

# Children and Adolescents Mental Health during the COVID-19 outbreak in Islamabad: A Qualitative Study

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Public health incentives have prioritized minimizing the negative physical health hazards with COVID-19. Insufficient emphasis has been focused on comprehending the psychological aspects of the worldwide epidemic, particularly among underprivileged groups. The purpose of this qualitative research was to better explore the expectations of children and young adults during COVID-19. To explore the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and nationwide shutdown, this research surveyed 48 households. The approach employed in the research was Interpretation Of the data collected analysis of parents and children noted the harmful effect of the limits on the well-being of youngsters. Adolescents and children had negative psychological impacts such as social isolation, sadness, anxiousness, and elevations in conduct problems. During this era, parents of children with autism spectrum disorders claimed increasing psychological symptoms, owing primarily to disruptions in routines. The results underscore the effect of extreme disruptions on the outcomes of psychological well-being of exposed populations, such as teenagers, people with ASD and moreover with the youngsters.

**Key words:** *children, adolescents, mental health & covid-19 outbreak*



## Introduction

COVID-19 policies emphasis substantially about the unfavorable consequences that the crisis in public health has had on individuals. According to studies, the most basic mental reactions to the pandemic in adults are depression, anxiousness, and post-traumatic stress disorder. COVID-19's impact on young people, however, remains uncertain (Brooks et al., 2020). Regardless of the fact that children and teens are not at the forefront of the outbreak, The UNSDG consider the population as susceptible demographic in risk of becoming the pandemic's worst victims, with long-term effects for some (UNSDG, 2020).

Younger individuals are as capable of or supported in dealing with the emotional, financial, or sociological repercussions of the condition (Verity et al., 2020). In addition, the widening wealth disparity between parents and the changing dynamics of families may make it more difficult for children from disadvantaged backgrounds to take advantage of available opportunities (OECD, 2020).

To alleviate the physical threats of COVID-19, authorities' short-term policy measures have concentrated on restricting social ties and mobility. These guidelines have influenced the behavior of youngsters aged 4 to 12 and teens aged 13 to 18. Healthcare services, as well as youth education and leisure programs, colleges, and other institutions, have all been interrupted. Women have been shown to be significantly impacted by interruptions, and family income losses owing to decreased work hours have a detrimental effect on the quality of life in the home (Clark et al., 2020). The well-being and health of today's youth have been significantly influenced by the aforementioned causes (Syed et al., 2020)

According to the numbers provided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, over 188 countries would have certain kind of department suspension, which will affect over 1.5 billion individuals. It is difficult to predict how the implementation of these policies would affect the psychological well-being of young adults. Even if longitudinal data are not yet available, it is expected that the epidemic would have an impact on mental health (Daly, et al., 2020).

According to study, social isolation affects young individuals (Loades, et al., 2020). Teenage stress levels have risen, maybe as a result of pandemic-related restraints (Qi et al., 2020; Smirni et al., 2020). It is quite probable that factors such as sex, sociodemographic position, and place of origin will affect the magnitude of the impact (Guessoum et al., 2020; Khane et al., 2020).

It is not known what the immediate or long-term repercussions will be, nor can it be determined whether or not this will result in a rise in psychological problems amongst young people (Caffo et al., 2020). This is particularly important since young adults are much more susceptible to mental health problems that last for a prolonged period of time (De Miranda, et al., 2020). There has been relatively little in-depth study conducted on the psychological aspects of the epidemic

that is impacting children and adolescents in Pakistan up to this point. This study investigates and discusses the influence that COVID-19 has had on younger generations in Pakistan, and it also includes research from other countries that is pertinent to the topic.

*Covid-19's Psychological Effects on Children and Adolescents:*

It's possible that some individuals will be more susceptible to the psychological effects of the COVID-19 outbreak than others. As a result of the fact that the majority of psychological problems appear in people before the age of 14 (Escobar, et al., 2020), it is imperative that youngsters be provided with the appropriate assistance while they are in this crucial stage of development. Young people's lives are being thrown into turmoil as a result of prevention measures such as social isolation, domestic friction, school closings, worries about the future, and lockdowns (OECD, 2020; Wagner, 2020). Changes in habit, a break in educational continuity due to school closures, missing key life situations, and a loss of a feeling of safety are all examples of these disruptions (CDC, 2020; Dooley et al., 2019). According to preliminary studies, young people with mental health results are worsening. Elevated levels of despair and anxiety, as well as a higher risk of thread stress symptoms, are among them.

