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Effects of COVID-19 Lockdown on Human Psychology in Selected Areas, Lahore, Pakistan

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Abstract

Objectives: To find out the effects of Covid-19 lockdown on human psychology and on interfamily relations, in selected areas of Lahore Pakistan.

Methodology: This study was conducted between Aprils to July 2020, after completion of first lockdown in Lahore. This cross-sectional survey was completed by 164 volunteers. Data was collected from model town, as it was one of the first hotspot of covid-19 in Lahore and one of the first sealed area also.

Results: Descriptive statistics was applied by using SPSS (statistical package for the social sciences) version 16.0. Results revealed that Covid-19 lockdown had negative impact on 69% peoples' psychology. 63.4% people felt stress and anxiety due to mishap. This lockdown affected 56.7% people work performance. It had bad impact on 70.1% population routine daily life. 45.3% peoples' family relations improved. 47.6% population felt isolated from their friends. 70.7% population stated that continuous news regarding covid-19 increased their stress levels. 47.6% population did not support Pakistani nationals return to Pakistan in such contagious circumstances. 51.2% population was full of hope that Pakistan can overcome this infection.

Conclusion: Covid-19 lockdown had negative impact on people psychology and daily lives.

Keywords: Covid-19; lockdown affects; human psychology; interfamily relations.

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Introduction

COVID-19 was first recognized in December 2019 in "Wuhan" the capital of china's Hubei region and has since spread globally, resulting in continuous 2019-2020 corona virus pandemic. Initially it was known as novel virus and then eventually it was found to be highly pathogenic and contagious variant of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome).

It was assumed to be originated from virus found in bats but had no prior history of affecting humans but corona virus (SARS-Cov.2) is a new member of this species, mainly infecting humans and causing acute pneumonia resulting in respiratory syndrome of severe nature (COVID-19 Response Team, 2020).

Among human it spreads basically through coughing, sneezing and talking because of the droplets they spread. As this virus is highly contagious, it was almost impossible to stop the spread of COVID-19 and due to its remarkable capability of thriving on different surfaces and less sensitivity to high temperatures, it was spreading really fast from one human to another human and from one country to another (Nishiura *et al.*, 2020).

Since, the administration was very much aware of the earnestness of this condition; Pakistan government had also announced the 21 days lock down consequently in different provinces and in Punjab also from 16 March till 6 April to slow down virus spread. The incubation period of corona virus in human body is 6-14 days and then 7 days for immune system to fight and overcome the infection in a healthy individual with good immune system (Mamun and Ullah, 2020). During the lock down, services corresponding with basic human needs e.g., food, health and non-physical means of communication e.g., television broadcasts, internet services and mobile network services were available for the public. Since everybody were pushed and scared of COVID-19, this made researcher to know the effects of this lockdown on human psychology or the mentality of the individuals, who spent an almost one-month period home bound. Researcher found an increase in uncertainly, Depression, fear, anxiousness, and an increase in the occurrence of psychiatric & other mental health disorders. Health care providers were also on front line to evolve mental health disorders like panic disorders, behavioural disorders etc. (Sood, 2020).

The effect of COVID-19 and lockdown on the psychological well-being of people in India was also investigated and n=1000 respondents were studied to observe depression, anxiety and stress. DASS-21 was used to observe individual's mental health. It was explored that these circumstances had worst effects on mental health as higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress and insomnia in psychotic people and psychiatric patients were reported more depressed as well as they also had suicidal thoughts (Kazmi *et al.*, 2020).

During the period of April 9, 2020 to April 16, 2020, a study in Nepal evaluated the prevalence of depression, anxiety and depression-anxiety comorbidity & correlated elements during COVID-19 and lockdown on n=349. A health questionnaire and anxiety tool was utilized to examine self-reported anxiety, depression. The results concluded that Pandemic covid-19 is affecting individual's life in numerous ways (Hao *et al.*, 2020).

Few studies have conducted to find its effects on human psychology, mental wellbeing and their daily routine life. No study was conducted in Pakistan in this context. This study aimed to find covid-19 psychological affects in Pakistan as a developing state.

