International Study on the Impact of COVID 19 on Family Life across Cultures

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This paper introduces the COVID 19 Family Life Study. The data was collected via snowball sampling starting May 30, 2020 through a survey instrument that was translated by volunteers into 18 languages. Data collection is ongoing and may be complemented with representative samples in the future. This document outlines the study goals and methodology.

Background

The COVID-19 Family Life Study is a research study that explores the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on family life across cultures. The study provides robust and reliable data to inform the design and delivery of cutting-edge mental health and psychosocial services for families across cultures. The project aims to significantly contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of current responses to COVID-19. There are extensive research on the psychological impact of pandemics outbreak on the general public (Bish and Michie, 2010; Jones and Salathe, 2009; Lau et al., 2005; Lau et al., 2009; Rubin et al., 2009; Hawryluck et al., 2004; Sim and Chua, 2004; Liu et al., 2007; Reynolds et al., 2008; Perrin et al., 2009; Person et al, 2004; Chan et al., 2016). However, little is known on the impact of the current pandemic on family life. The tangible outcome will be a state-of-the-art assessment of (a) the effects of the COVID-19 crisis and of (b) current government response measures on parents. The data will allow to detect and track trajectories of mental health and psychosocial issues and help assess the effectiveness of government response measures. The results from this study will inform policies, programs, and supports for families

Objectives

The study aims to (1) collect pertinent data to inform support service design and delivery for parents and families across the world; (2) assess symptoms, causes, and risk factors of mental health in parents during and due to the COVID-19 crisis; (3) document psychological and social experiences of parents during this period of the coronavirus pandemic; (4) understand (mental) health, psychosocial and social needs of families in times of crisis; (5) assess parents' needs for, perception of, and satisfaction with support services provided during the coronavirus pandemic; (6) examine coping skills and mechanisms and help-seeking behaviors among parents; and (7) Identify barriers to service utilization during the pandemic.

More specifically, the study intends to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What are the prevalent stressors (e.g., depression, anxiety and PTSD) affecting parents during this crisis? What are the mental, social and economic challenges parents are facing during the Covid-19 pandemic?
- (2) What are symptoms, causes, and risk factors of mental health issues in parents and what interventions do they receive during the COVID-19 crisis?
- (3) How do parents perceive the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic? What are the factors worrying parents and how do these vary by socio-demographic factors?
- (4) How do parents' understanding of and responses to the COVID-19 crisis vary by socio-demographic factors?

- (5) What are psychological and social experiences of parents during the pandemic and what are the effects of the pandemic on psychological and social wellbeing including life satisfaction, marital relationships, and parenting practices?
- (6) What are individual, family and community coping mechanisms and strategies to help manage emotional distress during this pandemic? What are the health, psychological and social needs of parents and what kind of advice, support and help will protect their mental wellbeing?
- (7) What are the barriers to service utilization and effectiveness during this crisis? Where do families seek help for mental health and psychosocial problems? Are there families which are underutilizing services (such as older people, adolescents, people with disabilities and those with pre-existing health conditions etc.)?

Methodology

The data is collected via snowball sampling starting May 30, 2020 through a survey instrument that was translated by volunteers into 18 languages. Data will be collected through an approximately 30-minute online survey. The study sample will be recruited through a variety of channels including a call to participate via various social media (Branley et al., 2014; Geldsetzer, 2020). Participants will have access to online survey via SurveyMonkey via www.covidfamilystudy.org

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