FEAR IS UNSEEN PERIL BEHIND AN OUTBREAK

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INTRODUCTION

Coronaviruses are single stranded, positive sense, enveloped viruses, zoonotic in nature and transferred from animal to humans and then human to human. Other strains of coronaviruses have also been reported such as hCoV-OC43, HKU and 229E but from the time of 2002 till 2019 coronaviruses have emerged (1).

Coronaviruses jumped from animal to humans by the process of “spill over” (2). At previously reported outbreaks of coronaviruses includes severe acute respiratory syndrome coronaviruses (SARS-CoV), Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and now novel coronavirus, Wuhan China (COVID-19) from which COVID-19 affects the whole world both economically and medically. At the first time beta coronaviruses were reported in the Guangdong in China at the time of November, 2002 (3-5).

As the COVID-19 pandemic exponentially increases the rates of deaths it also affects economics globally. Fear of economic loss, hunger should be addressed properly which is more severe than any outbreak (6). Fear of COVID-19 is greater than seasonal Flu due to its novelty and lack of adequate information to deal with psychological distress and anxiety towards uncertainty behind the chronophobia. Inadequate information by the social media is great source of fears and phobias which could be managed by Health Ministry (7).

Individuals of different status level responding differently during COVID-19 outbreak which is a pressure source for both public and economics globally and need of psychological management. Medical staff needs to win battle against this pandemic by fear management and coping strategies guidelines (8).

As the SARS in East Asia in 2003 and plague on Surat India in 1994 more affects the socio-economic than death rate. These disruptions are due to the weak co-ordination and public panic response against preventive efforts. It is not only important to
overcome outbreak but also need to manage public response towards outbreak because scientific outbreak also create socio-economic disorder (9, 10).

In the 2013-2016 Ebola virus was recognized as the major, fatal and the most disastrous epidemic in West Africa in 40 years since Ebola was identified. The Human behavior (panic fear) played a key role for the influential outbreak. Panic behavior either distinct or combined and activities started due to panic reactions that are prompted by an apparent threat or actual contact to a possibly traumatizing event. Steimer defines fear as “A motivational state aroused by specific stimuli that give rise to defensive behavior or escape”. Fear is an outlining expression of severe anxiety reaction, noticeable, physiologically and detected tangibly by an individual. The behavioral indicators of the anxiety reactions, in which panic play the key role, have been termed as the “fight or flight” reaction, or more precisely as the “freeze, flight, fight, fright, faint” behavior catalog. “Fear related behaviors (FRBs) are individual or collective behaviors and actions initiated in response to fear reactions that are triggered by a perceived threat or actual exposure to a potentially traumatizing event. Importantly, FRBs modulate the future risk of harm”. During 2013-2016 Ebola outbreak the bitter reality is that the FRBs did not operate (11).

Effected people experience physiological effects due to distressing course of the contagion, fright of expiry and witnessing other dying. Survivors can also face physiological consequences due to humiliation and guiltiness (e.g. transferring infection to others) and dishonor or blame from their societies. At the society level, a cyclic arrangement of anxiety arises with trust loss in health facilities and dishonor, causing in disturbance of social interactions and society break down (11).

Shutdown of factories, offices and travel restrictions affects economy globally which created spillover internationally (12). 82% people get panic due to epidemic. 72% were quarantined and instruct to obey the SOPs. 93% Authority agree to take such decisions which helped people for voluntarily isolation. Pandemic information should be conveyed by the health ministry in a way of anxiety management because people get panic by social media (13).

Reference:


