

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON MENTAL HEALTH: PERSPECTIVES OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND USERS

(Arm 1: Quantitative Survey)

Participant Information Sheet:

Ever since the discovery of the first diagnosed case of COVID19 infection in Singapore on 22 January, various incremental measures have been implemented to contain the spread. For example, healthcare facilities were asked to start ramping down Business As Usual (BAU). This further escalated to community-wide measures such as discouraging overseas travel. Finally, there was the implementation of the Circuit-Breaker measure where only essential services could continue operations. This affected various psychosocial and community mental health service providers as well. There have been anecdotal reports from these service providers about “collateral damage” brought about by these measures where members of the community have suffered psychological harm as a result. This study aims to document and quantify this psychological impact from the perspectives of service providers and users both quantitatively and qualitatively. You are invited to participate in this research study and complete a survey because your organization/department/program is a provider of mental health and psychosocial services in Singapore.

This arm of the study is a survey that hopes to find out the psychological impact of COVID-19 and circuit breaker measures from the perspectives of mental health and psychosocial service of various sector/ departments within your organisation. To ensure that we survey the full impact, please consider one representative from each sector/ department providing mental health and psychosocial services within your organisation to participate in this survey. Please refer to Section A (Question 4) of the survey on the applicable sectors/departments that this research study is interested to survey. Please contact the Overall PI (Dr Chan Lai Gwen) to clarify.

You are required to complete this questionnaire on behalf of the department or program within the organization that you provide services through. Your participation is entirely voluntary and implies that you have obtained the required approval from your organization to review and provide the aggregated categorical data about the impact on the way your services had been provided during the Circuit Breaker period. Information about individual clients is NOT required. Please do not provide any identifiable information that may identify yourself or your clients in the survey. Depending on how your service has collected the data up to this point, you may need up to 1 week to review your own service data. The actual completion of this survey once you have the data on hand, takes an estimated 5 to 15 minutes.

By completing this questionnaire, you are giving the study team implied consent to use the data obtained for research purposes. This survey is conducted solely for the purpose of research and not for routine training or assessment purposes. The information you provide may be used to develop a national plan for a response to the psychological impact of a future crisis. The study team includes:

Overall Principal Investigator: xxxx

The study has been reviewed by the NHG Domain Specific Review Board (the central ethics committee) for ethics approval.

If you want an independent opinion to discuss problems and questions, obtain information and offer inputs on your rights as a research subject, you may contact the NHG Domain Specific Review Board Secretariat at 6471-3266. You can also find more information about participating in clinical research, the NHG Domain Specific Review Board and its review processes at www.research.nhg.com.sg.

If you have any complaints or feedback about this research study, you may contact the Principal Investigator or the NHG Domain Specific Review Board Secretariat.

At the end of the survey, you will be invited to provide your name and preferred contact information or that of another member of your organization/department/program through a separate online link if you/your colleague wish to participate in a follow up semi-structured interview that aims to further explore the personal experiences and opinions.

Section A

1. Please tell us the name of your organization and department/programme name:

2. Please indicate the classification of your organization (Please select 1):

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Restructured Hospital | ☐ Social Service Agency |
| ☐ Polyclinic / General Practitioner | ☐ Social enterprise |
| ☐ Community Hospital | ☐ Self-start up groups |
| ☐ Private practice | ☐ Schools |

3. Please indicate the age profiles that your department/programme primarily serve (please tick all applies):

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ☐ Below 17 years old | ☐ 18 – 60 years old | ☐ Above 60 years old |
| ☐ All age group | | |

4. Please indicate the sector/department that your organisation/programme serves (Please select 1):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Medical care | ☐ Mental Health / Dementia |
| ☐ Eldercare | ☐ Social and Family |
| ☐ Disability / Special Needs | ☐ Education |
| ☐ Palliative | |

