lead to a loss of purpose and a feeling of disconnection from the world around them [2].

Another significant impact of the pandemic on older adults has been increased stress and anxiety levels. The fear of contracting the virus and the associated health risks, combined with the changes in routines and activities, have increased stress levels for many older adults. This stress can also be compounded by financial concerns and the loss of employment for older adults who are still working [3].

The pandemic has also significantly impacted the physical health of older adults, which can in turn affect their mental health. Older adults are more susceptible to severe illness and death from COVID-19, and the fear of this can cause increased levels of anxiety and stress.

The changes in routine and limited access to healthcare services have also harmed their physical health, leading to further declines in mental health.

In addition, the pandemic has disrupted access to essential mental health services for older adults [4]. Many older adults rely on in-person therapy and support groups to manage their mental health, but these services have been disrupted or discontinued due to social distancing measures. This has left many older adults without access to the mental health support they need, further exacerbating their emotional distress. Stress-related psychiatric disorders are associated with suicidal behavior, which can peak later than the pandemic.

To mitigate the psychological impact of the pandemic on older adults, governments, policymakers, healthcare providers, and families must work together to ensure that older adults have access to the support they need [5]. This includes virtual support groups, teletherapy services, and other technology-based mental health support forms. Governments can also provide financial support to older adults struggling to make ends meet due to the pandemic [5].

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the psychological well-being of older adults. The sudden onset of the pandemic and the associated lockdowns and social distancing measures have led to increased social isolation, stress, and anxiety and disrupted access to essential mental health services. To mitigate the impact of the pandemic on older adults, it is critical to provide them with access to the support they need to manage their mental health and emotional well-being.

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