

**How to Cite:**

Sharma, S., Joshi, H., Anand, P., & Rizvi, M. R. (2022). Role of physiotherapy in dealing with mental health challenges as a consequence of COVID 19: A review. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S5), 7207–7210. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS5.10288>

# **Role of physiotherapy in dealing with mental health challenges as a consequence of COVID 19: A review**

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**Abstract**---The wide spread flare-up of COVID-19 corona virus infection, started in Wuhan city, Hubei province, China, spreading around various countries of the world, has the great impact on the mental health. Strategies have been adopted for issues in mental health and physiotherapy plays a vital role in upgrading the mental balance of individuals. Various published articles related to outbreak of COVID-19 and mental health have been reviewed from the databases to study the role or character of physical therapy in improving the mental health of people during this critical situation. Various mental issues arrived because of the outbreak of COVID-19 like anxiety, stress, depression, insomnia, fear etc. Physiotherapy plays an imperative role in treating mental health issues by working on the physical attributes of individuals.

**Keywords**---Corona virus, COVID-19, Mental Health, Anxiety, Insomnia.

## **Introduction**

COVID-19 originated in Wuhan city, Hubei province, China, a novel corona virus disease proclaimed as a pandemic by World Health Organization spreading across the world as a clump of unexplained illustration.<sup>(1)</sup> COVID-19 is an infectious disease also connected with mental distress and mental illness manifestations (Bao et al.,2020).<sup>(2)</sup> As a general population, we all are suffering from mental illness somewhat but health care workers are at noteworthy risk of unfavorable mental health consequences due to widespread outbreak of COVID-19.<sup>(1)</sup> During the epidemic of SARS- CoV in Singapore, symptoms of psychiatric illness have been reported in 27% of health care workers in 2003 (Lee et al., 2003).

During the emergency of COVID-19, medical workers are dealing with hazardous infection, improper shielding against contamination, exasperation, overburdened or overwork, segregation, negative sentiments, unacquainted with their families (Kang et al., 2020). This circumstance of medical workers leads to further mental health issues like stress, anxiety, depression, anger, insomnia, fright (Jones et al., 2017). These mental issues have a durable effect on their overall welfare in spite of their attentiveness, comprehension and decision making capacity (Kang et al., 2020). Even in general populace, prevalence rate of depression has been increased by 7% during this recent outbreak.<sup>(2)</sup> SARS-CoV-2 i.e. Severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus- 2 that give rise to COVID-19 may have, extra-added adverse effects on outcome of brain and psychological health as it might contaminate the brain or set off the response of the immune system.

The social isolation or social distancing, financial concerns increases the rate of anxiety, stress, depression and other negative emotions in the population as revealed by the general population survey done by IpSOS MORI.<sup>(3)</sup> School routines has been considered as an important coping mechanism for young people who have some issues of their mental health. In this lockdown period, as schools are closed, their symptoms could relapse as their daily routines are disrupted. They can become more frustrated and short tempered now. This is in particular for children with special education needs. Due to continuation of this pandemic, it is imperative to support general population as their mental issues are mostly related to the loss of their household income. <sup>(4)</sup>

## **Physiotherapy for mental health**

Physiotherapy is a connection between the physical and mental health of an individual. Physiotherapy addresses the human movement and function, physical exercises in individual and group settings in context to mental health care. Physiotherapy and psychiatry both add the value in treatment of mental health problems. Physiotherapy provides different and various approaches which aids in relieving the symptoms, improving the self confidence and motivation along with overall quality of life.

Mental health is basically referred to as cognitive and emotional well-being of individual. Mental health can also influence the overall routine life, associations with anyone, the potential to live life to the fullest. Physical activity can help to refine the standard of life of people who suffers from significant mental sickness

by refining their physical wellbeing and by taking the edge off the psychiatric or social infirmity. The part of physiotherapy in mental health addresses the assessment and treatment of the patient suffers from pain, anxiety, depression, behavior disorders, dementia etc. According to the researchers, the extent of physical robustness is negatively corresponding to depression, anxiety and positively correspond to self-congratulation. Physical fitness also helps in improving cardiovascular function, thus helps in improvement of emotional well being.<sup>(5)</sup>

Various exercises can be given to the victims with mental health disarray like Deep Breathing Exercises, Pliability exercises, Relaxation techniques and Water cure , General mobility exercises, Ergonomics, Endurance training, etc. Clinical evidence suggests that exercises have a positive outcome on different mental states like Depression, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, etc. Therefore, Physiotherapy acts as an adjunct measure to upgrade the quality of life of patients of mental health disorders through working on their physical health.<sup>(6)</sup> There is a high need to understand the various aspects of physiotherapy and physiotherapist should be well equipped with all required knowledge and skills for greater involvement in the sphere of mental health as Mental Health Disarray are analogous with elevated levels of affliction.<sup>(7)</sup> The Physiotherapy profession is accepted world wide as a conventional approach, suggesting that it is consistent with internationally accepted standard model which are basically grounded on evidence- based practice.

Criteria for physiotherapy intervention in mental health

- Clear description of the nature of intervention.
- The claimed benefits of the services.
- Scientific validation of the claimed benefits.
- Disclosure of the individual risks that may outweigh benefits.<sup>(8)</sup>

According to the department of health (1996), physical activity is considered as an imperative health related behavior. Various researches indicate that exercise is associated with health related benefits. Reviews of the literature suggest the implication and benefits of the exercise in treatment of depression, anxiety, improving well being through increase self esteem, mood state and quality of sleep and by reducing the stress.<sup>(9)</sup>

As stated by the College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), specific guidelines like frequency, duration, intensity of exercise should be developed to maintain the fitness in an individual. According to the specific guidelines minimum exercise program should be of at least 20-60 minutes each week.<sup>(10)</sup> In summary our findings show potential benefits of physiotherapy, concerned with identifying and increasing the movement potential, helpfully for wide range of mental health. Keeping in mind the scope of physiotherapy and wide range of problems in India, one needs to successfully implement its delivery.<sup>(11)</sup>

**Declaration of funding sources** – Not Applicable.

**Financial Disclosure-** The author has no sources of funding or other financial disclosure covering this article.

**Declaration of conflicts of Interest-** The author declares that there is no conflict of interests.

**Acknowledgment-** None.

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