

Psychological effects of lockdown during COVID-19 in population of Gujarat and mitigating factors for it: A survey

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Abstract:

Background: Recently, billion of people in the world are suffering from some kind of lockdown or quarantine due to COVID-19 infection. People who are lockdown or quarantine are very likely to develop a wide range of symptoms of psychological stress and disorders like stress, anxiety, anger, insomnia, low mood, irritability, depression, emotional exhaustion and post traumatic stress symptoms. **Methods:** A cross sectional survey was conducted within the duration of March 2020 – April 2020 by using qualitative research approach and surveying demographics, symptoms, knowledge, concerns, and precautionary measures regarding psychological effects against COVID-19 lockdown. Among the 1000 people were included in study from Gujarat, the respondents (n=266) showed interest in the study. **Results and Discussion:** Among the participants 60.89% people shows angeriness, 73.7% believe that their work efficiency is reduced or decreased, 39.5% people believe that their family income reduced or disturbed, more than half people means 54.9% people have increased their different types of negative thoughts during lockdown. The 49.6% people are using electronic media and internet, 43.2% people spend their time by reading and doing their favorite hobbies as a mitigating factors against psychological effects. **Conclusion:** During the phase of lockdown in Gujarat, India, people are suffering from varies psychological effects regarding work efficiency, family income, negative thoughts due to stress and anxiety and angeriness. We identified various factors that might help in safeguarding the psychological effect.

Key words: COVID-19, Lockdown, Psychological effect, Mitigating factors, Gujarat

Key message: To survey the psychological effects on people and mitigating factors for it in Gujarat during the lockdown of COVID-19 outbreak is helpful to stable the mindset of people and creating strong positive atmosphere against the fight of pandemic COVID-19.

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I. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this new decade, people were anticipating “World War III that is pandemic COVID-19 outbreak.”¹ Currently about 2.6 billion people – one third of the world’s population is living some kind of lockdown or quarantine. This is arguably the largest psychological experiment ever conducted.²

The learning and processes of the society and surrounding around us that affect of enhance psychological well being and social behavior is called as psychological effects in psychology.¹

The corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is having a profound effect on all aspects of society, including mental health and physical health. We explore the psychological, social, and neuroscientific effects of COVID-19 and set out the immediate priorities and longer-term strategies for mental health science research.³

The economic and psychological impact of the pandemic is enormous. Many sectors of the Italian economy, which is largely based on family-owned small businesses, are suffering.⁴

Increasing menace of the epidemic led to a global atmosphere of anxiety and depression due to disrupted travel plans, social isolation, media information overload and panic buying of necessity goods.⁵

A group of more than 40 psychologist are currently reviewing researched relevant to people’s behavior during pandemic to advance the fight against COVID-19.⁶

People who are lockdown or quarantine are very likely to develop a wide range of symptoms of psychological stress and disorders like stress, anxiety, anger, insomnia, low mood, irritability, depression, emotional exhaustion and post traumatic stress symptoms.²

During the initial phase of the COVID-19 outbreak in China, more than half of the respondents rated the psychological impact as moderate-to-severe, and about one-third reported moderate-to-severe anxiety.⁷

In study notes irritability and low mood stand out as being very common.² Reason for stress or mental illness in lockdown; there is a risk of infection, fear of becoming sick or of losing loved ones, as well as the prospect of financial hardship. All these factors and many more reasons are currently in this pandemic COVID-19.²

One research also report that, a sharp increase in absenteeism in countries in lockdown by afraid to catch COVID-19 on the work floor and avoid work. When we need all able bodies to repair the economy, we can expect sharp spike in absenteeism and burnout.² The people at high risk for long term absenteeism from work due to illness and burnout; even if they stay at work reduce the productivity in these people.²

A Belgian university is launching a cross border study in three European countries to assess the nefarious effects of lockdown measures on individuals.⁸

All approaches emphasize on social distancing and taking hygiene seriously. So we all ought to do conditioning & learning, personality type, lifestyle, poverty and stress. These all steps to tackle the situation are very simple.¹

From government and NGOs point of view they can educate people about the expected psychological impact and reaction to trauma if they are interested in receiving it. Make sure that people understand that psychological reaction is normal. They can also launch a specific website to address psychosocial issues and make sure that people with acute issues can find the help that they need.²

