

# Evaluating the Psychological Distress of the Corona Disease 2019 Pandemic in Egypt

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## Abstract

**Background:** The increasing numbers of infected cases with Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) overwhelmed the population all over the world. The advice with regard to social distancing and staying at home were recommended in the community which have led to the spread of psychological distress. **Objective:** To assess the psychological status of the general population in Egypt during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). **Methods:** The authors conducted a cross-sectional, observational survey before the peak of the pandemic in Egypt through an online questionnaire. It was shared through e-mails and different social media platforms. The COVID-19 Peritraumatic Distress Index (CPDI) questionnaire adapted by the Shanghai Mental Health Centre was used to inquire about the incidence of anxiety, depression, specific phobias, cognitive changes, avoidance, compulsive behaviors, physical warning signs, and loss of social interaction in the aforementioned period. Logistic regression was used to analyze factors affecting CPDI score to evaluate the relationship between CPDI category, socioeconomic, and demographic characteristics. **Findings:** Overall, 523 eligible participants were enrolled (including 266 health care workers (HCW) and 257 non-HCW). It was found that 51.9% of HCWs experienced mild to moderate distress, while 15% experienced severe distress. Additionally, non-HCWs' results showed that 39.7% of them experienced mild to moderate distress; 21.8% experienced severe distress (OR: 0.717; 95% CI: 0.493-1.043). Moreover, the percentage of females with severe distress (21.7%) was two times higher than that of males (10.7%) (OR: 0.412; 95% CI: 0.278-0.612). **Conclusion:** Public health emergencies such as COVID-19 increase the psychological distress liability of the general Egyptian population. Promoting mental health well-being, as well as behaviorally public psychological engagement during outbreaks, is required to support people who are distressed and to ameliorate their mental health.

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