

# IIPHG Newsletter



INDIAN  
INSTITUTE OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
GANDHINAGAR

## Mental Health and COVID-19

Periodic e-Newsletter  
Issue IV - February 2021

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#### Editorial Details:

Advisor: Dr. Dileep Mavalankar

Editor-in-Chief : Dr. Shyam Pingle

Editorial Board : Dr. Deepak Saxena

Dr. Anish Sinha

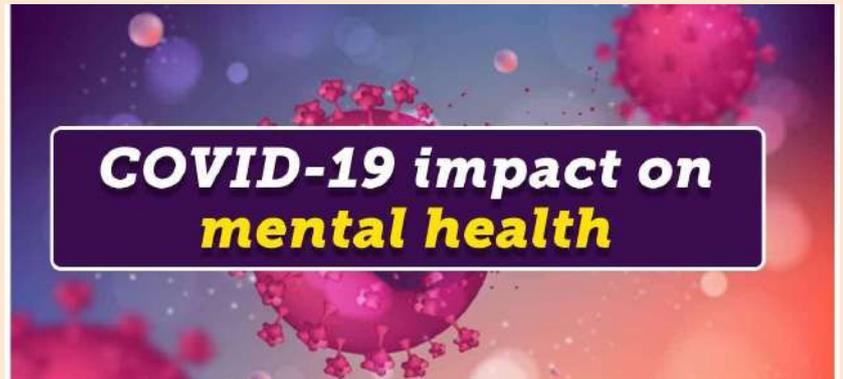
Dr. Komal Shah

Dr. Vijay Panchdhane

Mr. Pravin Makvana

Executive Editor: Dr. Apurva Kumar Pandya

This issue of IIPHG Newsletter is a Publication  
of IIPHG's  
COVID CARE COMMITTEE



Dear Colleagues,

We are happy to release the COVID-19 Special newsletter on the theme of Mental Health. As per UGC and Gujarat government mandate, IIPHG has opened its campus for students and we welcome all students to the campus!

COVID-19 pandemic has fueled a parallel epidemic of mental health. Bereavement, isolation, loss of income and fear are triggering mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones. Many people may be facing increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia, and anxiety. These conditions also affect compliance with precautions.

In this issue, we attempt to highlight key mental health issues, positive stories and IIPHG's contribution to addressing COVID-19. Hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. I invite you to share your contribution to the next issue.

Dr. Shyam Pingle,  
Chair, COVID CARE COMMITTEE

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# COVID-19 UPDATE



More than 85 lakh beneficiaries vaccinated against Covid-19. Total 73,557 HCWs received the second dose of vaccine on February 15. **Gujarat is one of the 10 States that recorded the highest number of vaccinations.**

Total of 35 persons (0.0004% of the total vaccinations) have been hospitalized due to adverse effects and 28 deaths (0.0003%) have been recorded to date. Despite very low adverse effects of COVID-19 vaccine, many states are struggling with vaccination coverage. Vaccine hesitancy is a concern.

Source: <https://vaccine.icmr.org.in/covid-19-vaccine>

## Myths related to Vaccine

- Myth: Natural immunity is better than vaccine-acquired immunity. A vaccine may weaken the immune system.
- Myth: Vaccinations cause the diseases that they are meant to prevent.
- Myth: The effectiveness of vaccinations has never been proven.
- Myth: Vaccines cause autism.
- Myth: Vaccine will give you Covid-19.

Source: WHO/ICMR



## Guidance material for health professional

- COVID-19 guidance for health professionals  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>
- Technical guidance from the World health Organization (WHO)  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>
- Covid 19 pocket reference book by the MoHFW  
<https://iphindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/covid-19-pocket-reference-book.pdf>

# Mental Health and COVID 19



COVID-19 has impacted all the spheres of human lives. Several adverse effects on mental health such as anxiety, depressive, obsessive-compulsive, and post-traumatic stress disorders have been reported. It has worsened the condition of people living with mental illness. Moreover, the incidence of other mental health problems, including psychological distress, substance abuse, internet addiction have increased. We also foresee an increased incidence of violence, stigma, economic difficulties, excessive use of digital technology, changes in daily habits, maladaptive coping strategies, which may bang mental health. Therefore, it is essential to take care of mental health and seek timely support.

## Mental health advice for Students

- Sleep sufficiently.
- Eat well, at least three times a day.
- Maintain contact with your peers/friends and family members.
- Share information and personal stories, not rumours.
- Care for each other.
- Constantly update your knowledge related to COVID-19.
- Make time for your hobbies and daily routine.
- Listen to music, read a book, exercise.
- Ensure that you continue to care for pre-existing health conditions in addition to the new challenges posed by COVID-19.

