

Abstract

Introduction: Covid-19, which emerged in Wuhan, China in 2019, has spread to many countries around the world and cases have been declared in clusters. It has been suggested that this pandemic process may cause psychiatric disorders or increase in pre-existing symptoms in addition to physical health problems (Banerjee, 2020). It has been stated that individuals with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) may be more affected by the Covid-19 epidemic compared to other psychiatric disorders. (Fineberg, et al., 2020).

Objective: Could Covid-19 have caused obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors to be considered acceptable as a result of the effects of the process in the prognosis of individuals with OCD during the pandemic? Could it have triggered or increased the level of anxiety and depression, sleep problems, along with the symptoms that may accompany OCD? Can the process create a state of guilt or embarrassment for those with OCD to harbor the virus as carriers and the thought of spreading the virus to other individuals? The aim of the study was to seek answers to these questions, to address the conditions that may lead to changes in OCD prognosis, to provide a review of perspectives on OCD treatment, and to form a source for other studies for the creation of scientific literature.

Conclusion: It has been revealed that individuals with OCD have increased during the Covid -19 pandemic process, but it has been observed that there are fewer studies in the literature on the condition of individuals with OCD (Banerjee, 2020). It has been understood, in this case, that more comprehensive studies with a holistic perspective are needed.

Keywords: COVID-19, OCD, pandemic, psychological resilience, anxiety

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Epidemics are contagious diseases that spread in a certain human community, at certain time intervals, faster than expected compared to past events, and affect the society. Pandemics are epidemic diseases that cause death in living things and indicate that the geographical spread of contaminating diseases is in a wide area (Aslan, 2020).

SARS-CoV-2 (Coronavirus), which first appeared in Wuhan, China in 2019, has spread to many countries around the world and cases have been declared in clusters. In Turkey, the date of 11 March 2020, when the first case emerged, was announced by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic on the globe (Ministry of Health, 2020).

In addition to the fact that many deaths occurred in the world during the pandemic process announced with the emergence of the coronavirus, this epidemic affects the lives of individuals negatively, spiritually, socially and financially, as a source of anxiety on individuals and societies (Yıldız Bilge & Yusuf Bilge, 2020).

The feeling of fear that arises in situations such as epidemics and pandemics may be experienced at high levels in individuals, or this feeling may cause anxiety and distress in individuals or cause an increase in pre-existing psychiatric disorders (Shigemura, Ursano, Morganstein, Kurosawa & Benedek, 2020 cited in Bekaroğlu & Yılmaz, 2020). A study conducted in the past years has suggested that the number of individuals suffering from infectious diseases is less than the number of individuals whose mental health is adversely affected during infectious diseases (Reardon, 2010, cited in Bekaroğlu & Yılmaz, 2020). In another study, Rajkumar (2020) reports that psychological health problems called subsyndromal disorders, which do not meet all the symptoms against the Covid-19 epidemic, are a common response to this pandemic process. The study also underlined that the symptoms of anxiety and depression are 16-28%, respectively, and the stress on individuals in the community is 8%, and that these subsyndromal disorders are the most common reactions to the epidemic process.

In addition to the increase in anxiety and depressive symptoms during the pandemic process, it has been suggested that there may be an increase in situations such as substance abuse (drug addiction), loneliness, and physical or psychological abuse of children (Haider II, Tiwana F, Tahir SM. 2020, cited by Çakır-Kardeş, 2020).

Anxiety, Depressive Symptoms and OCD in the Pandemic Process

Coronavirus should not come to mind as an infectious disease that manifests itself only as physical symptoms. It is difficult to perceive the human body without psychic foundations and psychic foundations without the human body (Baltacı & Coşar, 2020). In a study conducted by Xiao et al., it was reported that the Covid-19 epidemic not only affected the physical health of individuals who had this disease, but also affected the mental health of individuals who did not have this disease, and increased the level of anxiety, depression and stress (Xiao, Zhang, Kong, Li and Yang, 2020).