Methodology

Descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted on 164 volunteers with 80% accuracy and 100% response rate. Model town an area in Lahore was selected for study as it was one of the initially hit area by corona virus in Lahore. Population above 18 years and resident of model town which were confined at their homes due to covid-19 lockdown and unable to resume their routine life took part in this study and filled this study questionnaire. Informed consent was taken. Questionnaire was adopted from a resembling study (Suryawanshi *et al.*, 2020). Section A asked demographic data, age and gender. Section B consisted upon 10 questions which measured effects of COVID-19 lockdown on human mentality, how people are spending most of their time during lockdown and know people opinion. Questions 1 to 6 measured effects of COVID-19 lockdown on people psychology and their daily life. Question 7 assessed how people were spending their time which they are spared due to lockdown and response collected in the form of 21 different Likert combinations formulated according to routine pastimes of people those days. Question 8 assessed relationship between stress levels and continuous COVID-19 increasing cases news not only from Pakistan but from around the globe. Question 9 and 10 obtained people opinions about overseas Pakistani return to Pakistan and their hopes about Pakistan control over COVID-19. Data was analysed by SPSS version 16.0. Descriptive statistics was applied over data, frequency distribution and percentage checked.

Results

One hundred and sixty-four individuals filled the questionnaire. Gender proportion was kept equal male=82, female=82 but no discrimination for age was made and people were selected randomly.

Participants' age

Age of respondents revealed that mostly population belonged to younger and middle age group. 73 respondents comprising upon 44.5% of the whole sample size of 164 belonged to 19-30 years of age boundary. 42 respondents belonged to age boundary of 31-40 years, 25 respondents belonged to age boundary of 41-50 years, 13 respondents belonged to age boundary of 51-60 years and 11 respondents belonged to age boundary of 61-70 years making the percentages of 25.6%, 15.2%, 7.9% and 6.7% respectively of the whole sample size and also making the response rate 100% (Fig. 1).

Effects of COVID-19 Lockdown

Fig. 2 shows that 69% population showing negative impact of lockdown on their mentality. 16% population felt the positive impact of lockdown on their mentality and lockdown didn't affect 15% population. In response to effect of COVID-19 lockdown we discovered that 115



respondents as 70.1% of the sample population experienced this change as bad change for their daily life routine. 27 or 16.5% respondents found lockdown as good change in their life. 22 or 13.4 % didn't influenced by this change in their daily life routine. We also come to know that lockdown affected work performance of 56.7% or 93 persons from sample population. 42 respondents, 25.6% of the whole sample didn't felt any compromise on their work performance. 29 people or 17.7% population was unable to differentiate this change.

People time spending preferences during lockdown period (16th March to 6th April, 2020)

Fig. 3 Shows people most probable time spending preferences during locked down period(16th March till 6th April, 2020) revealed that 23% of whole sample population spend their time only with their family. 1% respondents

spent most of their time by using laptops. 9.8% population utilized their time both on mobile phones and their families. 4.9% representative of population consumed their lockdown time with mobile, family, laptop and others. 1.8% respondents used their time by using mobile, laptop and other things. 9.1% population pursued other activities, 1.8% preferred television, family and other activities, 11% used mobile, spent time with family and watched television. 3% preferred television, mobile, family, laptop and others. 0.6% spent time with family and laptop, 10.5% used mobile phone, 1.2% with mobile, family laptop. 3.7% mobile, family and others, 0.6% mobile and others, 1.8% watching television, 1.6% watching television and using mobile, 1.2% watching television, mobile, family and laptop, 4.9% watching television, mobile, family and others, 8.5% spending time with family and doing other activities.

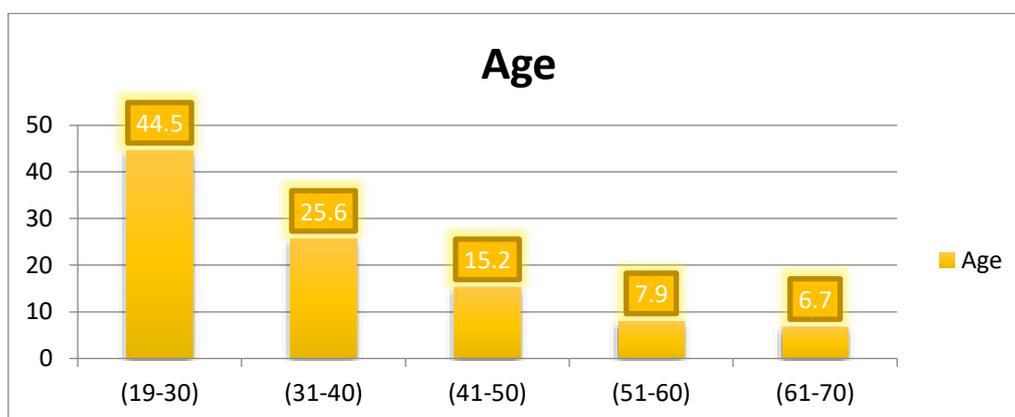


Fig. 1: Displayed demographic data age.

