Healthy Aging Research

COVID-19 has made the elderly more lonely

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Abstract

Loneliness is a major risk factor for the elderly and can double their problems. When the COVID-19 came, the condition of the elderly became more difficult. The news that the elderly were more exposed to severe COVID-19 than others made the elderly more lonely. The research method is library type which was done during two months by using valid scientific sources and books. According to the findings of the study, we believe that focusing on education, and reminding people of the necessary do's and don'ts of illness, modifying their diet, emphasizing masking, and even familiarizing the elderly with social media and virtual activities will prevent them from loneliness.

Keywords: COVID-19, Elderly, Aging

Loneliness is a major risk factor for the elderly and can double their problems. When the COVID-19 came, the condition of the elderly became more difficult. The news that the elderly were more exposed to severe COVID-19 than others made the elderly more lonely.[1]

Jalil is immersed in alone. Most of the time he is alone and the TV that now shows the colored lines on it is on the verge of burning. He experienced 12 years of married life and when his wife died, his lifestyle became lonely. Now, with the advent of Covid-19 and home quarantine, he is more lonely. He is past 70 years old and now his unemployment and loneliness have made him more tired. After retiring, he started a business with one or two of his friends, but Covid-19 locked him in the walls of the house again. He feels useless, he does not even have the patience of the house mirror. He no longer likes television and is the only radio wave that constantly sings next to his ear. He does not talk to anyone these days and that is what makes him depressed.[2]

But the quarantine has made 64-year-old Karim obsessive and fear has become a major part of his life. He sleeps by force of the pill, but nevertheless, he wakes up several times at night and the stress makes all the tension tremble. It was not like that at all before, but these days the fear of getting Covid-19 and just dying in these four walls has filled his mind. Fear that has taken over his existence, after hearing the news of the death of one of his relatives alone.[1,2]

Severe mental conditions for the elderly

Loneliness is a major risk factor for the elderly and can double their problems. When the COVID-19 came, the condition of the elderly became more difficult. The news that the elderly were more exposed to severe COVID-19 than others made the elderly more lonely. The elderly, many of whom, in addition to being alone, do not have enough knowledge of the virtual world and can not enjoy the benefits of cyberspace.[2,3]

Lack of proper infrastructure for the elderly is a major problem these days. Establishing the necessary infrastructure to increase the participation of the elderly after the Covid-19 crisis is one of the requirements. Due to the lack of the necessary infrastructure, as well as the limited knowledge of the elderly about new technologies, it is expected that TV, radio, and volunteer groups in today's critical situation will help fill the gap created for the elderly. Even frequent contact with loved ones can help reduce stress and anxiety in the elderly. However, the need for a comprehensive aging system is felt more than ever; A system in which the entire condition of the elderly, loneliness, illness, and lifestyle are recorded.[1,4]

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Increasing the vulnerability of the elderly

"The elderly have always been vulnerable, and now their vulnerability has doubled. This situation becomes more painful when statistics show that most of the dead were in their 50s and older. For those who did not reach this stage and survived the virus, their depression was exacerbated by isolation.

Loneliness is a major risk factor for the elderly and can double their problems; Depression, digestive problems, sleep disorders, and fear of loneliness for the rest of your life are some of the issues that plague them during loneliness. There are also solutions to reduce this crisis; Like video calls, but these also can not reduce the problem of the elderly and fill the void of their loved ones.2,4

Unnecessary compassion can be dangerous

He emphasizes that sometimes children visit their parents out of compassion and hug them, thinking that because they have no sign, they do not have a COVID-19; While the insidious virus may remain asymptomatic in a person if it is transmitted to the elderly, it is not clear how it will appear and therefore the only way to prevent COVID-19 disease in the elderly is to prevent it.1

Take abnormal symptoms seriously in the elderly

Any abnormal symptoms in the elderly should be taken seriously, as COVID-19 disease has widespread symptoms; Heart, gastrointestinal and respiratory problems are some of the problems that affect COVID-19 disease, but the point is that the symptoms of the disease in the elderly are elliptical. Sometimes the disease occurs in them only with drowsiness. We always say take any change in the elderly person seriously; Because the slightest change can be the onset of COVID-19 disease, an elderly person who has a stable condition but suddenly changes the condition should see a doctor immediately.

Avoid public places as much as possible. Older people are more sensitive than other members of society, so although everyone in the community is advised to wear regular masks, older people should use more special masks such as medical masks. They should wash their hands regularly, although the skin of the elderly may be more prone to dryness, they should use lotions regularly. In public places, the mask should be changed after 4 hours, and it is better to take a shower after each entry to the home.2,5

The elderly have become more lonely

The COVID-19 outbreak can lead to increased stress and anxiety in the elderly, and it can be difficult for them to miss their loved ones. At the same time, they should be motivated and facilitated by telephone counseling. The elderly need to find hope and motivation that the Covid-19 era will come to an end And they can come back to life after quarantine. Quarantine stress, lack of small daily activities, fear of getting infected, and reduced traffic are the types of stress that affect the elderly. Although some older people have experienced loneliness before the COVID-19 outbreak, despite the quarantine and the threat to their health, the stress of loneliness is doubled for them; Stresses that endanger their physical health as they continue. Undoubtedly, stress weakens the immune system of the elderly if they continue, and in addition to being prone to COVID-19 disease, they also have diseases with infectious backgrounds that threaten their health.1,6

Quarantine increases mental disorders

The quarantine can lead to mental disorders in a person: "Even the healthiest people, even the young ones, have mental problems during this period, and the effects can be seen only after the COVID-19 is over." Elderly people, even under normal circumstances, need special psychological care: "Today, with the outbreak of Covid-19 and due to the ambiguity of the dimensions of this disease and the biological characteristics of old age, more damage is lurking in front of them."6

Adapting to the situation is difficult for the elderly

"Reducing face-to-face visits and intensifying social distancing causes psychological stress. Adaptation to circumstances is usually difficult in old age; they are generally dependent on others; "Some of them are even dependent on others to meet some basic health needs."7

We believe that focusing on education, and reminding people of the necessary do's and don'ts of illness, modifying their diet, emphasizing masking, and even familiarizing the elderly with social media and virtual activities will prevent them from loneliness overcoming.

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