Our results highlight that physically active people might be more susceptible to wellbeing issues during the lockdown.⁹

Factors for good health during lockdown as well as after lockdown like Yoga and meditation for overall health, it will reduce stress and anxiety and also improve physical health, take proper diet and focus on healthy eating, try talking more to your friends and family when not working, keep yourself free of negative emotions, try art based therapies at home and other therapies for special people through consultation with your psychotherapists over calls or by a lessened number of sessions, practice reading, writing etc. to keep emotional health in check, cut down on negativity and read only what's verified and listen only to positive news, conversations, ideas etc, learn to have more empathy towards people like doctors, nurses, bankers, caretakers, other medical practitioners, police department etc, remember that you are not alone; the entire world is working together even if the solution is to be quarantined or lockdown.¹

So, main aim and objective of research is to survey the psychological effects on people and mitigating factors for it during the lockdown of COVID-19 outbreak.

II. METHODS

Recent mental health studies on COVID-19 were cross-sectional.¹⁰ A cross sectional survey was conducted within the duration of March 2020 – April 2020. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the institutional ethical committee of G.M.E.R.S medical college, Vadnagar, Gujarat, India. The participants were the peoples of all over Gujarat. For digital and speedy collection of the information, questionnaire was prepared with the help of Google form.

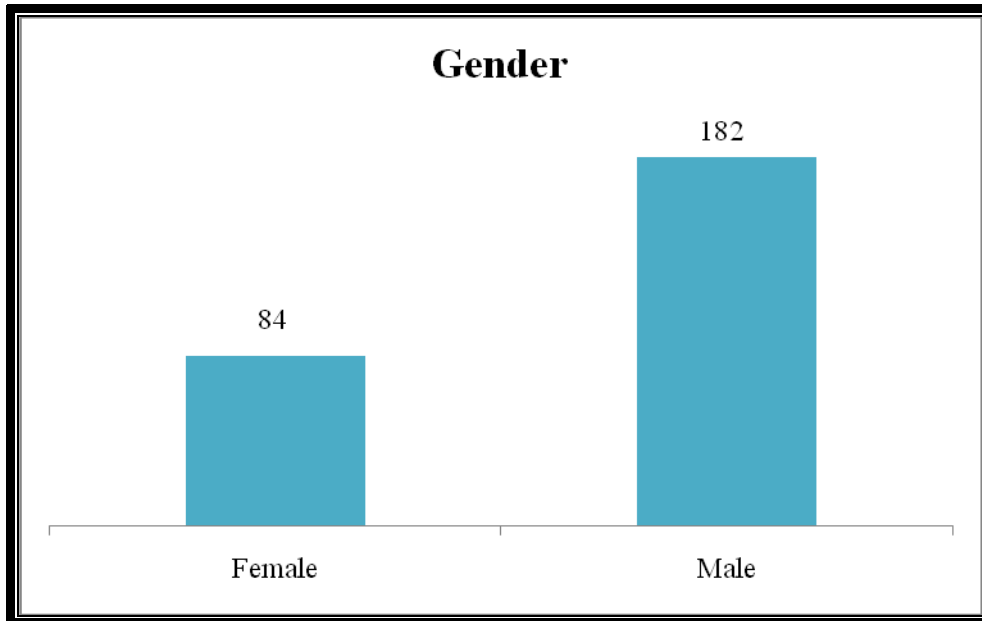
The questionnaire included basic information and strategic open and close ended questions regarding different psychological effects during lockdown and mitigating strategy for it on mindset of different categories people from all over Gujarat. After explaining the purpose of the study the respondents were asked to participate voluntarily. Confidentiality was also assured for all the information provided. A total 1000 people were included in the study and send them the questionnaire through what's app, or face book messenger or mail. Among them n=266 participants were interested to join the survey and they gave inputs.

