

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on physical and mental health of Asians: A study of seven middle-income countries in Asia

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Abstract

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted the economy, livelihood, and physical and mental well-being of people worldwide. This study aimed to compare the mental health status during the pandemic in the general population of seven middle income countries (MICs) in Asia (China, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam). All the countries used the Impact of Event Scale–Revised (IES-R) and Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) to measure mental health. There were 4479 Asians completed the questionnaire with demographic characteristics, physical symptoms and health service utilization, contact history, knowledge and concern, precautionary measure, and rated their mental health with the IES-R and DASS-21. Descriptive statistics, One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and linear regression were used to identify protective and risk factors associated with mental health parameters. There were significant differences in IES-R and DASS-21 scores between 7 MICs ($p < 0.05$). Thailand had all the highest scores of IES-R, DASS-21 stress, anxiety, and depression scores whereas Vietnam had all the lowest scores. The risk factors for adverse mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic include age < 30 years, high education background, single and separated status,