



IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PERSONS SUFFERING FROM AN EATING DISORDER, THE I-COPED STUDY

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Introduction:

- The COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions slowed down the spread of the disease and helped to lower the burden on healthcare system but came with a cost of adverse impact on mental and psychological wellbeing of people.

Objectives:

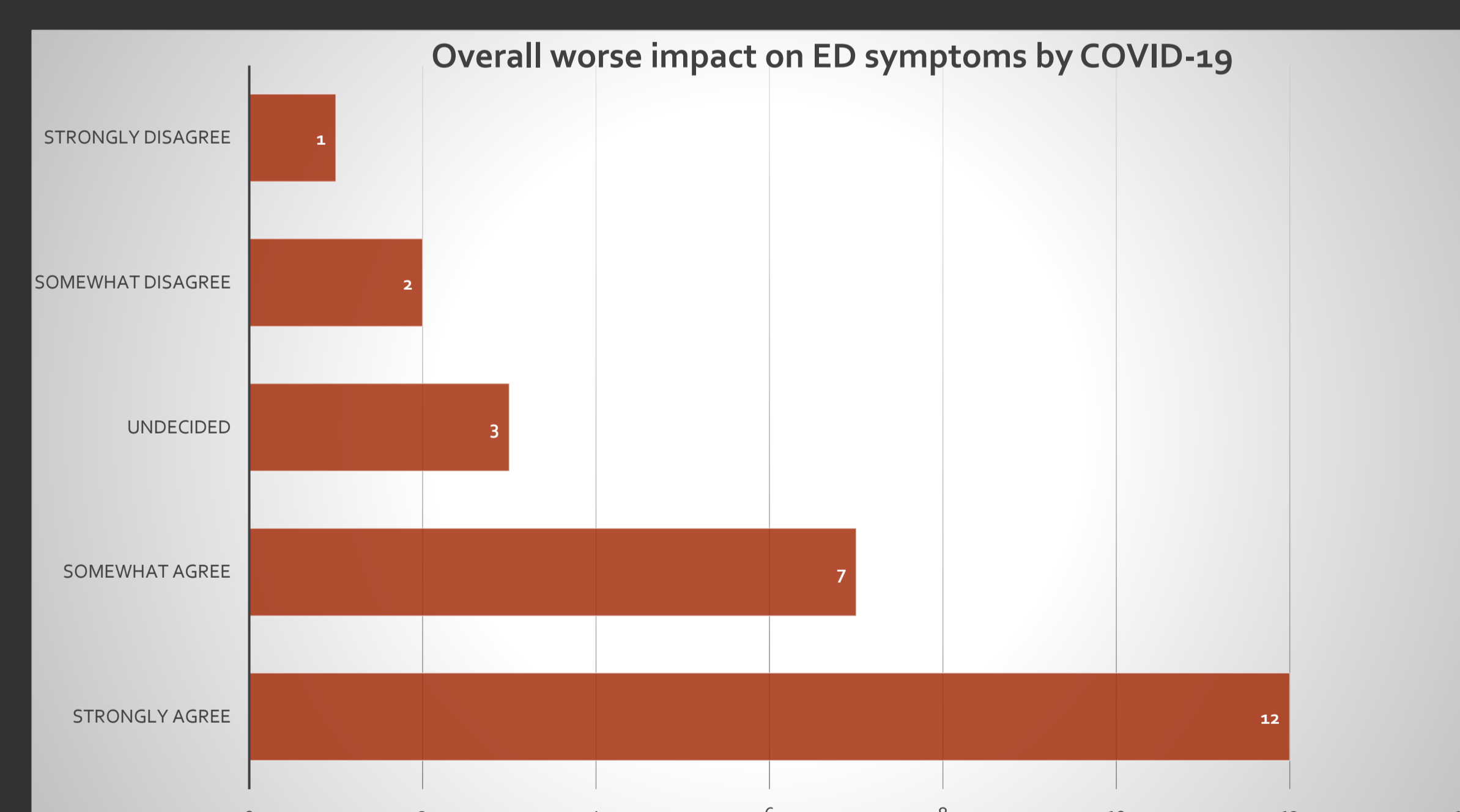
- Our Objective was to identify any change in the eating disorder (ED) symptoms, e.g. worsening of bingeing, restrictive eating, exercise and purging behavior during the pandemic.
- we aimed to Assess any changes in the stress level of participants due to pandemic related circumstances.
- We also hoped to measure change in the level of social support available to patients and identify any changes to patient's access to healthcare services.

Methodolgy:

- This study included all adult patients attending the Eating Disorder service during the one year before the Covid-19 pandemic. We did a clinical interview based on DSM-5 criteria of eating Disorders, after interview, all participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire. It gathers demographic information and assess consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on different aspects e.g. Sociodemographic information and covid-19 infection related information. It also asked about overall impact of the pandemic, change in eating disorder symptoms, Health care utilization and an open question about coping strategies participants used during the pandemic.
- We also used two validated clinical scales, Perceived stress scale (PSS-4) and a 7-item measure of social support Inventory (ESSI).

Results:

- A total of 82 participants were invited to the study and 33 (n=33) agreed to participate in the study. The survey and interview was completed by 24 participants. All these participants had an eating disorder of one kind or other. The results showed that 79% of the participants reported that the COVID-19 pandemic worsened their eating disorder symptoms, while most impacted symptoms were drive for thinness, worsened in 70% of the participants (17) and body dissatisfaction worsened in 66% of the patients.
- There were changes in the way patients access the healthcare services e.g. 30% never received in person therapy, and telephone and video call based therapy was more frequent with 55% and 30% patients accessed these modes of communication. Almost 79% of the participants found it hard to control important things in their life during this pandemic.



Discussion:

- The results clearly indicates that majority of ED patients were negatively impacted by the pandemic. Findings revealed that ED service had reduced provision of face to face care.

Conclusion:

- The pandemic negatively impacted on ED patients. A follow up study will be helpful to establish long term impact