5. Please describe the services that you provide (please tick all applies):

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Acute | ☐ Home-based medical |
| ☐ Centre-based intervention | ☐ Home nursing |
| ☐ Centre-based activities | ☐ Home personal care |
| ☐ Residential care (group home, nursing home) | ☐ Community-based mobile Support and Intervention |
| ☐ Community case management | ☐ Community nursing |
| ☐ Others: _____ | |

6. Did you offer teleconsult/remote services **before** the pandemic? Y/N

If Yes, pls check any of the following that were used:

☐	Phone (calls, texts)
☐	Chat (WhatsApp, Telegram etc)
☐	Videoconferencing
☐	Email
☐	Others, pls specify

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7. Which of the following did you use teleconsult/remote services for **before** the pandemic?

	Provide consultation to referrers/other providers
	Require supervision/consultation from other providers
	Assessing clients already under your care
	Assessing new clients
	Managing crises/emergencies
	Psychotherapy
	Psychosocial rehabilitation

8. Did you offer teleconsult/remote services **during** the pandemic? Y/N

If Yes, pls check any of the following that were used:

	Phone (calls, texts)
	Chat (WhatsApp, Telegram etc)
	Videoconferencing
	Email
	Others, pls specify

9. Will you continue to offer teleconsult/remote services **after** the pandemic? Y/N

Section B

10. Of the clients you have seen from 7 February 2020 (start of DORSCON Orange) until the time of receiving this survey:

How many have	Percentage (pls circle)
Needed to keep their regular face-to-face appointment (provider decision)	<25% / 25-50% / 51-75% / >75%
Called on their own to postpone	<25% / 25-50% / 51-75% / >75%
Offered Tele consult by your organisation and agreed	<25% / 25-50% / 51-75% / >75%
Offered Tele consult by your organization and declined	<25% / 25-50% / 51-75% / >75%
Offered postponement by your organisation and agreed	<25% / 25-50% / 51-75% / >75%
Offered postponement but requested to keep regular appointment	<25% / 25-50% / 51-75% / >75%
Requested urgent/earlier face-to-face appointment	<25% / 25-50% / 51-75% / >75%

11. Of those that your organization reached out to, how much of the following did you experience? (pls circle)

Successfully used Tele Consult services <25% / 25-50% / 51-75% / >75%

Not suitable for Tele Consult service because:	Percentage (pls circle)	Comments
Do not have IT devices eg no video/Zoom ability	10% / 20% / 30% / 40% / 50% or more	
No next of kin staying with them to help guide/troubleshoot in using the service	10% / 20% / 30% / 40% / 50% or more	
Unable to establish rapport or resolve issue	10% / 20% / 30% / 40% / 50% or more	
Surfacing of risk issue requiring conversion to face-to-face intervention	10% / 20% / 30% / 40% / 50% or more	

Others (please elaborate under Comments column)	10% / 20% / 30% / 40% / 50% or more	
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12. Please indicate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Circuit Breaker on your clients.

A. Impact on Crisis Situations

	Number	% change	Comments on possible reason/ triggers
Completed suicide			
Attempted suicide			
Deliberate self-harm			
Hospital admission for mental health reason			
Relapse/exacerbation of pre-existing mental illness			
Domestic Violence			

B. Impact on services required:

	Increase / Decrease / No change	% change	Possible reasons for change
New clients			
Required more frequent phone follow up			
Required specially arranged face-to-face intervention			
Actively sought help for crisis eg, calling hotline,			

