

COVID-19, MEDIA DEPENDENCY AND FEAR OF DEATH: ANALYSIS OF PRE, DURING AND POST INFECTION AMONG AFFECTED PEOPLE

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Summary:

Current research study aimed to know about media effects on individuals perception about death due to Covid-19 before, during and post disease among the people who suffered due to this disease. Media is main source of information and people depend upon media to know about any new issue. Study was interview based and ten individuals recovered from Covid-19 were interviewed. Interview was consisted on three parts i.e. before, during and after recover from Covid-19. Furthermore, researcher designed rating scale consisted on 0-6 numbers where 0 represented no fear of death due to media coverage about Covid-19 and 6 represented extremely high fear of death due to media coverage. The results found before infection media dependency was high and fear of death due to media information was moderate, while during isolation after being infected the fear of death was high and media dependency was moderate, whereas after recovery, both fear of death and media dependency found very low among individuals who suffered from Covid-19.

Keywords: Covid-19, Fear of Death, Media Dependency.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, a new virus appeared in the history of the world named Corona in the city of China Wuhan (Wang et al. 2020, Ahmed et al. 2020, Shuja et al. 2020). This virus caused disease named Covid-19 transmittable through touching even through air (WHO, 2020). Fatality rate of Covid-19 found 2.3% greater than that of influenza (Yang et al. 2020, Boury 2020). Up to 9th of May 2020, more than 4 million active cases with 0.27 million deaths were reported (WHO, 2020).

This disease has not become major issue for the China but also all the states of the universe (Phelan et al., 2020). Covid outbreak had constituted public health emergency of international concern (Mahase 2020). Findings of epidemiologic research revealed that Covid-19 outbreak started transmission to animal-to-human sustained human-to-human onward (Del Rio & Malani 2020, Chan et al. 2020). It is believed that interpersonal transmission occurs via respiratory droplets and through contact (The Chinese Preventive Medicine Association 2020).

MEDIA DEPENDENCY & EFFECTS

Media is key source of information about any issue (Shabir et al., 2015c; Shabir et al., 2015d). Hence majority of individuals depends on media to get information.

In this technological era, media has expended its roots and is accessible through various types of tools to get updated (Safdar et al. 2016). A bulk literature is available about the media effects (Safdar et al. 2018). Where media inform people, at the same media employs some effects on public. These effects may be long term or short term (Gerbner et al., 1979; Boyd et al. 1987, Condry 1989, Dominick 1990).

Due to media frequently coverage on Covid-19 created panic condition among masses. Current research study conducted to explore people perception about media coverage about Covid-19 and fear of death due to Covid-19 among them.

METHODOLOGY

Current research study deals with media dependency about Covid-19 information and fear of death. Media is important source of information (Shabir et al. 2015a, Shabir et al. 2015b) especially when new disease discovered in the world. Individuals seek information from media on any issue of concern (Safdar et al. 2018) Keeping in view the current scenario of Covid-19 and media coverage about this issue is more important for the public to be aware about the condition of the world.

To know about the media coverage about Covid-19 and individual's perception about death due to infection

of disease before, during and after recovered condition of Covid-19 patients. Researcher approaches ten recovered patients from Covid-19 quarantined in government civil hospital Bahawalpur, District Headquarter Hospital Lodhran and Nishtar Medical College University Multan Pakistan. Researcher adopted detailed interview methodology to know about the views of Covid-19 recovered patients as well as researcher prepared a rating scale consisting 0 to 6 rating to measure rating about media dependency and fear of death from Covid-19. 0 rating indicate no fear of death while 6 indicate extreme fear of death due to Covid-19.

Respondents agreed to give interview on the condition that their name should be kept unanimous. However from selected ten individuals, three belongs to Bahawalpur, three from Lodhran and four from Multan. While two from them were aged above fifty years old, four were between forty to fifty years, three were between thirty to forty years and one was twenty two years old.

Table 1: Respondents Detail

Sr.	Name	Age	City	Work
1	A	56	Multan	Government job
2	B	59	Lodhran	Landlord
3	C	43	Bahawalpur	Shopkeeper
4	D	40	Multan	Doctor
5	E	41	Lodhran	Landlord
6	F	47	Multan	Doctor
7	G	30	Multan	Businessman
8	H	33	Bahawalpur	Shopkeeper
9	I	36	Bahawalpur	Daily wages
10	J	22	Lodhran	Student

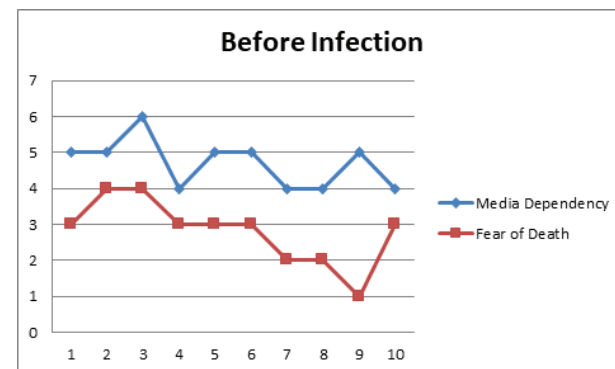
ANALYSIS

Before Infection

During interview, all the respondents agreed that they got information about Covid-19 from media especially from television. One said “I not took serious the news about Covid-19 in the start when I got news about China but when media showed that Covid cases are being increased in Pakistan and government is taking measures about the disease then after that I took this news serious. When government announced locked-down in the country and news coverage showed continuously increase in Covid patients then my tension increased. Regularly news

about deaths started imagination in my mind that I too may be victim and can die” Other said, “I got fed-up and mentally tortured when heard continuously news about Covid-19. It was time when I feel covid-19 everywhere even around me”. Other said “in the start, I thought that Covid infection mean defiantly death”. Other one said “before infection when I watched TV, I found Covid-19 news on every channel. It was teasing for me because frequently increase in Covid cases and increase rate of deaths created fear of death in me”. One said “I usually not interested in news especially such kind of news that create restless but I heard about Covid everywhere”. In this way the overall interview discussion and rating scale indicated that before get infected, individuals media dependency was high while fear of death was moderate.

