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Research Article

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN BEINGS¹Dr. Hamad Ahmad, ²Dr. Salman Haider, ³Dr. Neelma, ⁴Dr. Saira Shah¹MBBS, MD (USA), Resident Gastroenterology, Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar²MBBS, MD (USA), Resident Gastroenterology, Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar³MBBS, MD (USA), General Surgery, Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar,⁴MBBS, House Officer, Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar

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Abstract:

At the end of the year 2019, a novel virus named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV 2 or COVID-19) first appeared in the Chinese city of Wuhan, at the east-central Hubei province. The virus spread at such a pace across the globe, that the WHO declared the novel coronavirus disease as a global pandemic on March, 11th 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in over 18 million confirmed cases and over 689,000 deaths globally. Besides the morbidity and mortality, this pandemic has wreaked havoc and has affected humans in all aspects of life from a schoolchild to a healthcare worker, from a small vendor at the road to big franchises, from health services to non-health services, transportation from the daily commute to domestic and international air travel, from developing economies to developed economies, from disruption of small cultural, individual festivities to large scale lockdown across the regions. In fact, this pandemic has left no aspect of our lives unaffected. Even so, our mental and physical health has worsened as well, due to the disruption of preventative and treatment service amid the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in a poor quality of life. Many patients who are being treated for chronic medical illnesses like cancer, coronary artery diseases, hypertension, diabetes, and mental health problems have not been receiving the proper care and medicines they need since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The education system is facing a big challenge amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This will take years, if not months, for us to heal the wounds caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

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INTRODUCTION:

This novel virus COVID-19, famous by the name of "coronavirus" in the general population, first appeared in the eastern province of China affected the central Wuhan city in November 2019. The disease caused severe mortality and morbidity and spread so swiftly, that it was declared an epidemic. Within a matter of a couple of months, the disease went international and hardly any country was left unaffected, and the World Health Organization announced it as a pandemic.

Besides the mortality and morbidity, this pandemic has wreaked havoc on the global economy leaving scores of people around the world without work, child care, and — in many places — enough food on their tables. The current outbreak of COVID-19 is estimated to cost \$1 trillion to the world's economy during the year 2020. According to experts, this impact is even worse than the Great Financial Crisis that the world faced in 2007–2008.² A study by Noy *et al.* (2020) finds that the direct costs of the COVID-19 pandemic related to illness and mortality are lower than the indirect losses caused by the crisis.³

Owing to the disruption of preventive and treatment service amid the Covid-19 pandemic, this has resulted in decreased quality of life by affecting not only physical health but mental health as well. Many patients who are being treated for chronic medical illnesses like cancer, coronary artery diseases, hypertension, diabetes, and mental health problems have not been receiving the proper care and medicines they need since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ This outbreak is leading to further health issues like stress disorder, anxiety escalation, depression, sleep disorders, anger problems, and fear across the globe.⁵

Healthcare delivery to patients has also been affected by the current pandemic, particularly the outpatient care setup. To decrease the chances of spread of the virus to either patients or staff in their practice, healthcare providers are postponing elective and preventive visits, like routine follow-ups and when and where possible, in-person visits being converted to telemedicine visits.⁶

The surgical practice is affected too by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The impact is a broad range, ranging from the workforce and staffing problems, prioritization of elective procedures, risk of viral transmission intraoperatively, perioperative practice changes and working alongside the impact on continuous medical education and training programs.⁷

Healthcare workers, the frontline warriors in the fight against COVID-19, are the ones who are

affected the most by this pandemic. At least 90,000 health-care providers across the globe are thought to have been infected with the novel virus, and possibly even more than that, taking into account the unsolving shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), according to the International Council of Nurses.⁸ The World Health Organization (WHO) says that its member states are not providing detailed figures on healthcare providers' infections as they are facing an unprecedented health crisis.⁸ This failure on behalf of the member states to record both infection rates and deaths among healthcare providers is putting more Healthcare providers and their patients in inevitable danger. Besides the high infection rate in healthcare providers, the pandemic has resulted in causing high stress, exhaustion, depression, and anxiety among healthcare workers.⁹

Social life disruption amid the COVID-19 pandemic has widespread implications for human beings. These include but not limited to either cancellation or postponement of sports activities and tournaments, suspension of air travel domestic as well as international, disruption of the cultural, religious, and festive events, closure of hotels, restaurants, and religious places as well as the closure of entertainment centers such as movie theatres, clubs, gymnasiums, pools, and so on.¹⁰ These measures disrupted the daily life of a common man and have resulted in further stress escalation.

The education system is facing a big challenge amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Most governments across the globe have temporarily closed schools, colleges, and universities in an attempt to prevent further spread of the COVID-19.¹¹ Students have suffered in different ways, depending not only on their level and course of study but also on the point they have reached in their programs. Even those part-way through their programs will be anxious until they have clear indications of how their courses and assessment schemes will be restored after the crisis.¹² Reopening of schools is a big concern and needs to be executed with great caution. Everybody in the educational community must play their role to curb the spread COVID-19, particularly to those who are at high risk, and at the same time balancing the need to maintain a strong education system that effectively supports staff, students, and communities.¹³

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