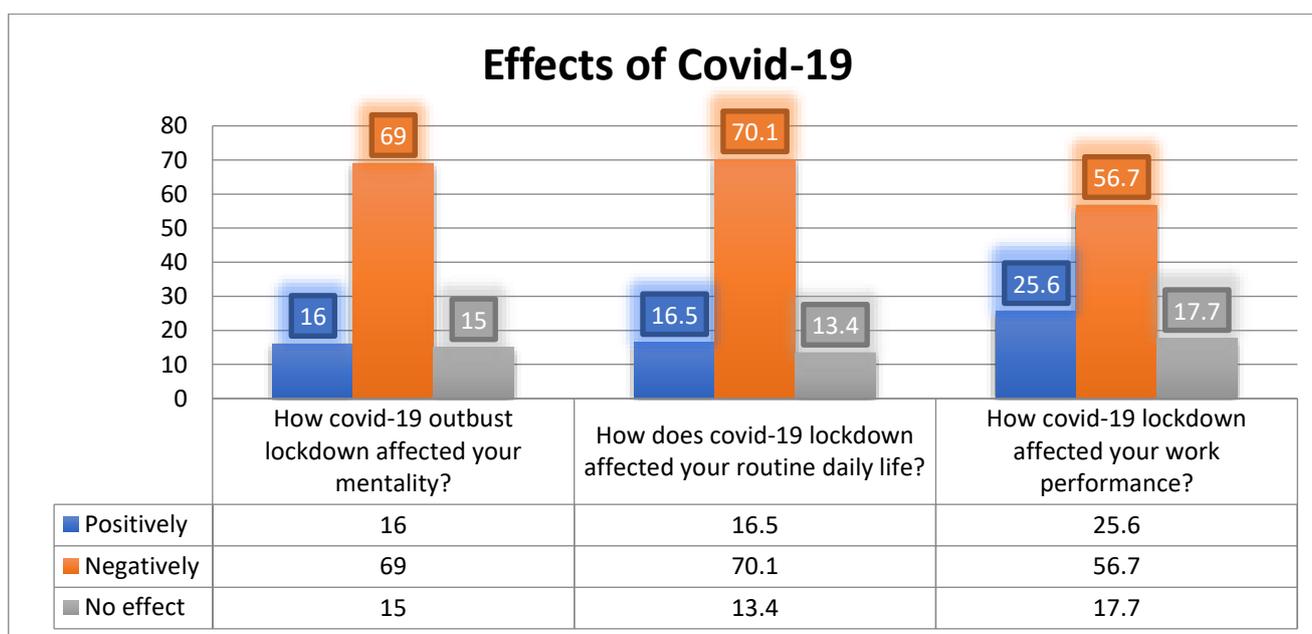


Fig 2: The fig shows COVID-19 lockdown effects over general population.