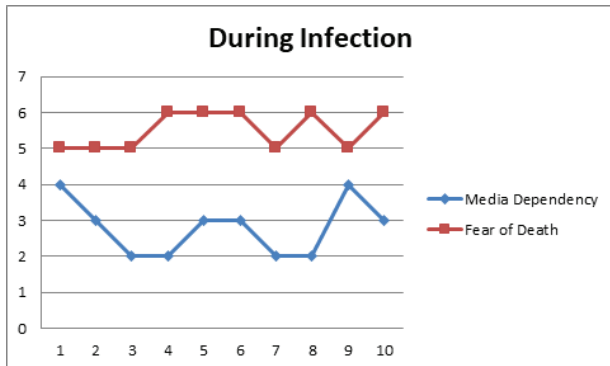
Figure 1: Individuals perception about media dependency and fear of death before infection



During Infection

About question during infection from Covid-19 and days spend in isolation in quarantine centers, researcher found increase in fear among infected people. Majority of respondents said they were high fear of death during isolation days while two were hoped that they will recover. They were feared from media news and tried to get rid from bad news about Covid-19 but they were interested too to get information about outer world condition to get hope for recovery, while the fear of death was deep rooted in their mind that among causalities they may be one of them. One said “I thought it will be surprise if I got alive”. Other said “I started thinking about my past sins that prayed forgiveness from God”. Other one said “I started weeping bitterly that I will be buried without funeral prayer”. While selection of numbers in rating scale, almost all the individuals were much afraid of death and dependency on media about Covid condition was moderate during quarantine days.

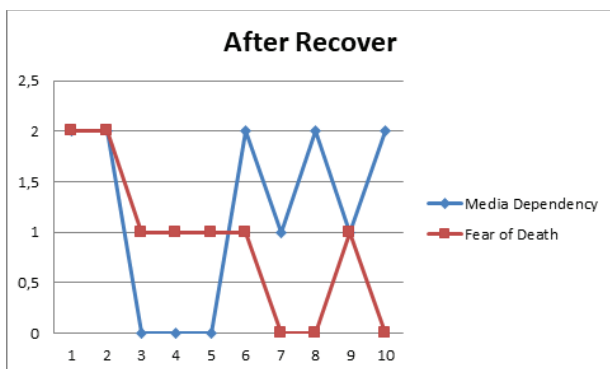
Figure 2: Individuals perception about media dependency and fear of death during infection



After Recover

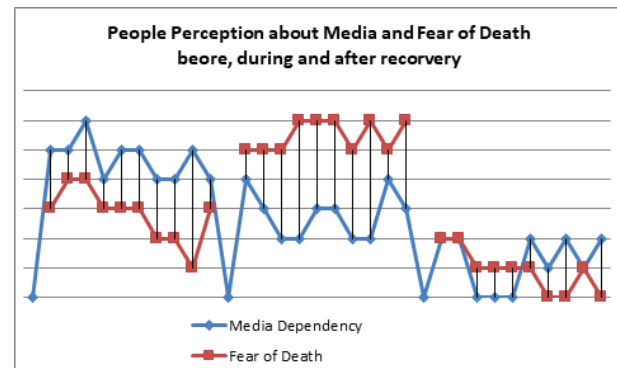
While questioning about after recover from Covid-19, the response of respondents were opposite. One said “I thank God that he gave me another life”. One said “isolation days make me close to God”. Other one said “A new hope awake”. Almost all the respondents agreed that it was just exam from God which they passed by patience and hope. They said now they don’t depend on media so much as media sensationalize issues and increase fear among people. Media is necessary for information but it depends on issue being broadcast. Covid-19 is long term issue and totally dependency on media may create psychological issues. Such long term issues make individuals strong by experience not by media advisory. They advised that for information media may be important but solution of problem vary practical condition of life. Rating scale showed low media dependency and low fear of death among people recovered from Covid-19.

Figure 3: Individuals perception about media dependency and fear of death after recover



Overall findings of research showed that pre infection, media dependency found high and fear of death found moderate, while after being infected fear of death increased and dependency on media moderate and after recovery, both media need and fear of death decreased among the individuals who suffered from Covid-19.

Figure 4: Individuals perception about media dependency and fear of death after recover



CONCLUSION

The study concluded that media has not everlasting effects on individuals on any issue. It is reality that media is important for information seeking but individuals beliefs deeply rooted in themselves and practical experience have more worth than media. Media sensationalism may create restless among people perception but practically experience of public defy media perception regarding any issue.

IMPLICATIONS

Media is important source of information and deep rooted in people’s perception. But sensationalism causes harm in the society. There is need to adopt development journalism to broadcast tackling and solution of any issue rather than panic broadcasting. Masses point of view, media is just source of information, personal experience has more worth than media dependency.

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