By Dr. Apurva Kumar Pandya, IIPHG



Seek help whenever needed. Reach out to a mental health professional if you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, or suicidal thoughts. Support your friend in doing the same.

Manodarpan - Psychosocoal Support for Students :  
**844 544 0632**

Buddha Psychological Services, School of Behavioural Sciences, NFSU: **917-399-9488**

# IIPHG reopens campus for students

We are excited to welcome students in our campus. Although it is encouraging that cases are reducing, it is important to adhere to Covid-19 safety measures to prevent any adverse second wave. Covid Care Committee at IIPHG has developed a guideline to contain the spread of Covid-19 and promote positive health and wellbeing.

- Adhere to the rules of SMS – Social distancing, Mask wearing and Sanitizing hands duly.
- Avoid congregating at entry and exit points, canteen and outside class.
- Extra-curricular and sports activities where physical distancing is not feasible will not be allowed.
- If you have Covid-19 symptoms, you should immediately isolate yourself and contact Civil Hospital Gandhinagar / Covid helpline (079-23250818) for further advice/treatment. You may also inform Assistant Registrar (Administration) Mr. Pravin Makvana (pmakvana@iiphg.org; 9725335574).



**Focus on what you can control, engage in constructive activities/hobbies and use digital media positively .**

## Students' Corner

*"After every dark night comes a glorious morning"*  
says Ms. Anushree Joshi, Research Scholar

COVID-19 has impacted students as well. To minimize the adverse impact of COVID-19, it is significant to focus energy on positive thought processes. For example, it is a good time to acknowledge one's own emotions and directing them into something creative. Also, its one of the best times to develop a skill of interest, to do some creative tasks like pursuing any hobby of interest (art, dance, music, reading a book etc), practicing breathing exercises, and doing mindful exercises. It is also an opportunity to develop a life perspective, revisit our goals and focus our energies to achieve our goals. After every dark night comes a glorious morning

*"The COVID-19 pandemic given an opportunity to reimagine public health system"* says Dr. Mahira, MPH student (2019-21 batch).

The COVID-19 pandemic has crippled the public health system across the world. The pandemic has drawn the attention of leaders and decision-makers towards the need for greater investment in the public health sector. In fact, it gave us a tiny window of opportunity to bridge the inequities and ensure responsive healthcare services for all. Key areas that need improvements are surveillance system, big data analytics for outbreak prediction, responsive primary healthcare, and trained human resource. Lastly, the human race has always tried to benefit from every opportunity and so let's be hopeful that this chance to change shall not be skipped.

# Contributions by IIPHG

IIPHG is contributing to fight this pandemic in the following ways:

1. Providing on-demand technical assistance to health and other departments at state levels
  2. Carry research in the area of COVID-19
  3. Building internal capacity to ensure appropriate and accurate information dissemination on COVID-19 through our official social media channels and website
- IIPHG organized a series of webinars on COVID-19 topics in collaboration with the World Health Organization and UNICEF.
  - Dr. Dilleep Mavalankar, Director IIPHG appeared in National Television shows, GIRNAR (Doordarshan) and wrote regularly opinion articles in Times of India and the Wire.
  - Dr. Shyam Pingle, Senior Occupational Health Specialist and Adjunct Professor is invited as a faculty for the scientific session in the forthcoming e-Conference on Biological Disasters (CoBiD) on 20th February 2021.
  - Dr Deepak Saxena, Professor and Dr. Anish Sinha, Associate Professor IIPHG in collaboration with Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad coordinated Intra Action Review of Public Health Response to COVID-19. Honourable Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister & Health Minister launched IAR report and video documentary the August presence of WHO India Country representative on January 22, 2021.
  - Dr. Apurva Kumar Pandya, Economic Evaluation Specialist along with international collaborators published an article, "Combating the COVID-19 infodemic: a three-level approach for low and middle-income countries" in BMJ Global Health.
  - Dr. Apurva Kumar Pandya participated as an expert speaker for a webinar on Adolescents and Mental Health organized by a national-level civil service organization, SHARP.
  - Dr. Anish Sinha continuously participating in News Paper, TV and disseminating scientific information regarding COVID-19 vaccine since November 2020.
    - Invited as an expert for CTFI Meeting in AMC for the covid vaccine on 01/12/2020.
    - Appeared in various national news channels such as NDTV, BBC News, GS TV etc,
    - Contributed to a newspaper article in Times of India, Mirrors on COVID 19 and COVID-19 vaccine
    - Participated in webinars organized by IIPHG, Lions Club, and Rotary Clubs.



## About Next Issue

We invite everyone to contribute to our next newsletter. Brief details of any new project or publication, achievement or opportunities are welcome.

Kindly send your contribution to Dr. Apurva Kumar Pandya at [apandya@iiphg.org](mailto:apandya@iiphg.org) on or before 28th February 2021.