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Challenge of the Pandemic

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Вызов пандемии

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The start of 2020 was marked by the emergence of a new coronavirus infection, which radically changed all spheres of human life, regardless of their territorial and national affiliation.

The emerging situation of the coronavirus pandemic has had an impact not only on the somatic health and socio-economic status, but also on the mental state of the population, provoking the risk of developing anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Personal determinants of anxiety and depression during the pandemic reflect unfavorable past experience, the availability of psychological resources, social and demographic characteristics of subjects. In other words, the specifics of the people's mental response in pandemic situations is determined by individual, personal, psychosocial and situational factors.

Moreover, the situation with the pandemic has clearly highlighted the peculiarities of modern society: uncertainty, turbulence and digitalization. It is common to perceive these characteristics negatively, but we forget that instability is often a sign of growth, development, change, and life. Turbulence is often a necessary jolt for a person, a push to new achievements.

Digitalization is an ability to continuously manage information, receive and process large databases that are a foundation for objective conclusions.

Of course, the current situation is a challenge for specialists in all fields, and especially for psychologists. The ability to make quick decisions and bear social responsibility, to provide mobile assistance and support becomes the main focus.

As the current situation tends to aggravate, we can expect a further increase in the need for psychological assistance aimed at training in self-regulation of mental states, developing and popularizing forms of active coping with them that are available within the pandemic context. Therefore, it is important to develop individualized and specialized strategies for psychological assistance in the situation of a coronavirus pandemic.

In the current pandemic, patients with comorbid health problems of all ages are at risk for serious health problems or sadly, have succumbed to COVID-19. Isolated case studies of pregnant women such as that of Hosier et al. (2020) recently reported two cases suggesting that the SARS-CoV-2 virus may cross the placental barrier, infecting the fetus. In Texas' Nucces County in the USA, 85 infants under the age of 1 year have tested positive for the novel coronavirus. In adults in particular, the impact of the virus has been varied with acute changes in breathing and hypoxia to blood clots and strokes, and microbleeds (Fitsiori, Pugin, Thieffry, Lalive, & Vargas, 2020), in many instances, requiring ICU management and ventilation. The delayed effects of COVID-19 on neuropsychological functioning are unknown. Although the significant death-rate worldwide has triggered alarm and anxiety as well as fear of impending death particularly in the absence of a vaccine, psychological distress and other cerebral effects are reported. The impact on cerebral functioning is anticipated in view of two possible effects. Since SARS-CoV-2 uses the angiotensin converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) receptor (Li et al., 2020) as an access portal to the lungs, the indirect effects of low blood oxygen saturation levels or hypoxia may on cerebral functioning is unknown. On the other hand, ACE2 and its receptors are also found in the brain especially in CNS neurons and glial cells thus making it a potential target for possible direct infiltration by SARS-CoV-2 virus. Individuals infected with SARS-CoV-2 virus have complained of loss of taste and smell with infection

of the olfactory bulb suspected to be pathway of entry into the cerebral structures. Since the medical management of COVID-19 is improving with ventilation, corticosteroids and other supportive measures, a large proportion of these patient is expected to recover from the disease. For patients who recover, the possibility of lingering cognitive and behavioral effects are unknown although they are likely to be present. Therefore, the post-acute and long-term effects of COVID-19 on the cognitive and behavioral functioning of individuals are expected to constitute an important area of neuropsychological research and clinical practice in coming months and years.

Using Luria's Syndrome Analysis to study the neuropsychological profiles of individual COVID-19 patients, ranging in age from infancy to late adulthood, affords a unique opportunity to track the neuropsychological changes of patients recovering from the disease, identify areas of the brain that are susceptible to hypoxic brain damage, predict their outcomes and contribute to the development of future neuropsychological rehabilitation and medical control of long-term sequelae of future viral pandemics impacting the brain.

The time of discovery seemed to be over, but life has shown that there is a lot of unknown things ahead of us, and it is still too soon for researchers to stop there. In the current situation, it is extremely important to be able to think systematically. And we hope that a reader will find useful information in our journal.

With wishes of health and well-being,

Lurian Journal.

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