

Mental Health Management of Chronic Prostatitis Patients at Urological Outpatients: Challenge from COVID-19 Pandemic

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Citation: Lao Y, Ma X, Li R, Li X, Guan Y (2021) Mental Health Management of Chronic Prostatitis Patients at Urological Outpatients: Challenge from COVID-19 Pandemic. J SARS-CoV-2 COVID 2:006.

Volume 2	Issue 1
Pages	27-28
Received	📅 March 02, 2021
Accepted	📅 April 26, 2021
Published	📅 April 28, 2021

Chronic prostatitis is a common urological condition while 35-50% of men reported symptoms suggesting prostatitis during their lifetime [1]. And chronic prostatitis presents extensive clinical manifestations including four main domains: Urogenital pain, lower urinary tract symptoms, psychological issues and sexual dysfunction while some patients are asymptomatic [1]. As the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is still rampant, a "tsunami of psychiatric illness" was predicted as its "collateral damage" [2] because mental disorders were observed in many populations such as COVID-19 patients [3], quarantined students [4], and health care workers [5] etc. Thus, we are concerned about the psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic on chronic prostatitis patients.

Mechanism of psychological issues in chronic prostatitis patients might be perplexing. 1.76-fold higher risk of chronic prostatitis was found in depression cohort when relative to the non-depression cohort [6], while Hu, et al. also found elevated risk of anxiety and depression in chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome (CP/CPPS) patients in turn [7]. Overlapped etiology such as disordered cytokines level [8,9] and activation of microglial cell [7,9] might underlie the inner association between mental disorders and chronic prostatitis. Asboard psychiatric symptoms observed in the population which could attributed to COVID-19 related stress [10], it's reasonable to speculate a secondary higher risk of chronic prostatitis since activation of certain etiology pathways between mental disorders and chronic prostatitis due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, prominent delayed disease management due to COVID-19-related constraints is also unignorable. Although Shipe, et al. found a similar or improved survival in patients receiving delayed surgical biopsy of lung nodules suspicious for cancer in hospitals when the risk of perioperative COVID-19 infection increases above 13% [11], significantly higher levels of cancer worry, anxiety, and depression in ovarian cancer patients under delayed cancer care was also observed [12], indicating non-negligible risk of mental disorders in chronic prostatitis patients undergoing delayed management.

Therefore, we hypothesized a burst of chronic prostatitis after the pandemic, and such patients might show severer psychological issues than usual interfering with treatment outcomes and increases treatment costs. Difficulty to screen chronic prostatitis patients at the outpatient is predicted since possibly increasing distribution of psychological issues among all clinical manifestation domains. Thus, high misdiagnosis and improper referral rate at the urology outpatient are speculated which requires multi-disciplinary perspective to address such challenge and appropriate intervention during and after the pandemic.

Funding Sources

The article has no funding source.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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