



The psychological effect of covid19 pandemic on neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder patients and their attitude change after a year of the pandemic in Isfahan, Iran

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Background: Coronavirus 2019 (COVID19) is a new coronavirus which created a pandemic recently. NMOSD patients are more affected by psychological effects of pandemic such as anxiety because they may be worried about being infected (due to the nature of disease and treatment by immunosuppressants) and they concern about their treatment protocol and disease relapses during the pandemic. The aim of study was to evaluate the anxiety due to COVID19 infection, 3 and 12 months after beginning of epidemic in Iran.

Methods: The study was done in patients of NMOSD Clinic of Isfahan Kashani hospital. We asked individuals if they were anxious or afraid of the pandemic subjectively. To investigate the objective level of anxiety, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS-A) questionnaire was filled. We asked them about respecting general cautions and sanitary protocols to prevent COVID19 infection.

Results: Study included 120 patients (96 female) with mean age of 36.37 ± 9.69 and mean disease duration of 8.49 ± 5.35 years. 96 cases (80%) experienced anxiety during the first 3 months of pandemic. The point is that their level of anxiety decreased significantly with the prolongation of pandemic and just 66 patients (55%) showed anxiety subjectively on the second survey. Based on HADS-A score, 92 patients (76.66%) were anxious on the third month while after one year of epidemic 70 cases (58.33%) showed anxiety. **Conclusion:** Respecting preventive measures increased in the same period. So along with the COVID19 pandemic prolongation, the level of anxiety had decreased gradually while the level of alertness and attention was almost high. It should be considered that this awareness must be preserved till the end of epidemic.