

Depression during the Journey of COVID 19 and Lockdown- A Study

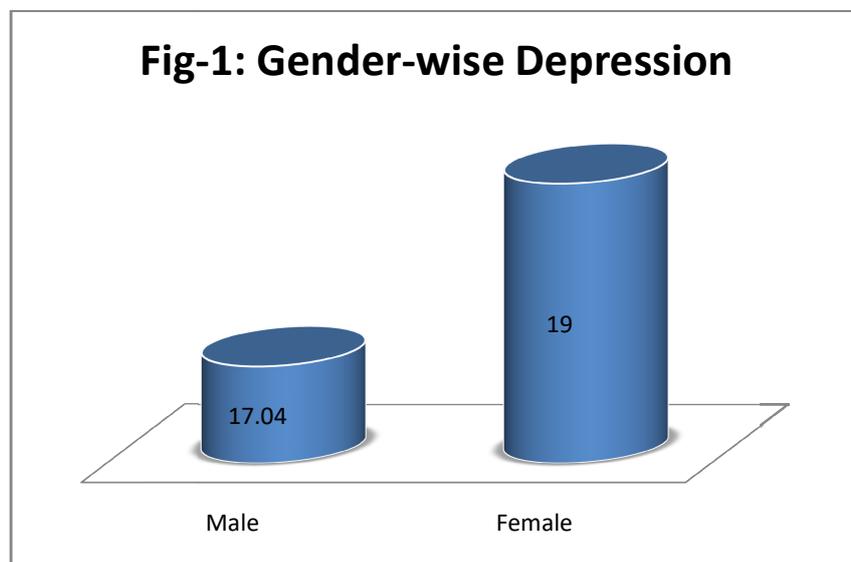
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The anxiety response pattern is a complex blend of unpleasant emotions and cognitions that is both more oriented to the future. Anxiety has not only cognitive/subjective components but also physiological and behavioral components. At the cognitive/ subjective level, anxiety involves negative mood, worry about possible future threats or danger, and a sense of being unable to predict future threat. At a physiological level it often creates a state of tension and chronic over arousal. Depression and anxiety are different conditions, but they commonly occur together. Anxiety may occur as a symptom of clinical (major) depression. It's also common to have depression that's triggered by an anxiety disorder, such as generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder or separation anxiety disorder. Depression usually involves feelings of extraordinary sadness and dejection. Psychological stressors are known to be involved in the onset of a variety of disorders, ranging from some of the anxiety disorders to schizophrenia. Most of the episodic stressful life events involved in precipitating depression involve loss of loved one, serious threats to important close relationships or **serious threats to one's occupation, or severe economic or serious health problems**. The cognitive diathesis that have been studied for depression generally focus on particular negative patterns of thinking that make people who are prone to depression more likely to become depressed when faced with one or more stressful life events. For example, people who attribute negative events to internal, stable, and global causes may be more prone to becoming depressed.

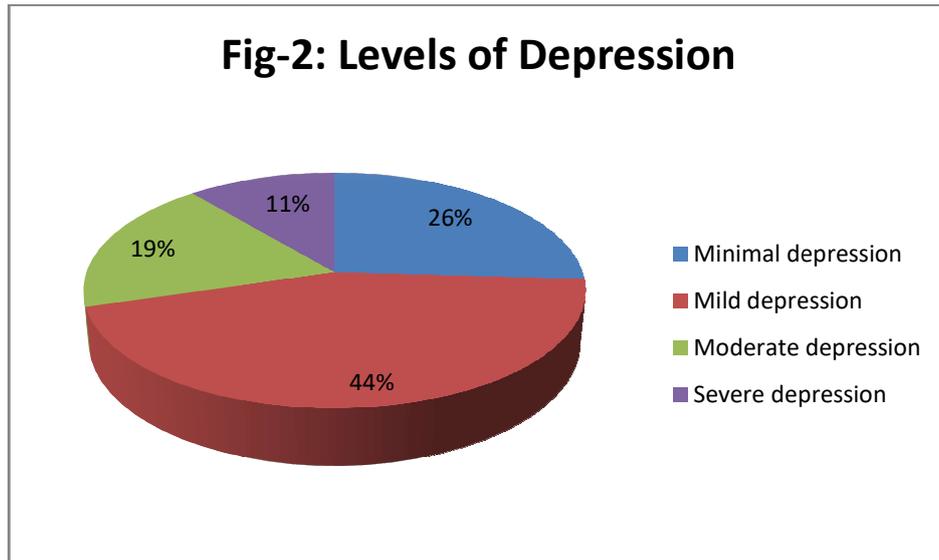
India's unprecedented lockdown due to COVID-19, brought forth changing behavioural patterns from people initially flouting norms to eventually accepting the isolation for their own good. Reports of people tackling mental health issues became common as the national lockdown entered the fourth week means one month. The pandemic has compelled people to stay indoors and some are not able to adjust very well to this. Things can be understood better if one reads Kessler's book 'On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief through the Five Stages of Loss'. The book, co-authored by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, **talks about five stages of grief - denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.**

Keeping in mind the pandemic and lockdown situation, the department of Psychology, Netaji Subhash Mahavidyalaya (NSM) has conducted a study (through Whatsapp group) to assess depression among the students of the said college. The study was conducted on 20th and 21st of April, 2020. A total of 54 students from 2nd, 4th and 6th Sem were included in the study and distributed BDI-II (Beck Depression Inventory- II), which is consisted of 21 items. There are 29 female students and 25 students are male. Their age ranges from 19-21years. All the students were also asked to share their feelings and state of mind during this lockdown situation in one page. From their write up it is found that irrespective of living area (Urban and Rural) and gender all the students are getting bored, frustrated, and helpless though not hopeless. Along with these they are also anxious about their syllabus and Semester examinations

Data obtained from the Inventory shows that the mean of the depression score is 18. As per scoring technique this score reveals that all the students of NSM, who have participated in the study, are suffering from mild depression. The following figure shows the depression of male and female students.



From the above figure it is found that both the male and female students are suffering from mild depression as per the scoring technique. The data also reveals that the depression scores of female students are more than that of male students. Many researchers have been suggested that gender affects depression but other studies do not supported this too. The following figure shows the level of depression among the students.



From the above figure it is found that majority (44%) of the students are suffering from mild depression followed by minimal (26%), moderate (19%) and severe depression (11%). Higher total score indicates severe depression. It is a matter of concern that 11% of the students are suffering from severe depression. The researchers of the study hope that the students suffering from mild depression will come out of their depression with the change of the lockdown situation.

Understanding the gravity of the situation an action oriented plan has been adopted via whatsapp as the sample size is not so large. Though online classes, providing study materials have already been started by the various departments of the college from the beginning of the lock down. Another thing is that all the participants of this study are connected with the department of Psychology through whatsapp and email, so they can be reached with some activities (problem solving puzzle; playing riddles; sharing motivational speech; providing link of online chess for those who can play; discussion about recent popular films etc) to distract themselves from their depressive feelings. The students suffering from severe depression need clinical diagnosis. Hence, special attention will be given to the students with moderate and severe depression. Their family members will also be included in this mission.

The following recommendations will also be forwarded to all the students of Netaji Subhash Mahavidyalaya through the respective Head of the Departments.

1. Contact should be made with nature.
2. Participation in family activities is necessary.

3. Contact over telephone with friends, relatives and others are required.
4. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media.
5. Students should try to do some other activities they enjoy.
6. Physical exercise and relaxation is highly needed.

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