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# **INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY**

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### **Effect of Covid-19 against mental health of citizens**

Covid-19 is a deadly disease which exposed to public since the exposure of the first positive case in Wu Han, China at November 2019. It is a worldwide pandemic that affect the citizens around the world. According to World Health Organization (WHO), up to 30 November 2020, the amount of confirmed cases worldwide is 62 195 274, whereas the total death cases accumulated is 1 453 355. ("Weekly operational update," 2020) This virus can be easily spread via airborne and droplets, hence tons of precaution steps are taken to prevent the further spread of the disease such as lock down of an area, starting from a town, to a city, a district, a state and then the whole country. Besides that, awareness regarding prevention and self-protection from the virus had been spread through the citizens via various platforms, social media being the main and most frequent used, followed by television programme, radio and also poster and banner hanging at public area. During the pandemic period, the citizens around the world has undergone home quarantine, where everyone is required to stay at home and prevent from getting out to the streets. Workers work from home, students study from home, but only those front liners (medical staffs, doctors, nurses, polices, etc.) are allowed to work outside of their home. Not only the physical health of citizens is being worried and taken care of, the mental health of citizens is also an important issue which being paid attention to.

During the pandemic period, the most common rules applied at worldwide are staying at home, the social distance rule, wearing a mask, and avoid being in crowded places. According to a study carried out in United State of America at February and March 2020, aimed to show how stay-at-home order and social distance among people affect the mental health of citizens regarding the symptoms of depression, anxiety and insomnia. Out of 435 respondents, 38.4% among them had mild depression, 27.4% undergone more severe condition which is clinical depression. As for anxiety, 9% of them are struggling with severe anxiety, 15.6% had moderate symptoms and 22.8% are considered as mild anxiety. For insomnia, 38.6% of them are experiencing clinical insomnia. (Marroquin, Vine and Morgan, 2020)

Besides adults, the mental health of children and teenagers aged between 7 and 18 also rise the concern of all the parents, teachers and education workers. A research is carried out in China regarding this topic. The total participances are 359 children and 3254 adolescents. The data collected is very shocking as the anxiety levels of children and teenagers are  $(23.87 \pm 15.79) \%$  and  $(29.27 \pm 19.79) \%$  respectively, whereas 22.28% of them had suffered from depressive symptoms. During the pandemic period where they are required to stay at home, the

children and teenagers had spent plenty of time at their gadgets. The statistics for smartphone addiction and internet addiction are  $(38.63 \pm 21.80) \%$  and  $(47.20 \pm 27.42) \%$  respectively. As there are various kind of information which can be accessed easily by the kids and teenagers regardless positive or negative, their minds can be easily affected by negativizes available at the internet especially those posted on the social media. This can be shown by 41.45% of them who are smartphone addicted are currently suffering depression, whereas 61.01% who are addicted to internet are also depressed. (Duan, Shao et al, 2020)

As we can see from the statistics mentioned above, public health emergencies like this global pandemic may more or less affect the health regardless physically or mentally, safety and well-being of both individuals and communities. To interpret deeper into the reasons of an individual facing mental health problems, various questionnaires are distributed to the public via online. Here are some common problems encountered by the citizens, such as insecurity and confusion due to the spreading of fake news and information during the pandemic which cause mass panic among the public. (Pfefferbaum and North, 2020) For example, in the beginning stage of the pandemic, people are panicking in buying daily supplements as there are lots of fake news regarding the lock down system, they afraid that the supplements would not be enough if they are not allowed to get out of their house during the lock down period. A common product that worldwide citizens are fighting to buy is the toilet paper, this is quite ridiculous as toilet paper is neither a tool for prevention of getting the virus such as the mask or the face shield nor a necessary need for living like food and water. But people are fighting hard for it because of a fake information stated the toilet paper can be used to prevent infection of the disease. This shows that while facing an emergency situation, people are insecure, loss of independent thinking and tend to follow the action of the crowd.

Other than that, economic stress faced by the citizens also leads to depression and anxiety. Due to the lock down of the country, the impact on economic is very obvious, some of the sectors such as travel and leisure activities, hotel management, event organizer and etc are affected as travelling overseas, mass gathering, and leisure activities at public areas are strictly forbidden. This causes the companies to lay off employees in order to reduce the expenses of company, some companies apply the policy of cutting pay, and unfortunately some of them cannot survive this economic shock which then closed down. Workers who had lost their jobs during the pandemic are facing lots of stress as they lost their incomes. This leads to anxiety especially when they have the responsible in raising their kids and supporting their families. As for students, the teaching and learning process is conducted online, which have a

huge difference compared to face to face learning. Online classes are carried out through platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, WebEx etc, students with poor internet connection or no internet connection are lagging behind their peers in studies. These students may feel stressed and some of them even had anxiety caused by the stress.

There is also sad news which a man who worked at overseas committed suicide due to work-related depression and also missing his families who are staying at the hometown during this pandemic period. (Mohamed, 17 Oct 2020) Therefore, it is undoubtedly important in taking action to prevent depression or to alleviate the symptoms of depression or to cure depression by clinical means. One has to be optimistic and think positively that there is always a solution for the problem encountered. Besides having a positive mind, the support from family and friends are also important while one is feeling down or depressed. Exercising regularly also help in making one feel better. When one is depressed, he or she must not hesitate to seek professional help from the therapist or doctor. Therapy is needed to understand the needs of the depressed patient, some of them ought to take drugs as medication process. For example, drugs such as dextroamphetamine-amphetamine (Adderall) or methylphenidate (Ritalin) can boost energy level, modafinil (Provigil) is helpful with lethargy or increased somnolence, and a low dosage of antipsychotic such as quetiapine (Seroquel) can reduce the rigidity of negative thinking. (Leahy, et al, 2011)

Apart from depression, anxiety is also a common psychological problem faced by the citizens. Individual who suffer from generalised anxiety disorder usually exhibit chronic apprehensive worry and also facing some physical symptoms such as restlessness, irritability and sleep disturbance. (Leahy, et al, 2011) There are some ways to prevent anxiety, one can take deep breaths to cool down their racing minds when feeling anxious or stressed. Exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy diet also aid in keeping a healthy lifestyle and mind. Talking to family, friends or any trusted person also able to help those who are constantly in worried mood feel better. Seeking professional aid is essential in treating anxiety before it got worse. Other than that, the government, non-government organizations or any societies or individuals can try their best in helping those in needs by providing financial support or emotional support.

While conducting this case study, I had gain insight about the effect of covid-19 to our mental health. Even though we cannot easily observe the consequence of mental disease such as depression and anxiety on a person in the beginning of the disease, but we cannot ignore the

symptoms of mental illness whether it is on ourselves or our loved ones. During this hard time of pandemic, caring and love is what people should spread among the community, positive quotes, funny jokes or memes, and motivation speech should be widely spread at social media rather than negativeness.

In conclusion, the virus had caused numerous changes in our lifestyle. The global pandemic still yet in its progress, also every country is working hard to control the spread of this disease among the community. The front liners are paying their full attention in saving lives and treating those who are infected, respect to them who are willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the healthy of the citizens. Mental health of the citizens also raised alert of the government and also non-government organization; they are also trying their best to provide aid to all the citizens in needs. The community also shown effort in taking care each other during this hard time. Hence, we can conclude that there is always warmth in the harsh situation.

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