*The state of juvenile mental health in Pakistan has worsened in recent years:*

Young people are experiencing greater rates of anxiety and sadness. The long-term ramifications of Covid-19's psychological impacts must be recognised, given the presumption that young people would be disproportionately affected (UNICEF, 2017; Nearchou et al., 2020). This knowledge will help in the establishment of support systems and give insight into how to effectively react to current disasters (UNICEF, 2017). COVID-19's effects on young individuals are anticipated to vary based on their age and the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of their families (Araújo et al., 2020; Chatterjee et al., 2020). Parenting stress brought on by pandemic have a greater influence on younger children, leading to behavioral issues and having a considerable impact on children with developmental impairments (Chatterjee et al., 2020; Golberstein et al., 2020). According to research parental stress have a direct impact on a child's quality of life (Lipari et al., 2016). In times of crisis, quality and length of sleep, According to this extensive analysis of the effects of pandemics, factors such as reduced levels of participation in external and physical activities may prevent childhood development from reaching its maximum capabilities (Xie et al., 2019; Orgilés et al., 2020).

Children and young people who already have existing psychological issues may be at a greater risk of acquiring new mental health conditions (Elgar et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2020). As a consequence of schools being closed, many kids no longer have access to the treatment programs that were formerly provided by their schools (Bubb et al., 2020). As a direct consequence of the crisis, early research reveals that around nine out of ten people are showing having the symptoms



of normal to high depression, and eight out of ten people are broadcasting symptoms of mild to severe anxiety (Mental Health America, 2020).

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

For this research, 48 families (N = 94) were engaged. In this research, parents, caregivers, and their children were asked to discuss their COVID 19 perspectives. Hundred and nine people consented to take part, and 94 people finished the surveys. Twenty percent were single parents, and three percent were married couples.

A convenience sample strategy and snowballing sampling strategies were used to engage families. Social media and other networks were used to ask people to join. People from various social and economic backgrounds, and people from rural and urban areas make up the final representative demographics. Despite the researchers' desire for a diverse sample set, participants were chosen based on their willingness, and forty eight families accepted. Furthermore, more female caregivers or parents were willing to engage.

### ***Design***

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is used in this qualitative investigation. The design included online interviews with family members, and the researcher utilized a technique called semistructured interviewing to pose open-ended questions to the interviewees (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). The purpose of this research is to evaluate the individual COVID-19 experiences of participants, as well as the mental health of children and adolescents throughout this time period. The mental capacity of applicants was taken into consideration while developing the IPA interview guide. This strategy was selected because it made it possible to organise the data gathering process, get comprehensive information, and keep the interviews consistent with one another.

### ***Procedure***

Participants who have been using social networking sites. Respondents were given the opportunity to enroll online and offer their personal information in order to facilitate the researcher's ability to organize a first discussion and provide the required papers. The transmission of COVID-19 was not hindered in any way by the use of physical copies of authorization forms. The consents were taken during the recruiting phone call and during the interview. In the examination, the permission of the subject was documented. The participants all agreed that the interviews should be conducted using Microsoft Teams, and they were videotaped and transcribed thereafter. Due to the fact that the study team had a professional Microsoft Office account, the surveys were done out using Microsoft Teams. This ensured the



confidentiality of the material as well as its ownership. The study's profile in Microsoft Office was used to keep the information on the participants as well as the audio recording of each interview. The interviews were held in Islamabad under the first round of pandemic prohibitions.

The investigator conducted the interviews, which lasted around 30 minutes. Participants were told at the start of each interview that they had the right to quit the study at any moment without facing any penalty. Each interview was conducted with a group of families. After the first briefing and permission, the researcher used a semistructured interview to enable open-ended questioning. This gave them more freedom in the questionnaire items. After the interview was over, the researcher kept the audio cassette. It was also discussed with the participants whether or not they were pleased with the interview they had received and whether or not they had any inquiries about the research.

### **Data Analysis**

The descriptive phase of an IPA theme analysis is followed by the interpretative phase. The initial step in the procedure is to classify each transcript into overarching themes. Subsequently, the data will be translated into more particular themes via the process of continual evaluation (Broocki & Wearden, 2006). In accordance with the IPA methodology, the study focuses on the subjective lived experiences (Love et al., 2020), and as a result, the researchers exhibit reflexivity throughout the whole of the study (Corlett & Mavin, 2020). The practice of reflexivity inspires examiners to explore that the researchers' own broad views could influence the study progression. Current strategy contributes to the high quality of the study, most notably in terms of the data analysis; this strategy acts as a buffer against the influence of personal experiences and prejudices on the conclusions of the research (Johnson-Bailey & Ray, 2008). Amy McGrane, MSc, who was given with training on how to conduct interviews by Katriona O'Sullivan, the lead investigator of the project, was the one who ended up doing the interviews. After the interviews had been transcribed, the first coding of the interviews was done independently by each researcher to verify that the procedures were consistent throughout all interviews. After that, we spoke about and analysed the newly discovered themes as a group in order to select the ultimate themes. The investigation also tallied the number of times each code was spoken, which was a measure of its frequency.

