

CHAPTER 6

COVID-19, AGİNG AND MENTAL HEALTH

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COVID-19

The world is faced with a new global health threat. COVID-19 has had its effect as a “life changer” for human civilization. Various countries have closed their borders, global economies have been fragmented, and travel has been restricted around the world. To control outbreaks, people were quarantined in their own homes (Banerjee et al., 2020: 4).

COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, SARS-CoV) (Yang et al., 2020: 475-481). Since its emergence in China, the virus has spread to every continent of the world(United Nations Development Program(UNDP), 2020). The source of the disease was defined on January 7, 2020, as a contagious type of a new coronavirus that has not been identified in humans before, and as a microorganism that can only be seen through a microscope and can multiply in seconds when suitable conditions are found (Altın, 2020; Alpago and Alpago, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified it as a pandemic and a major public health problem of international concern. It is not known whether the COVID-19 virus is transmitted directly from bats or through another mechanism (for example, through an intermediate host) (World Health Organization (WHO), 2020). The virus is mostly spread between people through close contact, usually through small droplets formed when coughing, sneezing, speaking or touching a contaminated surface (WHO, 2020).

According to the current data published by Johns Hopkins University, as of July 23, 2020, the number of cases in the world reached 15,265,081 and the number of people who lost their lives reached 624,370. In Turkey, the total number of cases was 222,402 and the number of those who lost their lives was 5,545 (Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, 2020). The risk of transmission of the

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and division of labor so that they can allocate the necessary time during the care and treatment process of the patients and participate in activities that will provide effective communication skills.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It has been determined that older adults are more sensitive than other members of the society during the COVID-19 epidemic. It is very important to protect the mental health of older adults during COVID-19 or similar epidemic processes. The provision of medication, especially for elderly adults with chronic diseases, and the planning of gerontological social services for this emerge as critically important. It is thought that it may be useful to provide spiritual care practices online in order to remove negative emotions that may occur in older adults within the scope of mental health services. In addition, providing the tools and equipment that older adults need to perform their daily living activities will reveal the idea that individuals are not left alone. At the same time, online meetings of older adults with other family members during COVID-19 or similar epidemic processes can prevent thoughts of loneliness and hopelessness from occurring. It is recommended to develop a wider scope of nursing care practices so that older adults are less affected during COVID-19 or similar epidemic processes.

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