

An Exploratory Study on the Interpersonal Relationships and Resilience of Adults Working from Home in COVID-19Amrita Chauhan¹, Rajesh Singh², Jugendra Lahari³, Sachin Singh Yadav⁴, Ashish Saraswat⁵¹Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, GMC, Datia (M.P.)²Senior Resident, Department of Psychiatry, GMC, Datia (M.P.)³Senior Resident, Department of Medicine, GMC, Datia (M.P.)⁴Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, GMC, Datia (M.P.)⁵Senior Resident, Department of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, MLBMC, Jhansi (U.P.)

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Conflict of interest: Nil

Abstract:

Background and Objective: Because Covid-19 has brought about previously unheard-of changes in our workplace culture; its effects are currently being researched on a global scale in order to fully understand how to handle them. The objective is to assess the body of research, explore the concept of working from home, and look at any potential impacts it might have on psychological characteristics including resiliency, loneliness, and social contacts.

Methods: People who worked from home during the COVID-19 pandemic were the subject of a cross-sectional study from January 2022 to June 2023 by the Department of Psychiatry, GMC, Datia (M.P.). The questionnaire was distributed online and participants' agreement was secured before data collection began during a three-month period. The sample consisted of 300 people, 150 men and 150 women, aged between 18 and 60, who had worked actively from home for at least 4 hours per day for the previous six months, had a bachelor's degree or were pursuing a bachelor's degree, and were fluent in English.

Results: There were a total of 168 (59.4%) unmarried individuals and 132 (40.6%) married individuals. Further the sample was divided into various age groups consisting of 142 individuals (47%) in the 18-30 age group, 60 (20%) in the 31-40 age group, 60 (20%) in the 41-50 age group, and 38 (13%) in the 51-60 age group. Comparison of age means for all dependent variables group differences were found to be significant for Loneliness, Resilience and FACES (Subscales 2 and 3) at 0.01 confidence level.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that those who are single or younger in age (18 to 30) are most affected, with low resilience, high symptoms of loneliness, and deteriorating mental health. The research's specific analyses, restrictions, and suggestions must be further explored.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Work from Home, Resilience, Loneliness, Meaning in Life Hope, Life Satisfaction.

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Introduction

Since the Second World War, the coronavirus Covid-19 epidemic has posed the greatest threat to global health. To slow the spread of the infection, countries have cancelled major events like sporting events, concerts, and educational institutions as well as patient testing and treatment. Other measures include limiting travel and contact tracing. People are negatively affected psychologically by this outbreak or lose their daily income because they don't know when their regular schedules will resume. [1]

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a variety of psychosocial stressors, such as concerns about one's own and their families' health, significant

disruptions to daily routines, physical separation from family and friends, a lack of basic necessities, a decline in income, forced social isolation, and the closure of educational institutions. [2]

Many people's everyday routines had been disturbed by the COVID-19 epidemic, including those in India. An surge in psychological health problems like anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicidal-destructive thinking was brought on by this social and economic upheaval. [3] If an employee has a lot of work-related obligations that put a lot of stress on them, it may be difficult for them to maintain a good, unburdened relationship with their family or friends. [4]

According to the American Psychological Association (2014), resilience is the adaptive process of successfully managing and coping with adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, and high levels of stress. [5] According to the concept of human resource management, giving employees work flexibility—such as the option to work remotely—can provide them greater freedom to balance their responsibilities to their families and their professional obligations.

Flexible work options could come with implicit demands for greater commitment and effort, which might outweigh the anticipated advantages of fewer work-family conflicts. This could be a drawback of working from home. Researchers have shown that employees who work remotely often put in more time and feel more time-constrained than their peers who work in offices. [6]

The Rationale behind the study was to assess whether there were issues among employed people in India during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as loneliness, impaired interpersonal interactions, and reduced resilience levels.

Materials and Methods-

People who worked from home during the Covid-19 pandemic were the subject of a cross-sectional study from January 2022 to June 2023 by the Department of Psychiatry, GMC, Datia (M.P.). The questionnaire was distributed online and

participants' agreement was secured before data collection began during a three-month period. The sample consisted of 300 people, 150 men and 150 women, aged between 18 and 60, who had worked actively from home for at least 4 hours per day for the previous six months, had a bachelor's degree or were pursuing a bachelor's degree, and were fluent in English.

The participants were required to fill in a consent form accompanying an information schedule, The Resilience Scale by Wagnild and Young (1993), followed by the UCLA Loneliness Scale by Daniel Russell, L.A. Peplau, and M.L. Ferguson (1978), and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES IV) by Tiesel (1994). [7] Participants were requested to complete the form in one session.

Statistical Analysis-

The resulting data were statistically analyzed. Version 22.0 of SPSS software was used to analyze the data.

The data were described using descriptive statistical analysis, which included frequency and percentages. For the various study dependent variables, inferential statistics comprised One-way Anova and independent samples t tests, and p 0.05 was regarded as statistically significant.