### **Results**

One idea that kept coming up was that the pandemic had a negative impact on the lives of young people and caused them to lose out on more opportunities than older generations. In particular with regard to the educational process as well as other changes that young people often receive the opportunity to go through. One parent articulates this wonderfully when they say

یہ واقعی افسوسناک تھا، جیسے وہ واقعی پریشان تھے کیونکہ وہ گزرنے کی تمام مخصوص رسومات سے محروم ہو گئے تھے جن کا وہ انتظار کر رہے تھے، جیسے کہ ان کی سال کے اختتامی تقریب میں گریجویشن (والدین)

Due to the fact that they could not act like children during the COVID-19 crisis, it was believed that youngsters and young people had the most difficult time.

Another parent reported:

میرا نتیجہ یہ ہے کہ بچوں کو اس کا خمیازہ بھگتنا پڑا ہے میرا نتیجہ یہ ہے کہ بچوں کو اس کا خمیازہ بھگتنا پڑا ہے۔ (والدین)

Another parent reported that the children had difficulty connecting with this sudden shift to technology based learning;

میرا نتیجہ یہ ہے کہ بچوں نے اس کا نقصان اٹھایا ہے۔ جانے کے لئے بہت کچھ ہے اور میرا سب سے بڑا نقطہ اور

میں واقعی اس مطالعہ میں حصہ لینے کی وجہ یہ ہے کہ ایک 9 سالہ اور

ایک 7 سال کا بچہ بات کرنے کے قابل نہیں ہے جیسے ہم زوم کال پر بات کرنے کے قابل ہیں

یہ صرف نہیں ہے۔ مجھے نہیں لگتا کہ وہ اعصابی طور پر کافی بالغ ہیں، میں جانتا ہوں کہ وہ ہیں۔

ڈیجیٹل مقامی، لیکن مجھے نہیں لگتا کہ ان میں سیکھنے یا بات چیت کرنے کی صلاحیت ہے۔

ڈیجیٹل پلیٹ فارمز میں (والدین)

### ***Social Isolation***

The children and their parents who participated in this research agreed that instances of loneliness and social isolation were the root causes of the negative mental outcomes that were seen in the youngsters. Each of the parents who agreed to be interviewed had a profound level of anxiety over the long-term repercussions of social isolation on their children. Broadly, parents in their verbatim were concerned that their children are going through a major personality change and have grown reluctant to play outside or socialize with other children.

کیونکہ میں نے اپنے بیٹے کو بھی پایا، وہ جون میں سات سال کا ہوا ہے، اس وقت وہ چھ سال کا تھا۔ وہ واقعی باہر جانے والا بچہ تھا لیکن لاک ڈاؤن کی وجہ سے۔ مجھے اسے واپس سڑک پر لانے کے لیے جو پریشانی ہوئی، آپ جانتے ہیں کہ پابندیاں کب ہٹا دی گئیں۔ وہ واقعی اپنے آپ میں چلا گیا - واقعی شرمیلا، اب یہ سب کچھ مکمل طور پر واپس آ چکا ہے، اب وہ اپنے پرانے نفس میں واپس آ گیا ہے۔ لیکن کچھ ہفتوں سے، میں حقیقت میں اس کے بارے میں چھ سال کی عمر میں اس کی ذہنی صحت کی طرح پریشان ہو رہا تھا۔ وہ باہر جانا نہیں چاہتا تھا اور وہ اپنے آپ میں بہت گھس گیا کیونکہ وہ باہر نہیں تھا اپنے دوستوں کے ساتھ (والدین)

A common assumption was that their children will cope with what they have missed academically.

یہ اپنے ساتھیوں کے ساتھ سماجی میل جول کی کمی تھی۔ میں شروع میں بھی پریشان نہیں تھا۔ میں تھوڑا سا تھا جیسے اوہ خدا، اس کی ریاضی، اس کا جو کچھ بھی ہو۔ لیکن تھوڑی دیر کے بعد، میں ایسا تھا کہ مجھے اصل میں اس کی پرواہ نہیں ہے۔ اسے اچھی طرح سے اٹھایا جا سکتا ہے، اپنے ساتھیوں کے ساتھ بات چیت کرنا اتنا اہم ہے کہ آپ جانتے ہیں اور صرف اسکرین کے سامنے بیٹھنے کے ہفتوں اور مہینے۔ (والدین)

Another parent highlighted the loss of social interaction and behavior changes in their child.

