

# LETTER TO EDITOR

## The psychological consequences of COVID-19 on children's world

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### Dear Editor-in-Chief

The world's countries are presently shaken by a novel member of the coronavirus family. Apparently, a very tiny creature has been commissioned to carry out a large mission. This issue causes us to experience a universal life-threatening condition that is changing the life framework for humans. It appears that humans are showing a more real picture of themselves in the current turmoil. This fragile creature does not appear invincible despite a state of self-confidence that reaps its rewards.

The structures are broken down in both advanced and underdeveloped societies. The adoption of special preventive measures for COVID-19 aiming to control the disease has currently failed in the United States, European countries, and Asia. There were more than 15, 000, 000 COVID-19 cases and more than 600, 000 deaths worldwide in the first six month of the COVID-19 pandemic. Children are likely to be the most affected group by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, children usually present with milder COVID-19 symptoms and have a lower fatality rate than other age groups (1). Albeit, the increased severity of the disease has been recently reported among children as a new hyperinflammatory entity similar to Kawasaki and some comorbidities (2).

Children and adolescents are highly vulnerable to the impact of persistent stressors during developmentally unique and sensitive conditions (3, 4). Depression and anxiety are among the most common mental disorders in children, with global burden of the disease and significant functional impacts (5, 6). As the disease progresses over an unchanging period of time, a typical development and expression of depressive and anxiety disorders will occur in the communities. Children are deprived of many activities including doing physical and extracurricular activities, going to school, and other activities that form other daily life rhythms and structures (7). We believe that continuing this harmful situation causes more severe psychiatric disorders. Self-esteem and some basic needs

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such as food and physical safety may be involved. The pandemic may also exacerbate specific types of disorder including obsessive-compulsive disorders, generalized anxiety, and specific phobias.

Moreover, parents are indispensable for mollifying children's stressors. Children's mental health is significantly influenced by family members, especially protectors, since people's interactions have been profoundly affected by the pandemic. However, to provide the best support possible, parents are required to be in suitable physical and psychological conditions. Since parents continuously have debilitating experiences such as loss of job and loved ones, their ability to relieve other family members' pain inevitably decreases over time.

In Iran, we are going through a difficult time. There will definitely be many psychological consequences of the disease that will divide our world into eras before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Both children and their parents have been affected by different mental disorders caused by the illness. However, children are more vulnerable and the persistence of this sensitive stressor can have more impact on their quality of life, both physically and mentally. We aim to evaluate the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of both children and their parents in the southeast of Iran. We will report the preliminary results of our study soon, while we feel the consequences of this great stressor every day. Certainly, this situation

will have long-term effects and the world will need a new movement toward mental health, although poverty, famine, and political corruption are the main issues against the expansion of psychological solutions.

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## Author's Contribution

All the authors contributed to the design and implementation of the research, analysis of the results, and writing of the manuscript.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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