

EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON EMOTIONAL STABILITY AND THOUGHT PATTERNS

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ABSTRACT

The world faced a pandemic of respiratory disease since the end of 2019 caused by a novel Coronavirus. The novel Coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and rapidly spread all over the world. Corona viruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM) are being implemented across the globe to limit transmission and reduce mortality and morbidity from Covid-19. This study was conducted in the month of January 2021 to observe any long lasting impacts of Covid-19 on mental abilities such as emotional stability and thought patterns. Emotion is a complex state of feeling that results in physical and psychological changes that influence thought and behavior, and Emotional stability is the process in which the personality continuously strives for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-physically and intra-personally. Thought pattern on the other hand is a way of thinking about something, or an attitude towards it. The study was conducted with a sample size comparing 60 adults in the age group of 16 to 64, out of which 30 participants had a history of Covid-19 and the other 30 participants were Covid-19 negative. It can be observed that there are no long lasting impacts of Covid-19 on mental abilities such as emotional stability and thought patterns in Mumbai.

Keywords: Covid-19, Emotional stability, Thought pattern, Personality

INTRODUCTION

The world faced a pandemic of respiratory disease since the end of 2019 spreading from person to person caused by a novel Coronavirus which poses a serious public health risk. The novel coronavirus (Covid-19) that emerged in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 rapidly spread all over the world (Devita *et al.*, 2020). COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease (Bender, 2020). Corona viruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (WHO, 2020). Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM) are being implemented across the globe to limit transmission and reduce mortality and morbidity from Covid-19 (WHO, 2020). The Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for Covid-19 aims to slow and stop transmission, prevent outbreaks and delay spread; provide optimized care for all patients, especially the seriously ill; minimize the

impact of the epidemic on the health systems, social services and economic activity (WHO, 2020).

As of 27th February 2021, there have been 11,096,378 Coronavirus cases in India out of which 157,085 cases lead to death of the patients and the remaining 10,773,218 are recovered cases (Coronavirus Cases, 2021).

This study was conducted to observe any long lasting impacts of Covid-19 on the cognitive abilities such as emotional stability and thought patterns in the residents of Mumbai.

Emotion is a complex state of feeling that results in physical and psychological changes that influence thought and behavior (Cherry, 2020). Positive emotions include pleasant or desirable situational responses, ranging from interest and contentment to love and joy, but are distinct from pleasurable sensation and undifferentiated positive affect (Cohn and Fredrickson, 2009). Negative emotion is an unpleasant, often disruptive, emotional reaction designed to express a negative affect (APA, n.d.). One of the Big Five higher-order personality traits in the study of psychology is Emotional stability. Emotional stability is a desirable trait and refers to a person's ability to remain stable and balanced. Personal stability is a lifestyle characterized by appropriate and well-thought-out decisions, consistent behavior and mood swings (Griffith, 2014). Emotional stability has been examined and recognized as a personality representation in the human mind (Chaturvedi and Chander, 2010). Emotional stability is the process in which the personality continuously strives for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-physically and intra-personally (Chaubey, Kumari and Dubey, 2017). The concept of stable emotional behavior at any level is that which reflects the fruits of the normal emotional development (Pant, 2016).

Thought pattern is a way of thinking about something, or an attitude towards it. The concept of thought has always been centre to understanding the nature of human thinking in psychological studies (Shadrikov, Kurginyan and Martynova, 2016). The quality of your thinking pattern is responsible for the quality of all individual, specific thoughts. Aristotle considered thought as essential to understanding of human nature. Thinking is a higher cognitive function and the analysis of thinking processes is part of cognitive psychology. There are two types of thought patterns, negative and positive thoughts. Negative thinking is a thought process where people tend to find the worst in everything, or reduce their expectations by considering the worst possible scenarios. Negative self-thinking has content in the form negative self-cognition (Verplanken et. al., 2007). Positive thinking is about

looking at things from a positive point of view (Cherry and Snyder, 2019). Having an optimistic outlook on life – a general expectation that good things will happen may help people live longer (Feldscher, 2016). Positive thinking encompasses the mental attitude of optimism, which searches for favorable outcomes in all situations and it relies on the emotional state of hope, which looks past the current circumstance and supports the building of emotional, social and other resources for positive action (Schnurr, 2019).