میں کہوں گا کہ وہ سماجی پہلو کو یاد کرے گا۔ . . ہم نے کچھ چیزوں کا مشاہدہ کیا ہے، کچھ رویے میں تبدیلیاں، بڑی چیزیں نہیں ہیں، لیکن صرف ہر وقت گھر میں رہنے سے مایوسی ہوتی ہے۔ مجھے لگتا ہے کہ آپ صرف نہیں کر سکتے ہیں۔ آپ صرف پانچ اور چھ سال کے بچوں کے ایک گروپ اور ان کی مصروفیت کی نقل نہیں بنا سکتے۔ (والدین)

### ***Concerns Regarding the Weight of Home and School Obligations***

The pressure that was put on children to succeed in their homeschooling was another factor that contributed to the adverse mental health outcomes that were experienced by these children. This youngster had a hard time learning alone and battled with the challenges of distant learning. She, like a great number of other youngsters, found the requirements of home schooling to be difficult. Throughout the course of our research, this topic kept coming up. It was claimed by a number of households that in order to preserve the harmony that existed amongst the members of the family, they would not impose schooling from home responsibilities on their youngsters. A child described the experience as

بہت سارے پروجیکٹس تھے، ہر ہفتے تقریباً ایک پروجیکٹ ہوتا تھا اور پھر اس چیز پر ہر ایک موضوع کی طرح ہوتا تھا اور جیسا کہ وہ ہمیں بہت کچھ کرنے پر آمادہ کرتی ہے۔ اور پھر میں بالکل ایسا ہی ہو گیا جیسے یہ میرے لئے بہت زیادہ تھا۔ کیونکہ میں چھوٹے کام کو پسند کرتا ہوں اور وہ ہمیں اسے ختم کرنے کے لیے زیادہ وقت دیتی۔ (11 سال کا بچہ)

Another parent reported:

وہ واقعی اپنے دوستوں کو یاد کرتی تھی اور وہ اس عمر میں ہے جہاں وہ صرف تھی، وہ اس کے بارے میں کافی جذباتی ہو جاتی تھی، اور اسے مکمل کرنے اور اس طرح کی چیزوں کے بارے میں فکر مند رہتی تھی۔ تو ایسے دن تھے جب میں نے صرف اس کی شکل بنائی تھی۔ ہمیں آج کچھ نہیں کرنا ہے۔ آپ جانتے ہیں کہ ہم صرف کر سکتے ہیں۔ آپ جانتے ہیں، اوپر جائیں اور کوئی کتاب یا کچھ پڑھیں، یا آرام کریں۔ یا کوئی فلم یا اس جیسی کوئی چیز دیکھیں۔ . . ہم صرف ایک فلم لگائیں گے اور آرام کریں گے اور آج کے لئے اسکول کو بھول جائیں گے۔ (والدین)



### ***Alterations in Conduct That Are Unfavorable***

It's interesting to note that many parents of children younger than 10 discovered that after the limitations, their kids acquired greater unfavorable or maladaptive behavior changes. For instance, a single mother reported that her kid had relapsed to an old behavior of wetting the bed, which may have been associated with the fact that he had not seen his father for a lengthy period of time.

چند ہفتوں تک، اس نے بچوں (ان کے والد) کو نہیں دیکھا، تو اس نے میرے سب سے چھوٹے بیٹے کو متاثر کیا۔ جڑواں بچوں میں سے ایک، اس کا برتاؤ پوری جگہ پر چلا گیا اور وہ کام کر رہا تھا اور سب کچھ اور پیچھے کی طرف چلا گیا اور وہ پھر سے سونا شروع کر رہا تھا اور اب بھی ہے، لہذا میں نے بھی اس سے نمٹنے کے لئے سب کو پسند کیا۔

(والدین)

Another parent reported their experience of COVID and the changes their child went through during lockdown.

آپ جانتے ہیں کہ وہ ایک مکمل ڈراؤنا خواب ہے یا اپنی بہن کو مار رہا ہے، ایک یا دوسرا۔ میں بہت سی کالوں پر تھا جہاں میرا باس کہتا تھا، کیا آپ جا کر اسے حل کرنا چاہتے ہیں کیونکہ آپ کو دو کمروں سے لڑائی کی آوازیں سنائی دے رہی تھیں۔ (والدین)

