



Letter to the Editor

The importance of psychiatric nursing in the Covid 19 pandemic process

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Today, the World is changing rapidly falling into an uncertainty. Humans feel death too close, just one step ahead. This situation raises several questions, such as: "Does humanity expect a more terrifying world in the future?" or "Is a more livable world, away from prejudices, where people will not destroy each other and nature through warfare, ahead of us? Undoubtedly, the expectation of all humanity is to move toward a more livable world, because the world is unique and belongs to all of us.

Humanity has fallen a victim of a virus called the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that was first identified on January 13, 2020; we are now experiencing a severe crisis, Coronaviruses (CoV) are a family of viruses that caused serious diseases previously such as the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV).^[1] Because the first symptoms of the disease caused by the Novel coronavirus, which has different characteristics from other coronaviruses that cause MERS and SARS were seen in December 2019, the disease was designated Coronavirus Disease-19 (COVID-19). In addition to asymptomatic COVID-19 cases, there may also be cases that show several symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, pneumonia, severe respiratory distress, or renal impairment: those can eventually result in death. Although it is stated that 80% of the patients were mildly affected by the disease and 20% were hospitalized and treated, the rate of the coronavirus infection was reported to be high in those who were over 60 years old and those who had chronic illnesses.^[2,3]

During this period, many health institutions, associations, universities, the media, clergymen, and others have cooperated with government agencies to grapple with this pandemic. It is also pleasing to see that nations show solidarity in the fight against this common enemy.

Several measures have been taken to cope with this virus including stabilizing, neutralizing, and destroying the novel coronavirus, which is very dangerous and harmful, increasing resistance of patients diagnosed with COVID-19 and treating them, preventing transmission of this dangerous virus to more people, developing vaccines, and supporting communities psychosocially and economically.

In many countries as in Turkey, governments are conducting epidemiological studies at three levels of protection (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and trying to save their communities from this insidious threat as it mutates and continues to make people fight to survive.

During the pandemic, infected and non-infected individuals experience not only physical but also psychosocial problems. When we handle these problems psychosocially, the feeling of loneliness at home, not seeing our beloved ones, not being able to hug them, not being able to use our work force enough, not being together with those whom we have a talk while sipping our coffee every day, experiencing the silence of empty streets; we find ourselves feeling as if we were in a horror movie. We experience stress; as we encounter facts we become uncertain between the possibilities of a solution or not. Eventually, our interaction with the conditions we must live in causes us to experience emotive disorders and undesired behaviors. Considering all these difficulties, it is important to focus on primary protection, secondary protection, and tertiary protection measures. Primary protection means planning initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of cases related to psychological disorders within a given population. In other words, it is a way of increasing the capacity of the individual, the family, and society to cope with psychological disorders and also to provide a therapeutic environment for

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them in dealing with the situation. Secondary protection includes attempts to reduce the impacts of psychological disorders. Finally, tertiary protection includes attempts to reduce the disability caused by psychological disorders after treatment.

Cooperation between associations established by psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists, social service specialists, and psychologists is important to help those who need it while solving these and similar psychosocial problems. In this context, programs such as Online Mental Health Program for Coronavirus Infection (KORDEP) were developed to provide psychosocial support for those affected by the outbreak of coronavirus; it can be argued that such programs are an important step in dealing with problems experienced in these difficult days.

Psychiatric and mental health nurses, key members of the team in psychosocial support services wherein teamwork is important, fulfill their roles not only in psychiatric settings where inpatient services are provided, but also in private outpatient centers, schools, industrial areas, public health centers, home care, and during crises (earthquakes, fierce fires, wars, and post-war epidemics/pandemics) by assuming duties and responsibilities according to the training they received. Although "psychiatric nursing" is regarded as a separate branch of science, the concept of the "psychiatric nurse" is used in Turkey to include all nurses who have worked or are still working in psychiatry clinics. During the COVID-19 pandemic, psychiatric nurses should determine which problems of individuals who were affected by the virus can be treated, then plan the intervention goals and evaluate the results.

To conclude, this epidemic/pandemic, for which we find ourselves unprepared, has reached alarming levels in a world in which hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives or have had their lives negatively affected, and their psychological balance disturbed. Social, psychological and financial solidarity, when needed, should be provided to solve this problem for a world free of this problem that threatens our health for our children, grandchildren, and extended family. Psychiatric nurses should perform their usual duties in this process, as well as paying attention to their possible reactions specific to such situations; they should also be able to cope with them and develop their self-management skills. Hoping to reach good days in the future...

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