Result

Table 1: Age and Marital status wise distribution of study participants

Variable	Categories	N	%
Age	18-30 Years	140	46%
	31-40 Years	70	25%
	41-50 Years	50	18%
	51-60 Years	40	11%
Marital Status	Unmarried	160	55%
	Married	140	45%

Table 1 shows that there were a total of 160 (55%) unmarried individuals and 140 (45%) married individuals. Further the sample was divided into various age groups consisting of 140 individuals (46%) in the 18-30 age group, 70 (25%) in the 31-40 age group, 50 (18%) in the 41-50 age group, and 40 (11%) in the 51-60 age group.

Table 2: Comparison of age means for all dependent variables

Variables	Age								p- value
	18 - 30 years		31 - 40 years		41 - 50 years		51 - 60 years		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Resilience	121.96	16.76	131.57	22.15	142.07	18.15	141.92	23.63	0.01
Loneliness	24.13	13.17	17.15	14.25	16.2	14.29	16.13	15.14	0.01
APS	61.81	17.42	64.19	18.11	64.12	15.12	64.21	12.24	0.02
EPS	43.22	19.23	51.33	24.41	51.27	23.16	48.1	18.7	0.31
FACES2	53.15	30.15	62.18	31.15	61.17	30.29	70.15	25.18	0.01
FACES3	51.49	32.31	60.05	31.66	61.58	32.78	67.34	27.59	0.01

Table 2 showed that between group differences were found to be significant for Loneliness, Resilience and FACES (Subscales 2 and 3) at 0.01 confidence level. Results for ANOVA for between group differences were found to be significant for APS (Balanced Cohesion Percentile Score) at 0.05 confidence level where age as independent variable.

Table 3: Comparison of marital groups with dependent variables

Variables	Marital Status				p-value
	Unmarried		Married		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Resilience	133.58	18.11	142.13	20.45	0.01
Loneliness	23.11	14.61	16.5	13.25	0.02
APS	63.11	16.39	66.15	13.22	0.01
EPS	43.67	21.19	51.44	20.12	0.11
FACES2	51.42	30.51	65.1	25.13	0.02
FACES3	51.09	31.28	63.43	26.69	0.01

Table 3 indicated that results were found to be significant for Loneliness, Resilience, APS (Balanced Cohesion Percentile Score), EPS (Rigid Percentile Score), FACES2, FACES3 at 0.01 level of significance when the marital status is compared with dependent variables. Results for independent sample t-test were found to be significant ($p < 0.05$).

Discussion

It has been discovered that an individual's age has a significant bearing on how they will react to a work-from-home arrangement during the Covid-19 outbreak. People in the 41-55 age range indicated very high levels of resilience, in contrast to the 18-30 age groups, which displayed the lowest levels. Furthermore, it was discovered that those between the ages of 18 and 35 displayed greater resilience than those between the ages of 31 and 45.

When identity and role confusion peaks in young adulthood, it causes a split self-image, a sense of urgency, a lack of awareness and attention for important responsibilities, and contempt for family or community standards. [8] This might be the reason why persons between the ages of 18 and 25 have lower levels of resilience. Wisdom emerges from the great fight between morality and hopelessness in the final psychological stage of development. [9] It's possible that the high levels of resilience in the age range 46-55 are due to the wisdom obtained through a lifetime of experiences in this group, who had previously experienced uncertainties in life including wars and other significant medical crises.

Middle-aged adults between the ages of 41 and 50 reported the highest levels of cohesion (APS), communication (FACES2), and satisfaction (FACES3) compared to the 18 to 30 age groups. Family satisfaction is met for those between the ages of 41 and 55, who may have attained stage three of Maslow's Need for Hierarchy. Thanks to the stability in their professional lives, they have met their physiological and safety needs and can now effectively concentrate on their belongingness needs. [10] The parent-adolescent connection, which maintains that as teenagers mature, they move apart from parents and subsequently enter a world of autonomy, may help to explain why the 18-25 age groups obtained low grades in these areas.

If a person is directly impacted by a marriage ending, such as through a divorce or the passing of a spouse, they may suffer significant health effects. Relationship stressors can be detrimental to one's health. Married persons outscored single people on the dimensions of communication (FACES2), happiness (FACES3), and balanced cohesion and flexibility. Experts on marriage say that commitment and tolerance are key elements of a successful union. [11,12] Self-repair is a multi-step process that occurs in healthy relationships. Again, married people fared better on these two scales than did those who were single. Marriages today can be particularly difficult and emotional due to the shifting norm of male-female equality in marriage as well as a rise in unrealistic bridal expectations.[13,14]

Few restrictions apply to our investigation. First off, since the poll was carried out online, there is a significant difference in sample sizes between different groups. Second, elderly people responded to the survey significantly less frequently than younger people due to a lack of technological competence. Thirdly, the purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used, which are not probability sampling techniques and are not very suitable for generalized samples from a community.

Conclusion

The sudden transition to working from home required significant changes in one's interpersonal relationships, overall wellbeing, and mental health, especially in uncharted times like the Covid-19 pandemic. Those who were single or younger (18 to 30) were often found to be more affected, having low resilience and a high level of loneliness. In addition to married working persons, the other three age groups also reported high levels of family togetherness, flexibility, and enmeshment as well as low levels of loneliness and high levels of resilience. Future researchers can develop useful solutions for a work-from-home situation by comprehending the trends and findings from this study.

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