Most common conduct problem was attachment related

لاک ڈاؤن کی وجہ سے اس نے اپنے دادا دادی کو بھی نہیں دیکھا۔ یا آپ کسی اور کو تقریباً تین مہینوں سے جانتے ہیں، اس لیے وہ واقعی میں اپنی امی کی طرح میری بیوی سے چمٹ گیا ہے۔ اور پھر وہ پسند نہیں کر سکتا تھا، اسے اس کے ساتھ ایک ہی کمرے میں سونا پڑتا ہے، اور اگر وہ ٹوائلٹ جا رہی ہے، تو وہ اس کے پیچھے آئے گا۔ میرے خیال میں لاک ڈاؤن نے واقعی کھیلا تھا۔ میرا مطلب ہے کہ وہ کافی منسلک تھا لیکن یہ اور بھی خراب ہو گیا۔ ہم اس رویے کے عادی ہو چکے تھے، اور اب جو لاک ڈاؤن سے باہر آ رہے تھے، ہم پہلے ہی دیکھ سکتے ہیں، وہ تھوڑا سا کم ہے، کیونکہ وہ ہفتے میں ایک بار اپنے دادا دادی سے ملتا ہے اور وہ بغیر کسی سفر کے مزید دوروں پر جاتا ہے۔ محدود کیا جا رہا ہے۔ تو، وہ اس سے تھوڑا سا باہر آ رہا ہے، لیکن لاک ڈاؤن کی وجہ سے طرز عمل کے مسائل ضرور تھے۔ یہ اس طرح چل رہا تھا جیسے آپ جانتے ہو، لیکن اس موسم سرما میں ایک بار پھر میں کہوں گا کہ وہ پھر سے پیچھے ہٹ جائے گا۔ (والدین)

### ***Challenges Facing the Children and Adolescents When It Comes to Their Mental Health***

The effect that the COVID-19 limitations had on children who suffered from developmental abnormalities was a common thread that surfaced throughout the investigation. During the COVID-19 limitations, six parents and two instructors of kids with special needs discussed the impact of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Although the people with autism have different age-related milestones, all expressed reactions to the lockdown that were similarly alarming. The participants in this research all acknowledged how the abrupt shift in routine had caused anxiety in the autistic youngsters in the sample.



### Anxiety was most common mental health issue among the children

شروع میں، یہ ایک بہت بڑا نیاپن تھا۔ یقیناً، یہ بہت اچھا ہے۔ آپ آدھا گھنٹہ کام کر سکتے ہیں اور ٹی وی دیکھ سکتے ہیں اور ایکس بکس چلا سکتے ہیں، لیکن جیسے جیسے ہفتے گزرتے گئے، میں نے واقعی ہم سب کو محسوس کیا۔ حوصلے بہت پست تھے۔ ہمارے مزاج بہت پست تھے۔ وہ بہت رو رہا تھا۔ اور یہاں تک کہ وہ نوجوان جو تھوڑا سا کام کرنے اور سارا دن آن لائن رہنے کا خواب دیکھ رہا تھا۔ . . وہ پست تھا اور رو رہا تھا اور آنسو بہا رہا تھا

میری بیٹی نے واقعی بہت جدوجہد کی، اور وہ ایسی تھی جیسے وہ واقعی قابل نہیں تھی۔ وہ بہت زیادہ ان پٹ چاہتی تھی، حالانکہ اسے واقعی اس کی ضرورت نہیں تھی۔ لہذا، وہ بہت، بہت فکر مند تھی اور بنیادی طور پر، وہ یہاں بیٹھنا چاہتی تھی۔ آپ جانتے ہیں، جب آپ کام کر رہے ہیں، یہ وہ بیڈ روم ہے جس میں وہ بستر پر بیٹھی ہو گی اور آپ کو معلوم ہے کہ وہ مداخلت کر رہی ہوگی۔ ہاں، اور پھر وہ پھڑپھڑا رہی ہوگی،

تم جانتے ہو میرا کیا مطلب ہے۔" (والدین)

وہ خبریں دیکھنے کو کہتی رہی، میں نے کہا نہیں، آپ خبریں نہیں دیکھ رہے ہیں۔ میں آپ کو بعد میں بتاؤں گا کہ کیا ہو رہا ہے۔" (والدین)

اس نے پوچھا . . اگر ہم تھوڑا آگے بڑھیں کیونکہ خاتون اور ریڈیو کہتے ہیں کہ آپ دو کلومیٹر سے زیادہ نہیں جائیں گے؟ اور میں باہر جانے والا ہوں، میں ہونے والا ہوں۔ کیا ہم یہاں سے 2 کلومیٹر کے علاقے سے باہر جا رہے ہیں؟ ہمیں ایسا نہیں کرنا چاہیے، آپ جانتے ہیں، ہاں، تو ایسا نہیں ہے، اگر بچہ صحت عامہ کے پیغامات کو اٹھانے کے قابل ہو تو آپ شوگر کوٹ نہیں کر سکتے۔" (والدین)

