



Women's Psychological Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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As coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) has continued to impact societies for more than one year, everyone has been influenced by the negative impact of COVID-19 [1,2]. Patterns of daily life have considerably changed. Additionally, there are diverse populations who are at higher risk of negative effects of COVID-19. Generally, there is a large body of research showing that women are at increased risk of some mental health problems compared to men, such as depression and anxiety [3]. Given that the possibility of suffering from mental health problems has increased since COVID-19 [4], women might be at even more of a risk of experiencing poor psychological health.

During the period of COVID-19, gender discrimination in the labor force can increase as many people have trouble finding a job and the unemployment rate has grown dramatically. Further, as the number of available jobs decreases, women's wages also reduce, leading women to suffer from financial challenges. That is, women's income since COVID-19 might have decreased [5], and this particularly makes it challenging for single mothers to raise their children. If they have babies or kids who cannot go to school, single mothers have even more difficulties to find a job because they must either afford or find childcare or stay at home to care for their children. In addition, single mothers might not have sufficient time and financial resources to invest in themselves, which is very important to be competitive in the labor force. In other words, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, women may find themselves in a worse position financially due to a loss of income or job loss. Women may then feel hopelessness and be at an increased risk for mental health problems such as depression or anxiety [6,7].

For women who were not employed before COVID-19 and stay at home to take care of their children, they may not have experienced the same mental health problems related

to job loss or loss of income as other women. However, since COVID-19, online education has become prevalent so that many students are not required to go to school in person to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This results in increased burdens of caregiving as mothers are forced to spend more time to take care of their children while they attend school virtually. Increased caregiving burden often leads to mental health problems and in one study researchers found that nearly a quarter of parents lost regular childcare, and nearly the same proportion of parents reported decreased mental health since the COVID pandemic began [8]. As mothers may be required to take care of their children all day, every day, they might be exhausted due to the increased burdens of caregiving, resulting in increased mental health problems. As mothers' depression can also influence their children's mental health and bring about problems with other family members, women's depression is a serious problem. If a mother suffers from mental health problems, she may not provide optimal caregiving to her children [9,10]. As such, COVID-19 has a negative effect not only on women's psychological health, but also on other family members as a result.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, women may be more likely to suffer from mental health problems due to difficulties in the labor force and increased caregiving burdens. In particular, single mothers may encounter more challenges in both employment and raising children. As a result, they may be much more depressed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Women's psychological health has been addressed in diverse academic areas; however, more attention is necessary to improve women's psychological health since the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, providing more mental health services that are affordable and accessible (e.g., telehealth options) are critical to address increased mental health problems among women since COVID-19 emerged. However, to ultimately resolve

such problems, financial assistance for women who have lost income or employment since COVID-19 must be provided in order to alleviate potential associated mental health problems. Additionally, women's rights in the labor force market should be protected, and interventions to reduce women's caregiving burden should be developed.

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