III. DATA COLLECTION & DATA ANALYSIS

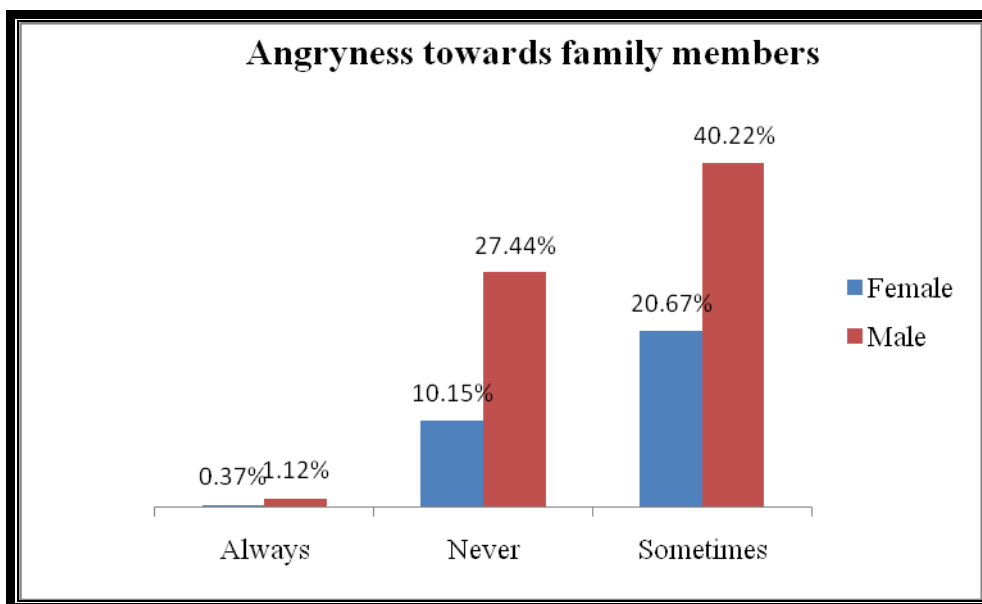
The total population comprised of the people (n=266) in all over Gujarat. Among the 1000 people were included in study from Gujarat, the people (n=266) showed interest in the study and majority of the people (n=266) responded through Google form link via what's app. The data were collected and analyzed with the descriptive statics on Google form responses.

IV. RESULT

Among the participants responded to the survey as shown in the Graph 1, the demographic data of gender are: Male (n= 182) and female (n= 84)