### However, another major theme emerged regarding mental health of adolescent's:

انہوں نے کہا کہ اگر کوئی ویکسینیشن ہو تو بھی اسے نہیں ملے گا۔ اور، کیونکہ وہ سوئیوں سے ڈرتا ہے، اور وہ ڈرتا ہے۔ بنیادی طور پر، اس نے آپ کے بارے میں بہت خوفناک سوچنا شروع کر دیا تھا کہ اس کے ساتھ کیا ہو گا جب اس کے والدین مر جائیں گے اور جب وہ ایک ایسے فرد کی طرح ہو گا جو دنیا میں آٹزم کے ساتھ رہتا ہے اور اسے وہ مدد نہیں ملتی جو اسے ساری زندگی ملی تھی، اس لیے وہ واقعی میں چلا گیا وجودی اضطراب اور آپ جانتے ہیں کہ نے یہی کیا ہے۔ جیسا کہ آپ جانتے ہیں، یہ ایک نفسیاتی بیماری بھی ہے۔" (والدین)

آپ جانتے ہیں کہ یہ مضحکہ خیز ہے کیونکہ کچھ بچے جو میرے پاس ہیں وہ بہت پسند کرتے ہیں، ام، بس آپ جانتے ہیں کہ، ان کا ایک خاص مضمون ہے جیسا کہ آٹزم کے ساتھ زیادہ تر بچوں کی خاص دلچسپی ہوتی ہے۔ . . لیکن ہاں، ان میں سے کچھ واقعی ان وائرسوں کے بارے میں جانتے ہیں اور یہ کہ وہ دوسرے وائرس کا باعث کیسے بن سکتے ہیں اور وہ واقعی دباؤ میں تھے۔" (والدین)

جیسے وہ گھبراتا تھا کہ کیا میری بیوی اس کے بغیر گھر چھوڑ دے گی، کیونکہ اس نے مہینوں سے اس کے بغیر گھر نہیں چھوڑا تھا۔ اس نے اپنا معمول کھو دیا اور پھر نیا معمول ایک طرح سے واقعی غیر صحت بخش تھا، کیونکہ اس کے لیے کوئی بیرونی چیز نہیں تھی۔" (والدین)

### Parent of ASD child were also interviewed and they reported that

سپیکٹرم پر ہے اور اسے دوبارہ انضمام کرنا پڑے گا۔ وہ ایسا کرتی ہے جب ASD خاص طور پر میری چھوٹی بیٹی بھی وہ اسکول میں ہوتی ہے اور وہ جمعہ کو چھٹی ہوتی ہے اور پیر کو واپس آتی ہے، یہ اس کے لیے ایک بڑا تناؤ



ہے، لہذا آپ تصور کر سکتے ہیں کہ اس کے لیے 6 ماہ کی چھٹی کتنی ہوگی۔ یہ دوبارہ اسکول کے پہلے دن کی طرح ہونے والا ہے۔" (والدین)

### **Discussion and Findings**

This study looks at the perspectives of Irish children and young adults during COVID-19, especially the psychological effects of the outbreak on this age category. The research evaluated the psychological implications on young people using an inductive qualitative research methodology. Parents and families are the primary observers of children. The primary findings suggest that the laws put in place to ensure public health have a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of children and young adults, health. Parents and careers had greater stress, despair, and anxiety levels as a consequence of social isolation among their dependents, These problems were aggravated developmental problems in children and adolescents These results are alarming (Lee et al., 2020). Because negative psychological experiences in childhood are linked to a greater probability of anxiousness later on in life, they are important to normal functioning.

### ***Social Isolation***

Social isolation are affecting young people, according to studies, and there have been rises in teenage distress, owing in part to pandemic-related constraints (Loades et al., 2020). Adolescent anxiety, sadness, and hopelessness were also reported by caregivers in this research. Simultaneously, many individuals were very troubled by the loss of regularity and purpose, and many bemoaned the cancellation of important events they had been looking forward to (Qi et al., 2020; Smirni et al., 2020). These results are consistent with prior research, which suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic's limitations have had an influence on young people's mental well-being (De Miranda et al., 2020; Bubb & Jones, 2020; Duan et al., 2020). The study discovered that using social distance and stay-at-home orders to prevent the spread of COVID-19 has a detrimental impact on young people's mental health, as has been shown previously. This danger is made even more complicated by the interaction between changes in hormones and neurobiology and increased emotional reactivity, as well as the continuous development of stress management and coping skills in adolescents. Furthermore, social connections with peers benefit adolescents' social health by fostering a sense of belonging and minimizing emotions of making it difficult toward others. These elements are necessary for interpersonal demands (Oosterhoff et al., 2020). This research demonstrates that after the pandemic has passed and restrictions have been released, it will be necessary to assess the psychological response that COVID-19 has had on young people and put in place support networks in order to minimize any potential long-term psychological implications.

