

## Preventive Steps Of Covid-19 Increases OCD Symptoms: Review Based Perspective

DR. Jaya Bharti

Assistant Professor Department of Psychology  
A.N.D.N.N.M.M. Harshnagar Kanpur, Kanpur University

Date of Submission: 16-06-2020

Date of Acceptance: 02-07-2020

The manner in which COVID-19 is spread appropriately has us washing our hands, not touching our faces and engaging in social distancing. However, the overall stress that it is causing may be linked to increased onset of problematic anxiety and obsessive-compulsive symptoms, as well as a worsening of symptoms for those who already are diagnosed with OCD or an anxiety disorder stated by Eric (2020).

Many who are diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) live in fear of being contaminated by germs and for their overall health on a regular basis. This fear and anxiety can be heightened during a global pandemic. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), a highly prevalent psychiatric condition, is recognised as one of the 10 most disabling conditions given its impact on functioning and quality of life (Bobes, González, Bascarán, Arango, Sáiz, Bousoño, (2001) & Veale, Roberts, 2014). For people with OCD, like many others, epidemic stress such as corona virus can exacerbate symptoms, whether it is contamination and cleaning behaviour, or other OCD symptoms such as undesirables and irritants about causing harm to others and disruption of daily activities. There is a need to examine thoughts or things repeatedly. Likewise for those struggling with depression or anxiety, COVID-19 has the potential to exacerbate pre-existing problems caused by increased stressors, such as difficulty using strategies and meeting with friends. People struggling with mental health concerns may be more vulnerable to times of crisis and increased stress.

As COVID-19 continues to spread, many of us have become as conscious as ever when it comes to cleaning. Whether it's wiping countertops, disinfecting belongings we frequently touch, washing our hands or wearing face masks, it may feel unusual and sometimes exhausting. For those who live with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), the changes in daily life can be debilitating and hard to manage.

People with OCD generally have unwanted, intrusive thoughts, or impulses that are called obsessions. In order to make the obsessions go away, those who suffer from OCD do different actions in attempt to push those thoughts out of their head. These are called compulsions.

People with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) are struggling more in general, as we deal with CORONO-viruses. So people who suffer from OCD are fighting on their own and many in this epidemic. OCD has also been seen in people, because our life has changed a lot due to Corona. Based on recent discussions with patients, I believe that the person suffering from OCD or the way in which the OCD is being dealt with depends on the nature of their condition and their personality. **"As seen for some people, it can exacerbate their symptoms, especially if their symptoms or obsessions are consistent with contamination or getting sick or someone else potentially passing the virus on to others. Fear of being responsible for the loss"** I have spoken to many ordinary people who have said that they are not overly concerned with COVID-19, to make them aware of OCD. It's not one of those things they worry about, and it's less than some of the other concerns they may have. They have many things to worry about...baby, . Their fees, housework, elders etc. Psychiatrist, Psychologist and Clinical Counsellors stated that around the world, crisis counselling phone lines have reported a drastic increase in calls since the pandemic began.

Nevertheless, the CORONA-virus crisis presents profound challenges for those whose OCD symptoms align with current concerns. People with OCD often talk about this and spend most of their time discussing "how good hygiene can stop the spread of the virus" This may cause some people to go to extremes in their mind. The government may have given more emphasis to the disease. The government has issued hand washing guidelines, but someone with OCD may feel an intense urge or drive to take it more, they

may wash their hands repeatedly. May be, especially when feelings of anxiety or uncertainty take hold of his contemplation.

A person living with OCD or someone with OCD who is experiencing OCD can only focus on one part of the hygiene guidelines and ignore the rest. Excessive anxiety can cause you to get tunnel vision where we cannot follow the recommendations the way we should be ..... because we are so hyper-focused on the specific piece of it that you are under the government's guidance. Let's forget about the other aspects. Due to which you can give trouble to both yourself and the family.

#### **Narrative of the Patients those with OCD and those without OCD**

**“A woman who works in a good company started spending most of her time at home due to Corona when she realized that the steps she is taking to protect herself and family from the corona are uncontrollable in her mind. .... If she sees a piece of hair on the floor, she thinks she has a corona. She often washes her hands in the wash sink and forces her husband and children to wash their hands more than ten times an hour. Children often retreat and remain upset.... She wishes her mind could not control .....She was much more uncomfortable seeing the advertisement of washing hands in T.V.”** A main problem for people with OCD may stem from the constant stream of news and information which frequently shown on T.V. and news Channels about the epidemic. OCD takes a point and causes it. A story or a title can affect everyone.