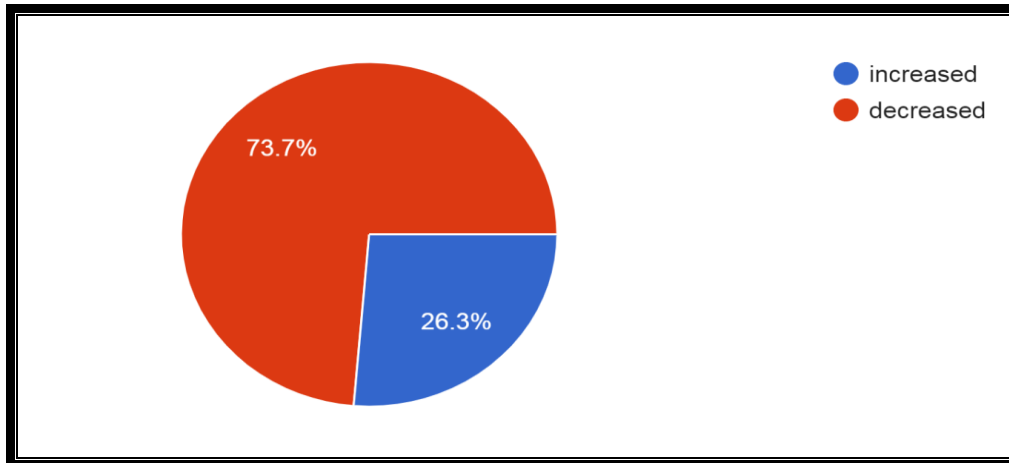


Graph 1: Gender of the people



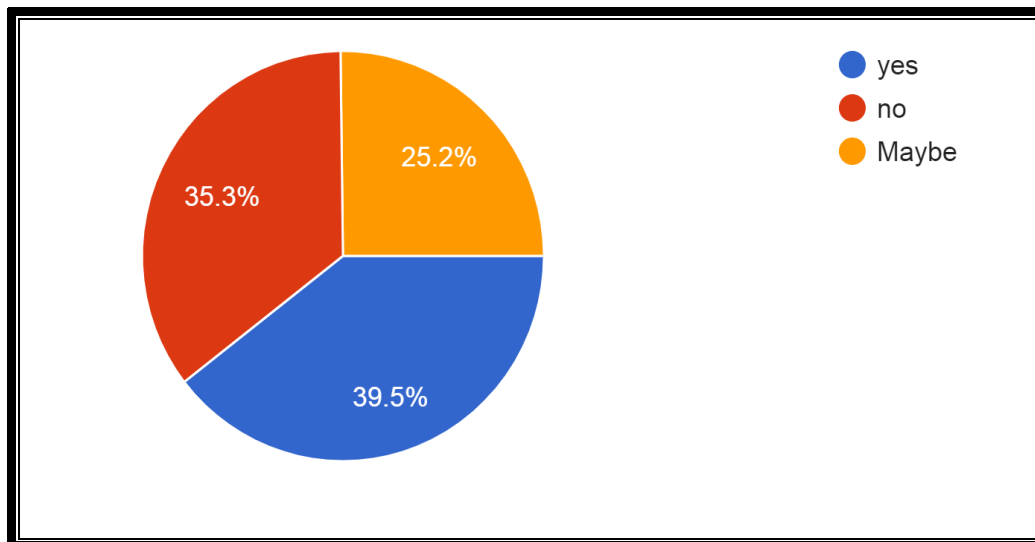
Graph 2: Angry towards family members during lockdown

As per graph 2, among the participants people 40.22% (n=106) male and 20.67% (n=55) female, total 60.89% (n=161) people sometimes becomes angry towards their family members due to stress or anxiety. 37.59% (n=100) people never become angry and 1.49% (n=4) people always become angry towards their family members.



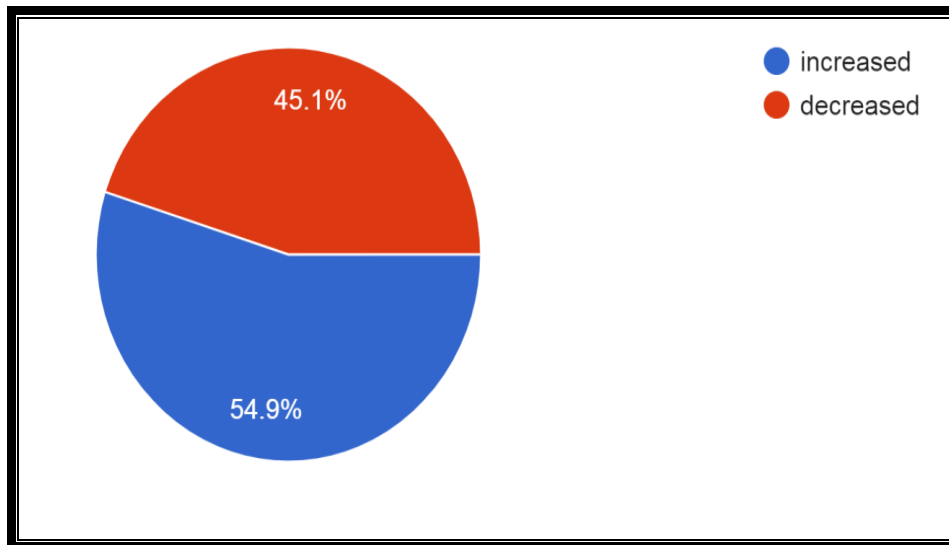
Graph 3: Work efficiency related to study, job or business during lockdown

As per graph 3, among the participants only 26.3% (n=70) people believe that their work efficiency is increased during lockdown, while 73.7% (n=196) people believe that their work efficiency towards different task is reduced or decreased.



