

Introduction: The prison environment and health of people who experience incarceration increase the risks of contracting COVID-19. Aside from the risks of infection and transmission, one should also examine the impact on their mental health state and identify their needs, since prison inmates experience already disadvantages and inequalities to a large extent.

Objectives: The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of inmates with the pandemic and the restrictions, their insights into the pandemic and the impact of social distancing in prison on their emotional status and management.

Methods: We used in-depth interviews with 5 inmates and 6 prison employees of a state prison in Athens, to produce an analysis of the challenges that the inmates faced during the pandemic. The study took part from February till June 2022. Each participant was asked semi-structured questions and a thematic content analysis was performed.

Results: The results of the interviews revealed several key themes, that have emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges that the participants faced were in relation to communication, feelings of heightened isolation and detachment from family, friends, and the normal rhythms of life in and out of prison. Furthermore, our study has shown that COVID-19 pandemic resulted in higher levels of anxiety, lack of positive stimuli, of work and education, of day-to-day interaction, and of information.

Conclusions: This study highlights the dramatic reduction in opportunities for prisoners to rehabilitate themselves and build productive and meaningful lives. A decline in the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of the prisoners as well as resignation with their situation can be expected due to the lack in purpose. There is a need to improve the information and communication and support them with continuous psychological care, especially when prison services are confronted with additional health or other crises.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

EPP0163

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures on people with psychiatric disorders in a small town in Greece

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Introduction: A pandemic can have significant effects on people's emotional wellbeing. Infection control measures such as social distancing can lead people to feel isolated and to increased feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, and sadness. Recent research showed a worrying increase in depression and anxiety disorders, general distress, and sleep disorders. People who already suffer from a mental illness may be more vulnerable to stress caused by the pandemic and may experience a deterioration of already preexisting symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Objectives: The purpose of the present study was to assess the pandemic's psychological impact on people with preexisting mental illness, to investigate their COVID-19-related fear, anxiety, and depression in association with various variables and to explore their behavioral responses regarding the measures against the pandemic.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted from March to May 2022 in the outpatient mental health clinic of a provincial hospital in Greece. Participants were patients, who were not fully disorganized and have been diagnosed with a mental illness before the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the 50 adult patients, 11 lived in assisted living facilities. The study included sociodemographic questions, questions about fear of COVID-19, negative feelings, safety measures and behaviors, disease progression, and compliance with their therapists. DASS-21 scale was used to measure the 3 subscales of emotional states.

Results: Sadness was reported as the most unpleasant emotion of the lockdown, following by hopelessness and denial. Several participants (36%) reported high levels of COVID-19-related fear, mainly patients living in the community and not in assisted facilities (40.1% vs 18.2%) and males compared to females (42.1% vs 32.3%). The majority (70%) declared high compliance with the therapy. A moderate to severe deterioration in disease progression during the pandemic was observed in 28%, mainly in females compared to males (38.7% vs 10.6%). Based on DASS-21 the mean scores ranged from moderate to severe symptoms in depression (16.2/42), anxiety (14.3/42), and stress (18.4/42) without a statistically significant correlation with age, gender, and living situation. However, 34%, 22% and 56% screened positive for severe and extreme severe depression, anxiety, and stress, respectively.

Conclusions: The study revealed a substantial proportion of patients with mental disorders to experience unpleasant emotions and increased levels of psychological distress and highlights the need for supportive mental health services to address the increased mental health symptoms in people with pre-existing mental illnesses during a pandemic.

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EPP0164

Post-traumatic stress disorder and post COVID 19 syndrome

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Introduction: Patients hospitalized in the case of COVID19 have had to face a complex and potentially very stressful situation. In this context a screening program for psychological distress in patients with COVID19 is necessary.

Objectives: To screen for post-traumatic stress disorder post COVID19 and to identify the epidemiological and clinical factors correlated with this disorder in post COVID19 patients.