### ***Stress about homeschooling***

The stress of homeschooling, according to one study, was an additional strain for families. School closures redirected education away toward homes (O'Sullivan et al., 2020). This shift was unusual, and many families had never experienced long-term homeschooling. Routines at school are important coping techniques for young individuals with mental health concerns. Children and adolescents experience stress when they are confined for extended periods of time, when they are afraid of being sick, when they are restless, when they have limited personal space, and when they are isolated from their classmates and teachers. This research highlights the need to help young people in participating in education in non-stressful methods that are acceptable for their family situations. Homeschooling is known to raise parental stress, especially in households that are already stressed (Ewing & Vu, 2020). As was said before, being cut off from their peers has a detrimental effect on the psychological condition. As per statistical information gathered in the United States between 2012 and 2015, thirty-five percent of the nation's adolescents who obtained treatment for their mental health did so via their schools. The experiences of young people who participated in this study point to the fact that home-schooling may be contributing to the worsening of the psychological impacts that are caused on people when schools close and resources are diminished.

### ***Young People's Behavioral changes, depression, and anxiety***

The COVID-19 limits produced detrimental mental health consequences for teenagers in this research. Anxiety and terror levels were found to be higher than usual. These results mirrored those of prior studies that showed an increase in teenage anxiety. The loss of control that is placed on young people as a result of nationwide restrictions has resulted in a variety of issues. For example, the closing of schools and the imposition of residential quarantines have increased anxiety and feelings of isolation among youngsters, while also contributing to an increase in negative behavior among younger children (Aishworiya & Kang, 2020). In addition, as was mentioned earlier, the findings of our study provide credence to the widely held belief that limits brought on by the epidemic have had a negative impact on the mental health of young people.

### ***Autism Has a Negative Impact on Young People's Mental Health***

The research also revealed that children and young people with ASD had unique psychological symptoms as a consequence of the constraints, which arose as a direct impact of the restrictions. This was shown to be the case as a direct result of the limitations. As a direct consequence of the limits, it was shown that this was in fact the case. These findings, which underscore the severity of the outbreak, indicate the mental and emotional sensitivity of children, particularly those who have developmental challenges. In particular, this vulnerability is shown in children who have developmental disorders. According to the findings of earlier research, these youngsters are at a greater risk as the epidemic begins to wind down, and they need specialised therapies in order to



prevent experiencing disproportionately negative psychological and emotional effects. The outcomes of this research back up this assertion, showing that in the limited sample of families with an autistic child, assistance was required to reestablish regularity and make it possible to make the transition back to times when COVID was present.

### **Limitations and Conclusion**

Although this research yielded useful information, it has several drawbacks. First, the researchers examined for a sample group that was evenly distributed across demographic groups. As a direct result of this, the demographics of the sample set were not spread in an equitable manner. For instance, given that Dublin is home to the biggest number of people in Pakistan, many families choose to make the city their permanent residence. Interviews were conducted with mothers more often than with fathers, which suggests that gender had a role in the selection process [16]. The use of a method that involves conducting interviews via the internet constitutes a second limitation. In spite of the fact that COVID-19 makes this a crucial tool, this method limits the nonverbal communication between the interviewer and the interviewee, which might prevent the interviewer from gaining potentially essential information about the interviewee.

This research, along with other studies conducted all around the globe, illustrates the mental health concerns related with the pandemic limits posed by COVID-19. Young people are particularly vulnerable to experiencing adverse psychological consequences, and it is not yet clear what the long-term repercussions of this issue will be. Strategies that will assist children and adolescents in coping with the pandemic's short- and long-term psychological repercussions, particularly those who are judged to be more susceptible within this group, are becoming more important in order to address these issues. These strategies will assist children and adolescents in coping with the pandemic's short- and long-term psychological repercussions.

If we want to avoid longer-term mental health consequences, we must assess the effect of further limitations and ensure that mental health services for young people are readily available. It is imperative that these services be made available to the general public given the increased incidence of clinical depression among young people, as well as the findings made by parents in this study that their children are having difficulty coping with their symptoms. Young people require support in establishing appropriate coping skills when they begin to process the potentially detrimental repercussions of COVID-19. This assistance may be provided by adults.

