

COVID-19 Impact on Suicide's in Individuals with Autism

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DESCRIPTION

The COVID-19 viral epidemic had a profound effect on humanity, with particularly detrimental effects on mental health. Those with pre-existing mental health issues and disabilities are among the groups most at risk from these effects. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) sufferers are more likely to experience mental illness, making them potentially more susceptible to COVID-19's effects. Although there have been some positive effects in this population (e.g., reduced stress related to sensory and social demand, improved sleep), there have also been reported negative effects such as increased worry (e.g., about access to health services, medication and food, safety and security, work, and pets) and stress (often related to a loss of routines and social supports). The most affected groups may include women who are autistic, young adults (under 25), those who already have a co-occurring mental health problem, and people who have had personal experience with COVID-19 (such as knowing someone who has it and testing positive themselves) [1]. It is crucial to describe the effects of COVID-19 on mental health in this community because of both its effect on mental health and the heightened susceptibility of autistic people. Concern that the COVID-19 pandemic may have raised suicide risk is one of the most serious effects connected to mental illness. In the context of autism, this connection has not yet been investigated.

Vulnerability to suicide during COVID-19

It is unknown at this time whether the pandemic has contributed to an increase in suicide rates in the general population. People with pre-existing mental health disorders, the elderly or very young, women, members of minority groups, and people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are among those who are more at risk of experiencing negative mental health during the pandemic. There is some proof that the epidemic has increased suicidal thoughts, which are a reliable indicator of attempted suicide. Young adults (i.e., those aged 18 to 29) may be more likely to experience effects, according to a longitudinal study from the United Kingdom (UK) [2]. An analysis of pediatric emergency department visits in the United States (US) during the early COVID-19 pandemic

many people had suicidal thoughts, suicide attempt, or self-harm. Others, however, have found no proof of a major rise in suicide rates since the start of the pandemic in a multi-country study, with the number of suicide fatalities showing a significant decline compared to the projected rate. This discovery might be the result of data being gathered too soon in the pandemic, hiding longer-term consequences. Although there were recorded decreases in suicide during the first wave of the epidemic in Japan, there was a rise during the second wave [3]. In addition, suicide rates rose most among women (37%) and young individuals under 20 (49%).

Risk of suicide and autism

The autistic population is consistently shown to have a higher suicide risk. When compared to non-autistic groups, autistic populations have a three to nine times higher risk of both suicide attempts and suicide mortality. There is mounting proof that the autistic phenotype or features increase the risk of suicide. Furthermore, a high incidence of co-occurring mental health disorders in autistic communities may contribute to an increased sensitivity to suicide. Depression is one of the most common clinical diseases in this population (lifetime rates may be as high as 49%), and it is closely related to suicidal ideas and actions [4].

In addition to taking psychological discomfort into account, resilience and protective factors are equally crucial. Positive mental health, also known as wellbeing, is a crucial concept that may buffer against the damaging effects of stressful situations on one's mental health. For instance, it has been discovered that wellness protects employed autistic adults against depression. Well-being is a protective factor against suicidal attempts in inpatients who are experiencing suicidal thoughts and moderates the link between depression and suicidal ideation in non-autistic samples.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic implies a profound disruption of daily life and has the potential to exacerbate mental health issues and raise the risk of suicide. It is crucial to take into account possible

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effects on people who are most at risk and those whose risk of suicide is already elevated. Therefore, the purpose of our study was to determine whether COVID-19 impact was related to characteristics that increase the risk of suicide in individuals with autism. When adjusting for these characteristics, COVID-19 impact did not directly correlate with Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) suicide risk, despite a minor correlation between increasing depressive symptoms and decreased personal wellbeing. Even during a time of substantial stress and struggle, it was discovered that feeling well-being was connected with decreased SBQ-R suicide risk. Direct investigations into the potential protective effects of wellness on autistic people's risk of suicide require more study.

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