Required further escalation/referrals for specific help			
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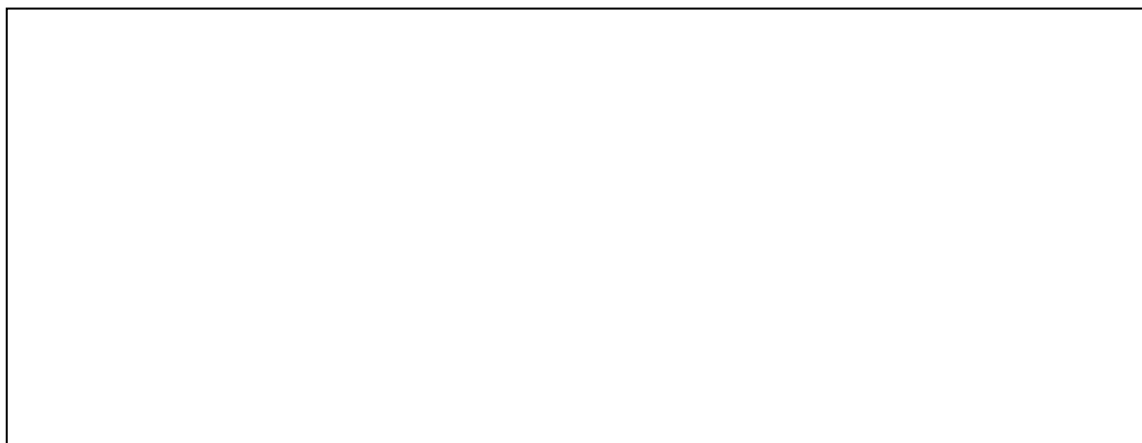
13. Please describe any other impact on patient/ client needs not listed in the options above, and where possible, give an estimated number of such cases or percentage (in relation to total patient/ client population):

14. Please describe the possible challenges faced by some of your clients who were not able to or were prevented from seeking help during this period:

15. Please list some factors that increased the vulnerability of your affected clients to experiencing poorer outcomes during this period:



16. Please describe the challenges you faced as a service provider:



If you would like to participate in a semi-structured interview exploring your actual experiences and opinions, please access the link provided below for more information. This link is separate from the survey you just completed.

(link and QR code to be inserted here, same link as used in Letter of Invitation Arm 2)

~ END OF SURVEY~

(Arm 2): Interview topics/questions

Healthcare service provider interview questions

1. How has the pandemic impacted your work as a mental health worker / professional?
 - a. Prompts
 - i. What kind of clients do you mostly work with?
 - ii. What has changed for you in your work as a result of the pandemic?
2. What psychological impact (if any) was there of the pandemic and the circuit breaker on your clients?
 - a. Prompts
 - i. new onset of symptoms/relapse etc.
 - ii. greater/lower intensity/frequency of symptoms/relapses, etc.
3. What COVID-19 measures do you think have caused the most impact on your client?
 - a. Why?
4. Who are those in most need or at most risk during these times?
 - a. Prompts
 - i. Marginalized groups, etc.
 - b. Why?
5. What made your affected clients vulnerable/overwhelmed?
6. What made your clients resilient?
 - a. What has helped them?
7. What difficulties/challenges have you faced/ are you facing in providing mental health services during this extraordinary pandemic and how are you dealing with them?
8. What did you find helpful for you to reach out to your clients effectively?
9. What else could have been done to prevent or minimize psychological impact from happening?
 - a. What ideas do you have to prevent this impact in future?
10. What has the pandemic taught you about what is important and meaningful in your work as mental health provider?

Healthcare service users (i.e. clients) interview questions

1. What was the impact (if any) of the pandemic and the circuit breaker on your physical and emotional health?
 - a. Prompts
 - i. How about your emotions/feelings (if emotional health not discussed)?
 - ii. greater/lower intensity/frequency of symptoms/relapses, etc.
2. What COVID-19 measures do you think have caused the most impact for you?
 - a. Why?
3. Looking back in the last few months, what made you feel less able to cope / that you needed more help? When have you felt overwhelmed during this time?
4. Over these few months, what made you feel stronger than before? When have you felt stronger or resilient during this time?
 - a. What has helped you?
5. Delivery services had been reconfigured to minimize risk for all. How was your experience with accessing mental health services during this period?
 - a. What was difficult or challenging for you in terms of accessing these services?
 - b. What has helped you in accessing these services
6. What ideas do you have to improve provision of the mental health services during pandemic?
7. What else can be done to support people and communities during these difficult times?
8. Are there any silver linings related to this experience for you? What has the pandemic taught you about what is important and meaningful in your life?