## Interview Protocol

Semi Structured Interview
<p>کیا آپ مجھے کی وبا کے دوران اپنی روزمرہ کی خاندانی زندگی کے بارے میں کچھ بتا سکتے ہیں؟</p> <p>کی وبا سے پہلے آپ کے اسکول کا اوسط دن COVID-19 کیا آپ مجھے اس بارے میں تھوڑا سا بتا سکتے ہیں کہ کیسا لگتا تھا؟</p> <p>1 کیا آپ نے ہوم ورک کیا ہے؟</p> <p>2 پسندیدہ مضامین؟</p> <p>3 اسکول میں کیا مزہ آیا؟</p> <p>4 کیا والدین کام کرتے ہیں - اسکول کی زندگی اور گھریلو زندگی کیسے ملتی ہے</p>
<p>• نے آپ کے اسکول کے کام کو کیسے متاثر کیا ہے؟ COVID-19 کیا آپ اس بارے میں بات کر سکتے ہیں کہ کیا اسکول نے آپ سے اس بارے میں بات کی کہ شروع میں کیا ہو رہا تھا؟</p> <p>1 کیا آپ (بچے کو) جانتے ہیں کہ کیا ہو رہا ہے؟</p> <p>2 کیا آپ کی کام کی زندگی متاثر ہوئی؟</p> <p>3 کیا کوئی جذباتی اثرات تھے؟</p> <p>4 کیا آپ اسکول کے مضامین اور مواد کے ساتھ مشغول ہونے کے قابل تھے؟</p> <p>5 گھر میں کون ہوم اسکولنگ کا انتظام کرتا ہے</p> <p>6</p>
<p>• بہت سے خاندانوں کو ہوم اسکولنگ مشکل یا عجیب لگی ہے — کچھ نے ایسا کیا ہے، کچھ نے نہیں کیا — کیا آپ مجھے بتا سکتے ہیں کہ کیا آپ بحران کے دوران اسکول کو جاری رکھنے میں کامیاب رہے ہیں؟ مجھے بتائیں کہ آپ کی روزمرہ کی اسکول کی مصروفیت کیسی لگتی ہے (چاہے کوئی نہ بھی ہو)۔</p> <p>1 کیا کوئی ایسی چیز ہے جو آپ کے لیے پچھلے چند مہینوں میں گھر کے اسکول کے کام کرنے میں خاص طور پر مددگار ثابت ہوئی ہے؟</p>
<p>• کیا کوئی ایسی چیز ہے جو خاص طور پر چیلنجنگ رہی ہو؟</p> <p>1 آپ کا اسکول سے رابطہ کیسے رہا؟</p> <p>2 کیا آپ مختلف رابطے کو ترجیح دیں گے؟</p> <p>3 آپ (بچے) کے بارے میں کیا خیال ہے کہ آپ نے آخری وقت میں اپنے استاد کو دیکھا؟</p> <p>4 کیا آپ کے پاس کوئی خیال ہے کہ ہم اسے بچوں کے لیے کیسے بہتر بنا سکتے ہیں</p>
<p>• کیا آپ لوگ کمپیوٹر ٹیبلٹس اور/یا انٹرنیٹ استعمال کرتے ہیں — مجھے بتائیں کہ آپ ان پر کیا کرنا پسند کرتے ہیں؟</p> <p>کیا آپ ان کو اسکول کے کام کے لیے استعمال کرتے ہیں؟ کیا کوئی ایسی ایپس یا سائٹس ہیں جو آپ نے ہوم اسکولنگ کے لیے استعمال کی ہیں؟</p> <p>1 کیا آپ بیان کر سکتے ہیں کہ یہ کیسا رہا؟</p> <p>2 کوئی چیلنج؟</p> <p>3 کوئی اچھے نکات؟</p> <p>4 کیا یہ اسکول کی تعلیم کی طرح محسوس ہوتا ہے</p>
<p>• اسکول کے ساتھ مشغول کیا ہے یا اسکول کے کام میں معاونت کرنے Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTE) کیا آپ نے والی کوئی خاص چیز؟</p> <p>یہ کیسا تھا؟ کیا آپ اپنے جواب کے ذریعے مجھ سے تھوڑی بات کر سکتے ہیں؟</p> <p>1</p>
<p>• اگر یہ وبائی بیماری دوبارہ ہوئی تو آپ کے خیال میں اسکول آپ کی مدد کے لیے کیا کر سکتے ہیں؟</p>



• کیا کوئی ایسی چیز ہے جو ہم مستقبل میں اسکول کی تعلیم میں مدد کے لیے آن لائن کر سکتے ہیں؟
کیا آپ مجھے اپنے ہوم اسکول کے تجربے کے بارے میں کوئی اہم بات بتانا چاہیں گے جو آپ کو کہنے کا موقع نہیں ملا یا آپ کے ساتھ ابھی ہوا ہے؟
کیا آپ اسکول واپس جانے کے بارے میں فکر مند ہیں؟
آپ دونوں/سب کو اسکول جانے کے بارے میں سب سے بڑی چیز کون سی محسوس ہوتی ہے؟ آپ کو کیا یاد نہیں ہے؟
COVID-19 کیا آپ اس بارے میں بات کر سکتے ہیں کہ آپ کے خاندان کو کیسے متاثر کیا ہے؟
کیا آپ مجھے بتا سکتے ہیں کہ آپ کے خیال میں آپ اور آپ کے خاندان کا مستقبل کیسا ہو گا



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