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TITLE: The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on child development: systematic review

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in December 2019 led to the rapid implementation of global social distancing measures, including school closures. These measures have had significant implications for physical activity and sleep patterns, both of which have a profound impact on brain plasticity. To gain insights into these effects, a comprehensive search was conducted on databases such as PubMed, Europe PMC, Google Scholar, and Science Direct between July 1st, 2022, and September 20th, 2022. The search focused on articles in English that examined the impact of COVID-19 on children, while excluding articles that were inaccessible or not available online. After careful analysis of 2371 records and the application of exclusion criteria, a total of 7 studies were included in this review. The results of these studies were compiled and examined. According to the MPIDR COVerAGE database, out of the reported 4.4 million COVID-19 deaths, only 0.4% occurred in children and adolescents under 20 years old. Furthermore, expectant mothers displayed reluctance to attend clinics and seek treatment due to fears of viral exposure, potentially affecting early structures of the developing limbic system. These factors and the resulting neuropsychiatric disorders in children may be interconnected. The prolonged lockdowns also had economic ramifications, leading to food shortages and increased prices, thereby impacting children's access to necessary nutrients. Prior to being confined at home, toddlers had more opportunities for complex motor development and the acquisition of communication skills. Understanding the effects of lockdowns on children's motor development during epidemics is crucial for policymakers to develop strategies that support children in coping with adversities stemming from epidemics/pandemics and ensuring their healthy development.

BIOGRAPHY

Ravneet Kaur is in final year MBBS at the age of 21 years from Lady Hardinge Medical College.

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