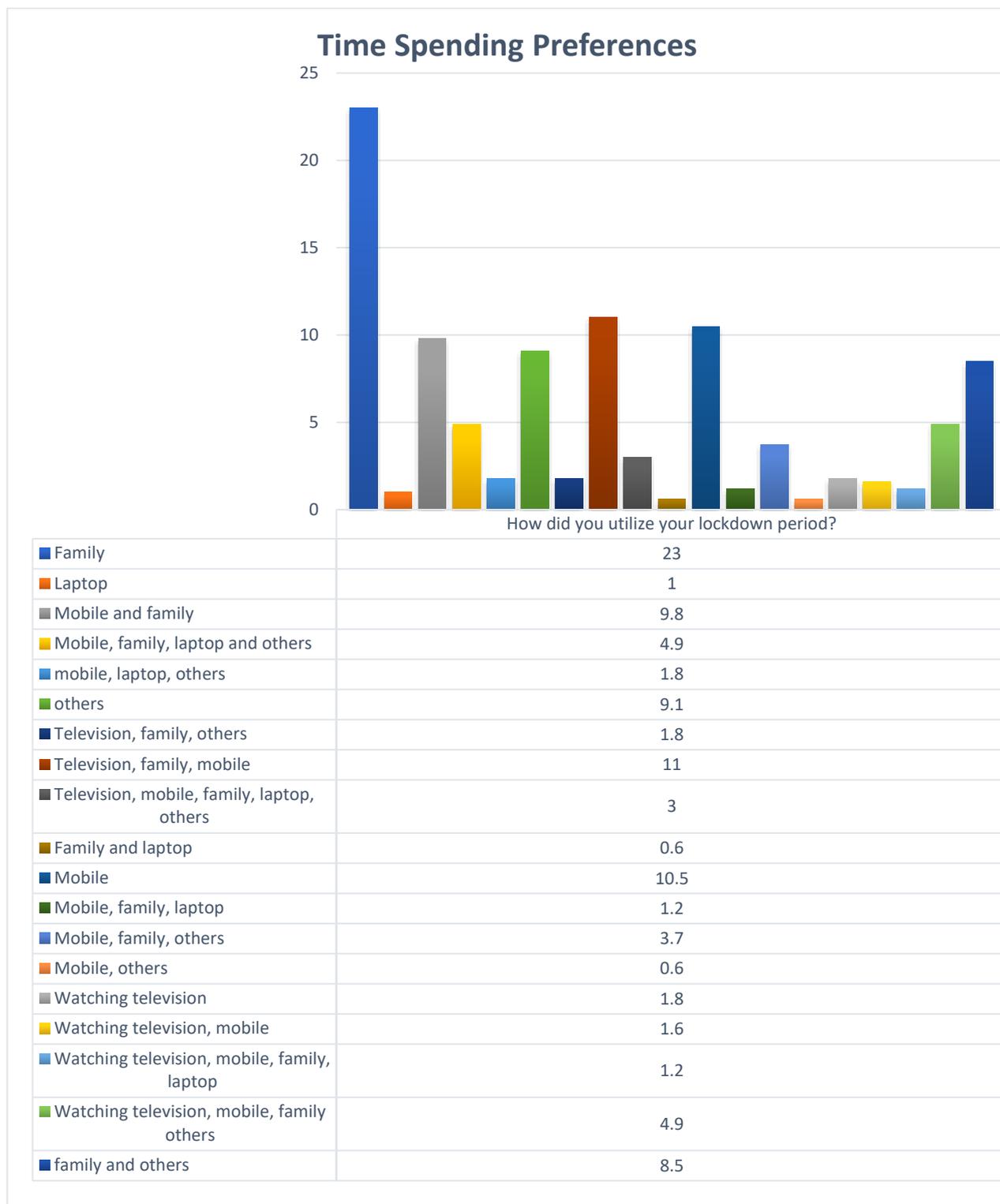


Fig. 3: People time spending preferences during lockdown period (16th March to 6th April, 2020).

COVID-19 Lockdown Affect Over Interfamily Relations

Fig 4 Shows improvement in family member relationships.45.3% population family relations improved due to having this unexpected time to stay at their homes. 35.2% population didn't experience any change in their family relations neither good nor bad. 19.5% population

also experienced decline in their family relations due to lockdown.

Table 1 shows frequency distribution and percentage of the data for the effects of COVID-19 lockdown on routine life stress, relationship with friends and corresponding relationship between stress level and COVID-19 repeated news broadcast, people opinion about overseas Pakistani return and Pakistanis hope about overcoming COVID-19.

