



Stress and the Experience of Pain during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

During the first lockdown, the negative impact of the pandemic situation on pain was mainly due to a lack of physiotherapy, reduced physical exercise, more occupational responsibilities, and increased mental stress.

For a long time, stress has been linked to an increase in pain. The individual evaluation process is at the center of stress development in Lazarus transactional stress model [1]. As a result, stress develops when demands are viewed as threatening or harmful, and the perceived personal resources to overcome them. COVID-19 related stress was attributed by responders to increased pain, with the virus threat playing a secondary role in stress development. Quantitative research have shown that the stress experienced by pain patients is mostly related to uncertainty about the condition, fear of not receiving pain treatment, and social isolation. The impacts of the early lockdown on social and work life were evidently more severe for pain patients than the pandemic itself [2].

While some pain patients were affected by the containment efforts, the majority did not. Because the pain patients examined here were already living socially and professionally restricted lifestyles as a result of their pain prior to the pandemic, the containment efforts were not seen as particularly impairing. Others said their suffering was worse than the pandemic, therefore they didn't feel severely affected.

DESCRIPTION

Researchers observed two groups of individuals. On the one hand, patients with well-managed pain who received regular pain care and social support saw significant changes in their pain management framework as a result of the COVID-19 measures. Those who did not have many means for dealing with the pain disorder and were already living more socially isolated lives prior to the pandemic, on the other hand, saw minimal change as a result of the pandemic. The current findings show that there are pain patients who are in great distress regardless of the pandemic condition. This hypothesis is backed up by the findings of a qualitative study on the quality of life of those suffering from chronic pain [3].

Others even felt relieved physically and psychologically as a result of the order to stay at home, as they had more time to themselves and could better adapt their day to their physical demands. Researchers conducted a qualitative study in which they questioned pain sufferers among several people about their experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic and the problems they faced [4]. They also discovered that the slowed daily routine during the lockdown helped pain patients. Furthermore, those around them were more aware of their pain condition, as healthy people had similar experiences as pain patients during the initial lockdown due to the restrictions. Without pandemic conditions, pain patients are often overburdened by occupational and social responsibilities, and chronic pain disease should be given more social consideration as a disability.

CONCLUSION

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pain patients has not been adequately explored, either quantitatively or qualitatively. As a result, it adds to and reinforces the conclusions of earlier quantitative studies on this topic. Our findings add to our understanding of pain patient's lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The patients interviewed here demonstrated that they had sufficient resources to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and even the initial pandemic-related distress. The findings show that they gained this resource from their personal experience of dealing with chronic pain.

It also demonstrates that the changes in pain treatment and daily living brought about by containment measures were felt to be more painful than the pandemic itself. The containment measures interrupted the tactics developed over time for dealing with the pain condition, which were linked to uncertainty and pain intensification. This also emphasizes the importance of pain patients becoming more empowered in their pain self-management in order to be better prepared for times of crisis with pain amplification, regardless of the pandemic. The study found that continuing pain therapy during a pandemic can help prevent persistent pain intensification, and telemedicine is an effective way to do it.

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