METHOD

The research approach adopted was quantitative and a cross-sectional survey by using emotional stability scale (Goldberg, 1992) and Thought patterns scale (Diener et. al., 2010) was carried out during January 2021. The convenient sample consisted of 60 adults within the age group of 16 to 64, both Covid-19 positive and Covid-19 negative, 30(50%) and 30(50%) respectively. The investigators approached the participants through social media. The participants were asked for their consent to be a part of this study before moving on to the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of Emotional stability and Thought patterns, 10(31%) and 22(69%) questions respectively. Emotional stability responses were scored on Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 where responders specify their level of agreement to a statement typically in these five points-strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Thought patterns responses were scored on a nominal scale where the responders specified their level of agreement to a statement in a ‘Yes or No’ response. The participants took part on a voluntary basis. The participants were asked to carefully read the questions and respond to the items according to their personal feelings. The participants completed the self administered questionnaire and the total time taken to complete the test was approximately 20 minutes. All queries and doubts of the participants were promptly addressed during the process.

RESULT

Within the sample of 60, 30(50%) of respondents were Covid-19 positive and 30(50%) of respondents were Covid-19 negative. The emotional stability and thought pattern were measured on the basis of Covid-19 positive and Covid-19 negative participants. The effect of Coronavirus on emotional stability and thought pattern were analyzed with the help of respective questionnaires. The following scores of Covid-19 positive and Covid-19 negative shows the consequences of emotional stability and thought patterns on Coronavirus. The self-

administered questionnaires which were used in the survey form are given below along with individual results.

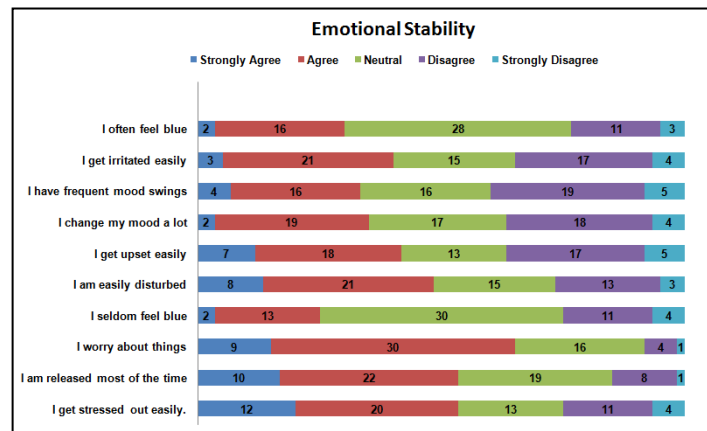


Figure 1.1: Responses recorded for emotional stability.

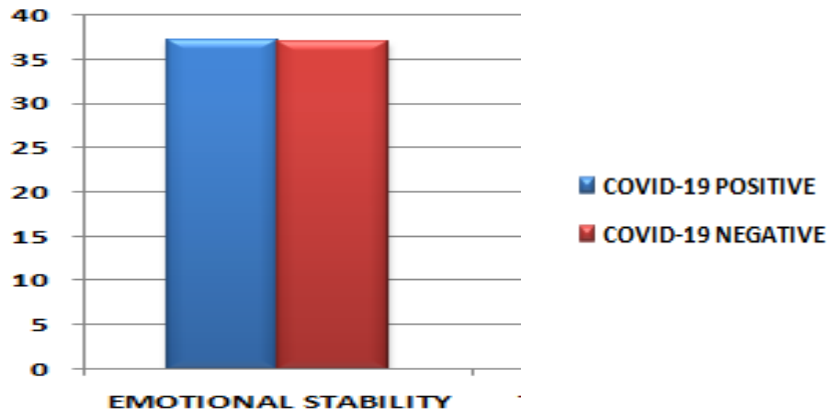


Figure 1.2: Scores obtained for Emotional Stability.

For Emotional Stability, it is observed that Covid-19 positive got a total score of 37.2 and Covid-19 negative got a total score of 37. Covid-19 positive score is higher than Covid-19 negative score which can be in part attributed to the increased levels of stress, anxiety and panic that one experiences on being diagnosed as Covid-19 positive. But this dies down soon, once the patients begin to recover (Based on individual post task questions and no research conducted so far). This proves why Covid-19 positive and Covid-19 negative show similar levels of neuroticism. Most people who have had Covid-19 will recover with no long-term impact on their memory concentration (Memory and Concentration, n.d.). People who are emotionally healthy are in control of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors and are able to cope with life’s challenges (Familydoctor, 2020). There is no long-term effect of the Covid-19 on the Emotional Stability.