Anxiety is a part of the order that concerns all humanity and enables life to move with integrity. Everyone experiences anxiety at some point in their life. Anxiety is an emotion that must be present in individuals in order to maintain their lives, but it has been underlined that the increase in the intensity and duration of the anxiety affects the functionality of the individual's life negatively. Anxiety is encountered in many structural and mental health problems (Öztürk, 2004, cited by Göksu & Kumcagiz, 2020).

Although the way people deal with this situation against the coronavirus epidemic in the world is not the same, factors such as unemployment, isolation, the increase in the number of people who died as a result of the epidemic, the deprivation of daily life, the inability to perform religious activities increase the level of anxiety (Y. Çölgeçen & H. Çölgeçen 2020). According to a study conducted at the same time, the widespread media coverage of Covid-19 has been associated with depression and anxiety (Yao, 2020).

Situations such as the sudden restriction of socialization and daily activities that help individuals to continue their lives in a healthy way, being alone and social isolation are defined as factors that increase depression and depressive symptoms (Rains, et al., 2020). During the pandemic, depressive symptoms increased more in individuals who did not have a chronic or severe psychiatric disorder in terms of symptoms (Pan, et al., 2021). In the study conducted by Satici et al. in Turkish society, it was determined that the coronavirus epidemic increased anxiety and psychological distress and decreased life satisfaction (B. Satici, Gocet-Tekin, Deniz & S.A. Satici, 2020). In another study, it was determined that the perceived psychological distress in individuals along with the differences in daily life caused by the pandemic is associated with depression (Yan, Gan, Ding, Wu & Duan, 2020).

It has been suggested that individuals with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) may be more affected by the Covid-19 epidemic compared to other psychiatric disorders (Fineberg, et al., 2020).

The epidemic process may increase the worsening of the symptoms that have occurred in individuals with OCD and may trigger anxiety in these individuals (Banerjee, 2020). In addition to worsening symptoms and triggering anxiety in individuals in the literature, it was underlined in a study that disorders such as Bulimia Neurosa, Hypochondriasis, Tourette's Disorder, Nodding Tiki are seen as comorbidities in the prognosis of individuals with OCD spectrum disorders (Demet, et al., 2005). The most common conditions and types in OCD, which is a disease with multiple symptom areas, are; pollution/contamination, control, repetition, regulation, accumulation and intrusive thoughts. Among these types, the most common ones are the ones with contagious and compulsive hand washing obsessions.

Considering all the facts announced in the world regarding the coronavirus pandemic, the Covid-19 epidemic should not be a mere physical health problem and should be examined biologically, psychologically and socially in a holistic perspective (Baltacı & Coşar, 2020). The importance of knowing that isolation from the social environment that comes with this process can cause an increase in mental disorders, apart from the disease's own transmission state, was emphasized in diseases with a contaminated state (Erdoğan & Hocaoglu, 2020). Considering the psychological aspect of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are clues in the literature that can help us better understand psychological disorders in this process (Asmundson & Taylor, 2020).

The coronavirus epidemic has led to anxiety, social isolation, loneliness and many other social and psychological problems in individuals. In addition to these problems that emerged during this epidemic process, it was underlined that the effect of the symptoms of individuals with OCD was not given much importance. It has been determined that OCD is lacking in research and studies in the literature compared to other psychiatric disorders in the Covid-19 pandemic (Banerjee, 2020). Could the Covid-19 pandemic process have caused obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors to be considered acceptable in the prognosis of individuals with OCD? Or can this process create a state of guilt or shame because of the thought that individuals with OCD harbor this virus as carriers and spread the virus to other individuals? The purpose of this study was written to seek answers to these questions, to address the conditions that may lead to changes in OCD prognosis, to review the perspectives on OCD treatment, and to create a source for other studies for the creation of scientific literature.