**“A working woman who had been suffering from OCD for three years told that she uses some methods to avoid corona, yet she does not get satisfaction as Avoiding physical contact with people outside the home, touching anything else, after repeatedly washing her hands, disinfecting groceries - once she cooked the dishes they washed them because she could not stop herself from the idea that the bread have a corona due to which the people of the house shouted her She told very clearly, that she had not done this before but due to Corona, such thoughts are taking place in his mind....”** The compulsion to wash and clean is likely to intensify; they may find difficult to stop washing after 20 seconds and may repeat the washing cycle a number of times in this order they not able to stop washing the number of times either edible or not edible.

**“A 32-year-old young man who never had OCD before, but he felt the change in himself due to the lockdown. He told me that I know if we keep distance, and wash our hands, and follow the lockdown rules. , We can protect ourselves and our people. But still uncertainty and doubt always bothers me, I think even after doing so I will not be able to save myself.... Eventually my family noticed I was trying to avoid touching things like door knobs and light switches even my family members too. This thought follows me day and night.”** Some people may go to excessive lengths such as using bleach and other abrasive material, which is counter productive as it will break the skin, making it more prone to infection. People with OCD may also fear getting someone else sick, even if they are not showing symptoms.

The burden of OCD is worrisome. Even before COVID-19 struck the world, it had a lifetime prevalence of 2–3 percent. Anxiety disorders (panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, phobias, panic attacks) form the commonest comorbidity of 70 percent and depressive disorders around 30 percent (**American Psychiatric Association, 2013**). Of the multiple symptom domains, obsessions of contamination and compulsive hand washing are amongst the commonest. Also, it has been seen that though these domains respond well to pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy, it tends to relapse in case of stress due to external or environmental cues (**Cordiero et al., 2015**). Various prevalent factors during the present pandemic, can play a role in worsening the symptoms of those already affected. Here, I am sharing my experiences with you, that I collected when I wanted to know how people are spending their time in this pandemic, then I came to know that people around us are like people with OCD, general population, school children, Officials etc. There are many people who are struggling with the starting symptoms of OCD. In Pandemic like COVID-19, people have become more fearful about the safety of themselves and family and are doing everything possible to avoid it, and the frequency of those efforts is so high that they themselves feel restless. For people who have been diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder or in borderline, the corona virus pandemic creates blurry or invisible weak lines between safety and compulsion. Many people are extremely disturbed by the irrational thoughts coming back in the mind. In the future, they may suffer from a strong disease called OCD. Here I

am sharing the thoughts collected during my recent interactions with people as follows:

➤ Clean your hands regularly and properly with hand sanitizer or soap and water for 20 seconds this kills viruses that may be on your hands (People's stated that they unlikely to wash hands again and again. Even after washing hands once, the mind does not get satisfaction and they wash their hands 7 to 8 times, yet they feel that there is something in their hands. They repeatedly thought virus have not come home, which will harm their family members.)

➤ Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and others it's protect you of a person's coughs, sneezes, small liquid droplets through their nose or mouth that may contain the virus (Majority of people reported that they keep a distance of more than 1 meter from people, yet there is a fear in their mind, if someone coughs and sneezes even from a distance, then there is a fear in the mind that some virus have come over their body through droplets. Anxiety continues throughout the day. After reaching home and take a bath minimum 12 to 13 times, yet the doubt of the mind does not go away.)

➤ Avoid visiting crowded places. Where people come together in a crowd, you are more likely to get in close contact with someone with COVID-19 or virus. (Most of the people stated that when someone comes into the house, a doubt arises in my mind that they have come intentionally and want to make us ill. Due to my over protective behaviour, my family also get angry on me. They often ask people that you have a cough or breathing problem. Repeatedly these questions keep coming in my mind and I ask them many times. Still my anxiety does not go away, due to this disease, they keep a distance with their children and wife too for less than 2 months.)