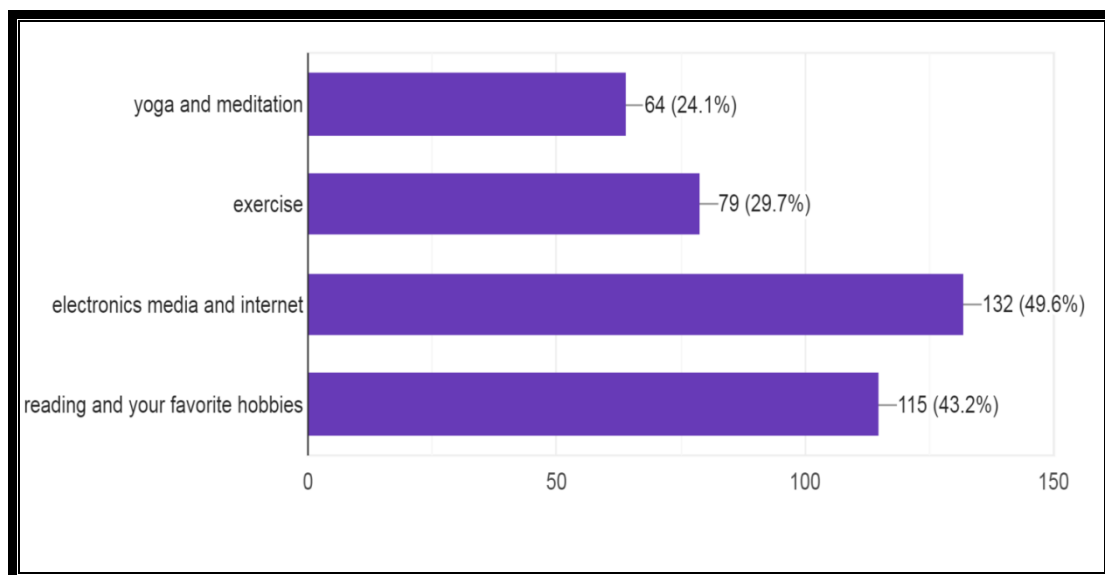
Graph 4: Disturbance in family income during lockdown

As per graph 4, 39.5% (n=105) people believe that their family income reduced or disturbed, 25.2% (n=67) people says that income will be disturbed and only 35.3% (n=94) people says that there is no effect in their family income during lockdown.



Graph 5: frequency of negative thoughts during lockdown

As per graph 5, more than half people means 54.9% (n=146) people have increased their different types of negative thoughts during lockdown.



Graph 6: Tools or methods used for reducing stress and anxiety during lockdown

As per graph 6, as a mitigating tools or methods for negative psychological effects of lockdown 49.6% (n= 132) people are using electronic media and internet, 43.2% (n=115) people spend their time by reading and doing their favorite hobbies, 29.7% (n=79) believe in exercise and 24.1% (n=64) doing a yoga and meditation.

V. DISCUSSION

Our cross sectional study describes the psychological effects and mitigating factors for it in the general population in Gujarat, India. We believe that decisive and rapid actions were taken by the Indian government as a lockdown in reducing further spread of corona virus and its effective but could safeguard mental health in the general public also.

Our study highlights that psychological effects of lockdown like reducing work efficiency, family income tension, negative thoughts due to stress and anxiety, anger towards family members are common and more pronounced, affects all people equally in Gujarat despite different age group and different occupation. Some stable results are also found during our survey that people are taking adequate sleep during lockdown so symptoms like insomnia types and irritability of nature are not pronounced.

People awareness regarding staying updated and keep away yourself from rumors, we found that 51.9% people are strongly agree and 36.1% people are agree, total 88% people showing their awareness in our surveys. In response to next question regarding awareness, 72.6% people had downloaded aarogya setu application which is so useful as finding a risk areas surrounding us and keep us updated.

In response to mitigating factors, open ended question, so many suggestions were we found during our survey like spend your time, talk with your family members, do regularly yoga and meditation or exercise, find out your favorite hobbies, reading, eat health foods, keep away from negativity and always be positive, listen music etc..

Our study has some limitations like the anonymity of the questionnaire made this sampling is unavoidable. Another is due to self reporting of the level of psychological impact, negative thoughts by stress, anxiety, depression which may not always be aligned with objective assessment and by mental health professional psychologists. Nevertheless psychological effects based on personal feeling and self reporting was paramount during the covid-19 pandemic. Further study can be performed in large group of people in Gujarat. Even the perceptions of categorized people like occupations wise can be included in further study and study can be performed in other geographical area also.

VI. CONCLUSION

During the phase of lockdown in Gujarat, India people are suffering from varies psychological effects regarding work efficiency, family income, negative thoughts due stress and anxiety, angeriness. We identified various factors that might help in safeguarding the psychological effect. Government is also working by different methods to mitigate it.

Sources of support

NIL

Conflicts of interest

There are no Conflicts of interest.

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