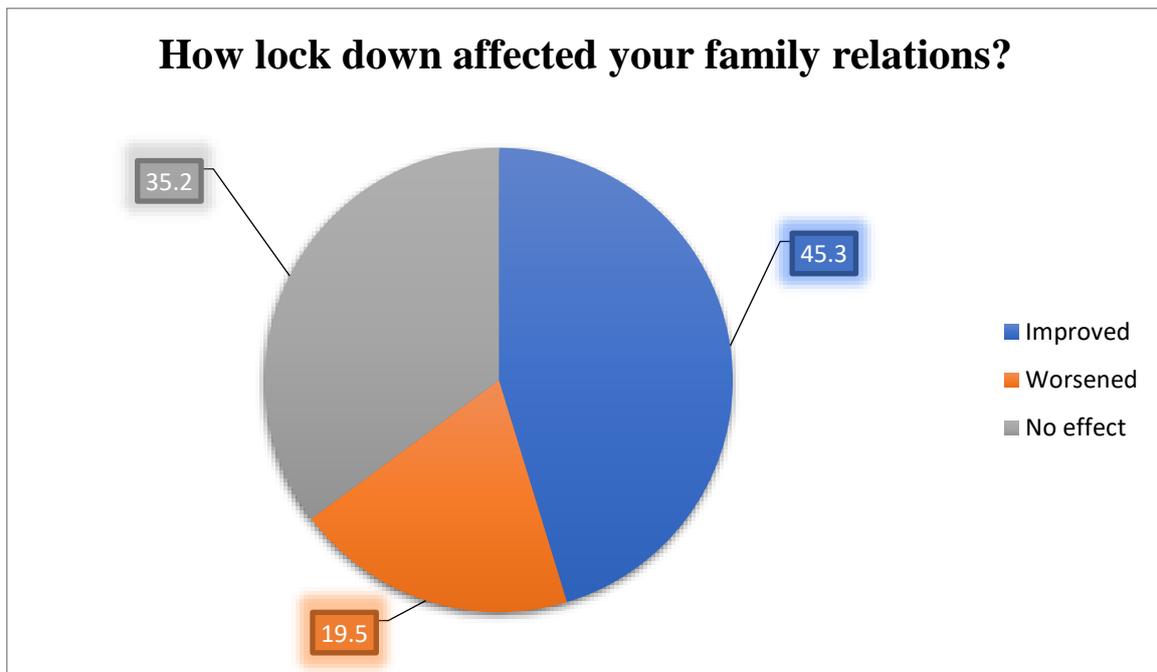


Fig 4: Data showing COVID-19 Lockdown Affect Over Interfamily Relations.

Table 1: Effects of COVID-19 lockdown (N=164)

VARIABLES	Yes		No		Cannot say	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Does the mishap and expected incidents increase your stress and anxiety?	104	63.4	32	19.5	28	17.1
Due to lockdown do you feel that you are isolated from you friends?	78	47.6	69	42.1	17	10.4
Does the continuous news of COVID-19 on News channel made you afraid and increased the stress level?	116	70.7	31	18.9	17	10.4
All Pakistani nationals who are working abroad should be restricted to come back Pakistan?	78	47.6	75	45.7	11	6.7
Are you hopeful that Pakistan will overcome COVID-19?	84	51.2	68	41.5	12	7.3

Discussion

It was observed after considering results of our study that objectives of our study fulfilled. COVID-19 lockdown also affected psychologically people in our own region in many ways. It was a descriptive cross-sectional survey of people who experienced lockdown of 21 days as preventive measure. Government applied restrictive strategy in all over the Pakistan to slowdown corona virus spread. We collected the data from general public of one of the high case reporting and initially locked down area in Lahore. We found that Participant’s mentality was negatively (69%) affected due to this lockdown.

One of the parallel studies also observed the degree of mental health effect in the start of COVID-19 pandemic and used IES-R (Impact of event scale-Revised) to investigate

the emotional effect and psychological effect, through DASS-21. (Depression, anxiety and stress scale). In the start of COVID-19 depression, anxiety and stress found to be moderate to severe. (Wang *et al.*, 2020)

Lockdown also affected people work performance (56.7%) as the environment of fear and uncertainty created. People were unable to concentrate on their work dealings. This environment of confinement and bondage also clenched their daily life routine and almost had negative impact on that (70.1%). One of the corresponding studies also observed that COVID-19 outbreak information also had bad impact on sleep duration as observed in Wuhan, china during the period 20th February to 2nd march, 2020. (Zheng *et al.*, 2020).



But not everything about this uncertain situation created worldwide was bad. This situation brought little good also. Due to lockdown people were restricted to their homes and came closer. Interfamily relations improved (45.3%), disturbed mostly due to daily busy life routine. Some people also felt isolated from their friends (47.6%) and other didn't, perhaps due to availability of modern means of communication e.g., social media apps, chats phone calls, video calls or due to engaging in other activities. people mostly spend their time with their families (23%) but did utilize their time in different activities to overcome the fearful circumstances and have a little escape from real world worries e.g., watching television, using mobile phone, laptops and doing other activities.

In contrast, as a result of our study it was eye opening fact that news channels were playing vital role in creating an atmosphere of fear and increased stress level (70.7%) among people by airing repeated news of corona virus spread and its death rate worldwide and number of positive cases as if these were scores of any competition. These repeated broadcasts created panic and uncertainty among public.

Another study also observed that COVID-19 pandemic heavily effecting on psychology of people. Notable increase in anxiety and other health issues e.g., depression, restlessness and panic conditions were seen worldwide. For advanced mental health interventions and psychological wellbeing of public, media and informal organization must be firmly controlled on facts/data all over the world (Torales et al., 2020).

On contrary, some people also wanted to meet their beloveds and demanded government to let their beloveds to return Pakistan (45.7%) but agreed upon proper screening and stay in quarantine centre on airports. During all these efforts most of the people were hoping that Pakistan can win this race easily and prevent the spread of virus in this region (51.2%) because comparatively less cases were reported here, but other being factual (41.5%) didn't hopped that Pakistan can overcome this pandemic as other highly developed countries were also helpless in these circumstances.

Conclusion

Covid-19 lockdown had negative impact on people's psychology and daily lives.

People felt isolated from their friends but their family relations improved. Continuous and competing news about corona cases created panic wave and increased people stress levels. People were hopeful that Pakistan can control spread of this virus.

Limitations

Participant's financial problems were not studied for research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with present publication.

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