➤ Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Use a surgical mask. (They wash our hands again and again. Even if they touch someone by mistake, they wash hands many times. Even frequently using tissue but they are not totally satisfied; they wash with a sanitizer and even finished 3 to 4 bottles of sanitizer in 1 day. They reported they change 6 to 7 masks throughout the day and sanitize them well, before wearing it on the face, due to which lips and throat are blisters which gave pain.)

➤ Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. (If a member of my family or I feel hiccup, sneeze or cough I force

to stay in a separate room or in isolation because I get the idea that the person is suffering from corona. Many people also told that due to this doubt, they have not been out of the house for many days and many even told that they have decided to stay in their room in the house, they afraid that if they come out from room of it, then they will suffer from the Corona virus.)

➤ Keep up to date on the latest information from trusted sources, such as WHO or your local and national health authorities. (People told that they remain locked in their rooms throughout the day and watch news related to Corona on TV. Many times they also see the details of the number of people suffering from corona on mobile phones and the number of people who died of corona etc. Many people have even told that they have tried to make a variety of medicines to face corona, but have not been successful yet due to which they have started giving 17 to 18 hours on the social networking site.)

➤ The numbers of OCD patients relapsing in India are increasing at various set-ups, though it is still personal and anecdotal data from most clinicians. We hope to systematically analyze it in the coming days to have a better understanding of the relapses. Here are some remedies for people suffering from mental health issues including OCD, which will lead to better health benefits.

➤ Be busy in daily chores, enjoy it.

➤ Distract yourself from negative emotions by listening to music, spiritual reading, watching an entertaining programme on television with family.

➤ Cook well, Eat well and drink well with plenty of fluids.

➤ Be physically active. Do simple indoor exercises like strength training, push-up, downward facing dogs, bent knee sit up, crunches etc.

➤ Sharing is caring and it's gave you a lot of satisfaction and happiness Understand if someone around you needs advice, food or other essentials.

➤ Elderly people may feel confused, lost and helpless. Help them by getting them what they need, their medicines, daily needs, help in daily chores etc.

➤ Do yoga daily with family and kids in an entertaining manner. Yogic practices enhance muscular strength and body flexibility, promote and improve respiratory and cardiovascular function, reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and

chronic pain, improve sleep patterns, and enhance overall well-being and quality of life.

➤ Keeping in touch with your friends, office staff, relatives and family may reduce the stress and anxiety developed by COVID-19. Talking through your concerns and feelings may help you find ways of dealing with challenges. Receiving social-support and care from others can bring a sense of comfort and belongingness.

In this pandemic where people are short of resources, think about the resources available to you. There are many useful resources online, including web communities, which can be used. You can ask doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists etc. for online treatment or counseling and can stop the thoughts coming in your mind. Make your routine active and engage in proper self-care and family care: do yoga, get a good sleep, eat clean food, focus on creative pursuits, read entertaining books regularly. Instead of blatant thinking, be optimistic. Enjoy with the family, play together, have a meal, have a conversation, cooperate in household chores, this will improve your relationship with family members and even better than yourself. This circumstance is intense and tricky, for all of us feeling isolated, worthless and hopeless and some are facing OCD symptoms but not want to disclose to anyone there are certainly ways to keep life as manageable as possible when you're all working, living and playing under the same roof follow the suggestions of Doctors, psychologist and psychiatrist.

#### REFERENCES:

- [1]. American Psychiatric Association . American Psychiatric Pub.; 2013. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5®)
- [2]. Cordeiro T., Sharma M.P., Thennarasu K., Reddy Y.J. Symptom dimensions in obsessive-compulsive disorder and obsessive beliefs. Indian J. Psychol. Med. 2015;37(4):403.
- [3]. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/eric-advice-for-public> (Accessed on 11/02/2020).
- [4]. Bobes J, González MP, Bascarán MT, Arango C, Sáiz PA, Bousoño M. Quality of life and disability in patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder. Eur Psychiatry. 2001;16:239–245
- [5]. Veale D, Roberts A. Obsessive-compulsive disorder. BMJ. 2014;348:g2183.





**International Journal of Advances in  
Engineering and Management**

**ISSN: 2395-5252**



# IJAEM

**Volume: 02**

**Issue: 01**

**DOI: 10.35629/5252**

**[www.ijaem.net](http://www.ijaem.net)**

**Email id: [ijaem.paper@gmail.com](mailto:ijaem.paper@gmail.com)**