Psychological Resilience and OCD in the Pandemic Process

In addition to many studies carried out on the basis of the psychology of the adult population during the pandemic process, the well-being of children other than education is ignored in this process (Akoğlu & Karaarslan, 2020). Children and adolescents hear the news about the epidemic from their environment or are confronted with this information through the media. With the process of individual isolation, changes occur in daily life flows and meeting with their peers is interrupted (Bekaroğlu & Yılmaz, 2020). In a study conducted in the literature, it was determined that well-being can be damaged by different stressors, and specifically, pre-forming daily plans is a powerful factor in maintaining well-being in children and adolescents when examined holistically (Brazendale et al., 2017, cited by Akoğlu & Karaarslan, 2020). In this process, the effect of parents' attitudes and behaviors on the well-being of children and adolescents' psychological well-being has been underlined (Şahbudak & Emiroğlu, 2020).

OCD is a psychic-based disorder characterized by obsessive, compulsive, or both with distinctive characteristics. Obsessions are repetitive ideas or images that occupy the minds of individuals, arouse anxiety in them, and making them aware that they are actually absurd. Compulsions, on the other hand, are repetitive behaviors that occur in response to the obsession situation we have defined above and to reduce the anxiety it creates (Bayar & Yavuz, 2008).

Social space and physical hygiene are at the forefront of the basic follow-ups offered by the World Health Organization to people in order to prevent the spread of the epidemic. The media expresses the importance of these strategies every day. It seems easy from the outside to follow the measures taken for a healthy life. However, it has been emphasized that the follow-up of the measures taken by individuals with OCD is negatively affected compared to the follow-up of the measures taken by individuals without OCD (Banerjee, 2020).

When measures against infectious diseases involve repetitive behaviors, they threaten to increase obsessions (Banerjee, 2020). Among individuals with OCD, those with compulsion to control and pollution/contamination are in a higher risk group compared to others. Recommendations to strengthen personal hygiene have led to an increase in contamination and washing compulsions (Nebioğlu-Yıldız & Türkili, 2020). Another point of view has suggested that ruminative behaviors against the epidemic can be considered as an exaggerated measure against the pandemic and can be considered normal (Banerjee, 2020). On the other hand, it has been underlined that an increase in compulsive and avoidance behaviors of individuals with OCD may be seen as other individuals reduce the measures related to hygiene in the post-pandemic period (Çakır-Kardeş, 2020). For example, washing hands, which was previously considered to be extreme and commonly encountered in OCD, is a gaining accepted as a result of the pandemic process. Considering these and other cleaning-related behaviors that may take excessive time during the pandemic process as a symptom for OCD does not stand as a healthy decision in the prognosis of this disease (Silva, Shavitt & Costa, 2021).

Conclusion

Considering the end of Covid-19, it has been underlined that negative life events can cause an increase in cognitive disorders in societies (Banerjee, 2020). In individuals with OCD, with the addition of the epidemic conditions we are in, it has been emphasized that there may be worsening of their symptoms and an increase in anxiety and depressive symptoms. (Silva, Shavitt & Costa, 2021). Considering the contaminated situation of Covid-19, we may need to reconsider our choices now and in the future to explain the reasons for treatment, especially to people diagnosed with OCD who have signs of contamination and ruminative hand washing. Another claim and one of the hypotheses guiding this study is that the pandemic process, which affects more than half of the world, may lead to a decrease in the symptoms of individuals with OCD rather than worsening of their symptoms (Fontenelle & Miguel, 2020).

It is thought that the Coronavirus anxiety scale, which is standardized and adapted for Turkey and is used in clinics, hospitals, research, taking anamnesis and many other areas, Beck anxiety scale, Yale-Brown obsession-compulsion rating scale, Endurance test against stress scales such as the list of signs for coping with stress, Guilt/Shame scale, Brief symptom inventory, Depression scale for children, Spielberger state-trait anxiety scale for children can be used while people reveal their research and studies on this subject. Considering that the clinical level cases are taken into consideration while forming the hypotheses that reveal this study, there is a need for studies on the status of individuals with OCD during the pandemic process at the longitudinal level, which is added to their social status in the literature, in order to eliminate clinical limitations.

Conflict of Interest

No financial aid has been received in this article. There is no conflict of interest regarding any person and/or institution.

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