

Book Review

COVID-19 Epidemiological and Mental Health Challenges

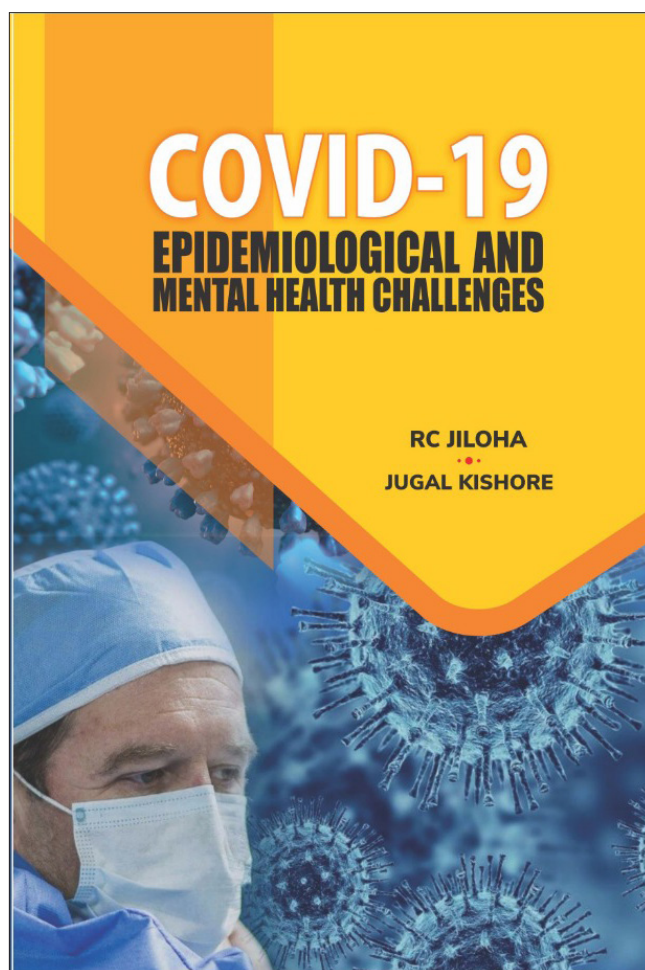
Neeta Kumar

Scientist, Innovation and Translation, Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, India.

In view of increasing reports of adverse mental health events after COVID-19 related deaths, and higher deaths due to COVID-19 among those having mental illness, this book "COVID-19 Epidemiological and mental health challenges" is providing the perfect blend of clinical-psychological connect with reader due to its user-friendly narrative style on mental health issues during COVID-19. This book written by a team of eminent psychiatrist and public health expert carries comprehensive compilation of the history of pandemics and handling of mental health, present scenario, past practices, and learning for the current scenarios. This book not only discusses the science of mental health during pandemics, occurrences/ prevalence, affecting factors but also much-awaited word on management in the home as well as in hospital settings. Due to its simple yet elaborated user-friendly narrative with elaborated evidence & references on psychological, aspects in public health, this book itself becomes therapeutic not only for scholars' students' faculties involved in research, but also for laymen, general public to understand the cause of what is happening deep inside in mind and affecting their body chemistry. Mental status is mutually connected to biochemical happenings in body. There are reported high incidences of symptoms of lethargy, weakness, listlessness, suicidal tendencies, and causalities due to mental health effect during pandemic and has been identified with cause, mechanism, and remedial aspects in the book.

"The the virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities and this may never go away-Mike Ryan -Executive Director WHO" seems relevant seeing various mental health sequelae, waves of COVID-19 and its variants striking 2nd time in many parts of the world. Since global lockdowns from March 2020 posing economic, occupational, environmental, physical, psychological-relationship impacts indirectly as well as directly. Virus-induced mental changes are a direct pathological manifestation of the virus and indirect effects are due to circumstances.

Infodemic of information is also posing confusions, and this book with relevant references, evidence and facts behind myth bring clarity amidst confusion.



About Book

Author: RC Jiloha, Jugal Kishore

ISBN: 978-81-950016-3-7

Edition 2021

Price: ₹ 450

Publisher: Century Publications

Pages: 336

Right from the beginning of Chapter 1, how should clinicians integrate behavioral-immune response during an epidemic are addressed, in view of latest challenges to the individual and psyche of the community during a pandemic. Various infective pathogens, a pattern of spread, the effect of the pandemic on health care the system, along with stress factors, socio-economical aspects of mental health are dealt with herein.

Well-read history provides courage for proper action during future challenges. Chapter 2 ensures readers by telling the last 100 years history of many COVID-19 like pandemics of Athenian plague in 430BC till recently occurring SARS, Swine flu, Ebola, Zika, and now COVID-19, and about its possible controllability.

Chapter 3 prepares for war by discussing possible changes in future course to enable learning on methods needed in this warfare by understanding its nature, pattern, and mechanism of actions required. Strength and weakness of viruses are elaborated in Chapter 4 and management strategies for various clinical features/ presentations of mental illnesses in Chapter 5. Evidence for the role of preventive measures viz a viz vaccine in management are elaborated in Chapter 6 & 7.

Chapter 8 and 9 are dealing with Health for its multi dimensional aspects. How health is affected by social status, income, surrounding, physical, and emotional capabilities at the level of individual, family, community, city, country, and at international level globally by responses during the pandemic.

Starting from first declared case of COVID-19 on 8th December to lockdown from 22 March 2020, many mental health challenges started pouring in. Chapter 8 extension elaborates on symptoms of anxiety, depression, the role of pre-existing psychiatric disorders, precipitation of addictions and their management including use of telepsychiatry counseling among existing patients, address substance use disorders cognitive disorders, fear-related issues during the lockdown. Role of ancient Indian traditions, dealing with lifestyle practices for prevention to sort mental health challenges are emerging beautifully from elaborations in Chapter 9.

Chapter 10 focuses on causes of discrepancy of prevalence, mortality across the globe, and role of different cultural practices, preventive measures, and mental strength of communities along with differences in management strategies. Health system approaches in dealing with challenges are elaborated. Such differences have played important role in discrepancies in the outcome.

Medicinal, pharmacological management of withdrawal symptoms among drug addicts, precipitation of new and persisting mental symptoms, and issues related to data

safety confidentiality during tale counseling/consultation and many such unique conditions posed due to lockdown are elaborated towards the end. Easily understood language for pharmacological management of psychiatric disorders makes it a handbook for mental health management during a challenging situation- the absence of physical visit the doctor.

With the current mark of 12 million cases in India on 30 March 2021, recovering 11.4 million, 162 thousand deaths, 128 million cases worldwide with 72.3 million recoveries and 2.79 a million deaths globally make it imperative to look into various factors becoming saviors for recovery, immunity, and mental health and what needs to be promoted to pave way for more recoveries.

However, there is scope to elaborate more of the role of spiritual practices, beliefs, lifestyle, yoga dhyana practices, in addressing mental health, the book highlights lacunae and other solutions effectively. There is a contrast difference in customs tradition, belief and its role during pandemic and difference of mortality rates across countries; those would have been elaborated in more detail in this book. Still COVID-19 epidemiological and mental health challenges is an excellent book with a good layout on disease, its description, effect on mental health with relevant and appropriate references on all aspects related to mental status - covering the history of the pandemic from the year of its start, geography, mortality, and impact on the psyche. Each chapter accompanied by references to aid additional reading makes it a must-read for all public health and mental health professionals. Students of public health science will find it helps them to reflect on policy, program, advocacy, activism, and their role in it.