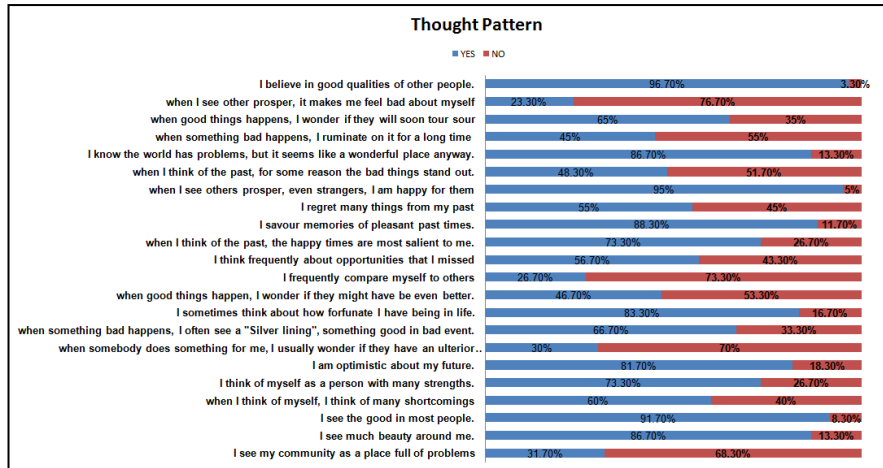


Figure 2.1: Responses recorded for thought pattern.

Similarly, for Thought patterns, it is observed that Covid-19 positive got a total score of 13.6 and Covid-19 negative got a total score of 13.9. Hence, it can be observed that Covid-19 positive and Covid-19 negative both have similar thought patterns. A positive attitude can improve your immune systems and may help you live longer (University of Queensland, 2014). There is no long-term effect of Covid-19 on thought patterns. The slight increase in the scores of Covid-19 positive patients may be attributed to the increased sense of resilience and change in perspective they may have experienced due to their struggle with this fatal disease. This is because one characteristic of resiliency is to keep our personality healthy when facing harmful effects such as distress (Nooripour *et al.*, 2021). Finding similar researches on the same factors is difficult given the novel nature of this virus but the researchers hope to keep abreast with newer researchers and update if similar or contrary results are found.

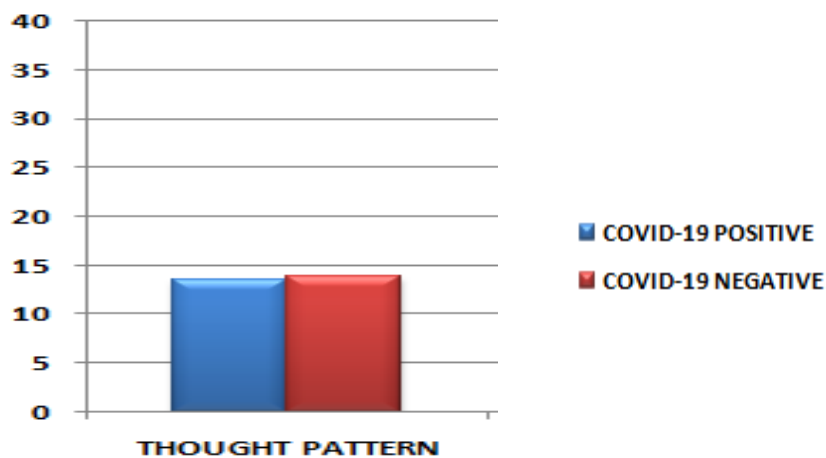


Figure 2.2: Scores obtained for Thought pattern.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge influence on people's physical and mental health (Chen, Sun and Feng, 2020). Emotional stability provides individuals with ability to take problems they face in stride (Garforth, 2020). Emotionally stable persons tolerate minor stresses and strains of day to day living without becoming emotionally upset, anxious, nervous or tense or angry (HMM, 2020). Thinking was associated with conscious experiences, but, as the study of behavior developed within psychology (Sternberg *et al.*, 2008). Optimists will see themselves as less susceptible to risk of covid-19 than others (Helweg- Larsen, 2020). Positive thinking helps with stress management and can improve health. Positive thinking impacts the ability to cope with stress and immunity; it also has an impact on overall well-being (Cherry, 2020). This study measures if there are any lasting cognitive impacts of Covid-19. Research shows that the medical conditions do not have an impact on thought pattern and personality. According to the results, there are no long-term effects of Covid-19 on emotional stability and thought patterns.

LIMITATION

The social distancing, the anxiety and the negative thinking that have been exacerbated in the pandemic situation may trigger relapse (Pedrosa *et al.*, 2020). About 36% of the participants reported moderate to severe psychological impact, 25% showed mild to severe levels of anxiety, 41% reported depressive symptoms, and 41% felt stressed. Women, young and those who lost their jobs during the health crisis showed the strongest negative psychological symptoms (Rodriguez-Rey *et al.*, 2020). Anxiety or depression but also non specific symptoms that include fatigue, sleep and waking abnormalities, a general sense of not being at your best, not being fully recovered in terms of the abilities of performing academically, occupationally, potentially physically (Cooney, 2020).

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