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Commentary article

The Role of Useful Information Obtained from Understanding the Lived Experiences of Patients in Pandemics: A Commentary

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Abstract

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During the outbreak of a new epidemic, the scarcity of reliable information and understanding often drives organizations and individuals to actively seek out knowledge to recognize better and respond to the situation. As time passes, numerous studies emerge focusing on the experiences and insights gained from the epidemic. Over time, these diseases reveal many similarities in their effects on global health and society. This commentary aims to explain the importance of patients' lived experiences during the pandemic.

Understanding the lived experiences of patients during pandemics is critical for healthcare providers, policymakers, and the general public to help address the unique challenges of patients (especially vulnerable populations) and design interventions and support systems for them.

Useful information derived from understanding patients' lived experiences plays an essential role during epidemics. By using this information, communities and healthcare systems can be more responsive, fair, and flexible in the face of future health crises and meet the needs of most patients.

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Introduction and importance

Lived experience represents experiences, choices, and knowledge, and the individual's understanding of these experiences and choices, the purpose of which is to determine the understandable meaning of such experiences after passing or living

that experience (1-3). During a new epidemic, the scarcity of adequate information and the limited comprehension of the phenomenon compel organizations and individuals to pursue knowledge and insights for improved recognition and response



actively. Consequently, over time, a significant body of research has emerged focused on the lived experiences related to this issue (4). An epidemic or pandemic is a state of spread of a disease, often viral, during which the disease spreads rapidly and widely worldwide and causes widespread illness or death among humans (5). This commentary aims to explain the importance of patients' lived experiences during the pandemic.

Similarities and challenges of pandemics

Over time, epidemic diseases (such as The Plague, Types of Influenza, AIDS, Ebola, SARS, MERS, and COVID-19) have many similarities with each other in terms of their impact on global health and society, such as:

Global reach: Pandemics have shown the ability to cross international borders and affect multiple countries simultaneously. This widespread distribution leads to social disturbances, economic losses, and public problems.

Public health responses: Pandemics have prompted significant public health responses aimed at controlling the spread of disease. These responses include quarantine, social distancing, mandatory masks, and vaccination campaigns.

Economic impact: Pandemics have profound economic consequences and affect industries globally. Businesses may close temporarily or permanently, resulting in job losses and financial instability for individuals and communities.

Fear and apprehension: They inspire fear and suspicion among people worldwide due to their potential to cause widespread disease and death. The uncertainty surrounding these diseases exacerbates public anxiety.

Scientific research and development: Each pandemic has stimulated significant scientific research and development to understand the virus, develop treatments, and develop vaccines. This research is critical to managing the pandemic and preparing for future outbreaks.

Health care system pressure: Pandemics put a lot of pressure on healthcare systems, requiring the allocation of resources and personnel to manage the increase in patients seeking medical care, which

can lead to shortages of medical facilities and equipment.

Long-term effects: In addition to the need for immediate treatment response, epidemics can have long-term effects on mental health, education, and social structures (6, 7).

These similarities and common challenges during pandemics underscore the importance of preparedness, planning, and response strategies in mitigating their impact.

The importance of patients' lived experiences

Understanding the lived experiences of patients during pandemics is critical for healthcare providers, policymakers, and the general public to help address the unique challenges of patients (especially vulnerable populations) and design interventions and support systems for them.

The role of helpful information in this context covers several key areas:

Increasing access to health care: Patients' lived experiences highlight the challenges facing access to health care, specifically during emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This awareness is critical for policymakers and healthcare providers to address these barriers and ensure equitable access to care and resources.

Improving community participation: Involving patients in research and decision-making processes can increase voluntary donations and advocacy efforts, reduce the pandemic's effects on vulnerable populations, and increase the effectiveness of health care.

Expertise in their own experiences: Patients are experts in their own experiences, especially when living with the long-term consequences of diseases like COVID-19. Their first-hand accounts provide valuable insights into the nuances of their daily lives and challenge and expand researchers' preconceived notions about the effects of these diseases (8).

Learning from longitudinal studies: Longitudinal studies that follow patients over time provide valuable lessons in managing epidemics. They reveal patterns in disease progression, treatment efficacy, and long-term effects of

infections that guide clinical practices and public health strategies.

Empathy and understanding: Gaining insight into patients' lived experiences, including their fears, anxieties, and coping mechanisms, fosters empathy among individuals and healthcare professionals. This empathy is essential for providing compassionate care and support during challenging times.

Promoting resilience: Recognizing adaptive strategies employed by patients, such as acceptance, following protocols, and seeking spiritual support, can encourage resilience approaches in health care and community support systems.

Improving access to communication and information: Patients and healthcare workers face challenges accessing reliable and timely information, showing the importance of clear communication channels and resources. Increased access to accurate information can reduce confusion and anxiety and facilitate better decision-making and adherence to public health measures.

Conclusion

In summary, helpful information derived from understanding patients' lived experiences plays an essential role during epidemics. It helps to increase access to health care, facilitate community

participation, gain professional experiences, learn from longitudinal studies, foster empathy, promote resilience, and improve access to communication and information. Using this information, communities and healthcare systems can be more responsive, fair, and flexible in the face of future health crises and meet the needs of most patients (8, 9).

Declaration

Acknowledgment

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Conflicts of Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Ethical Statement

This article is the result of independent research, and the authors have observed all ethical issues at all stages of research and publication.

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Authors' contributions

All authors participated in all phases of this study.

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