



Correspondence

The importance of psychological supports for COVID-19 patients and families

Dear Editor,

We are very grateful and strongly appreciate Wang et al. for identifying the importance of providing psychological assessment and intervention for COVID-19 patients in the article “Holistic care for patients with severe coronavirus disease 2019: An expert consensus” published in the *International Journal of Nursing Sciences* [1]. As we know, COVID-19 has impacted the psychological and mental health of the patients and their families or relatives. A study from Switzerland revealed that 19.1% of 126 COVID-19 patients had psychological distress and 8.7% had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder 30 days after a hospital discharge. Moreover, the study also revealed that the three factors independently associated with psychological distress in COVID-19 patients are resilience, high level of perceived stress, and low frequency of contact with relatives [2]. A study from Italy also showed that from 402 adults surviving COVID-19, 28% suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, 31% suffered from depression, and 42% suffered from anxiety 30 days after a hospital discharge [3]. Even at 6 months after COVID-19 infection, 23% of 1,617 patients in Wuhan, China, reported the symptoms of anxiety and depression [4]. These findings emphasize the need to provide psychological supports and intervention during hospitalization and even after a hospital discharge for patients. As front-line health workers, nurses need to regularly assess the patients’ psychological condition and emotional response to the COVID-19. Early identification of psychological distress and consult with mental health professionals is important as the secondary level of prevention [1].

Not only patients, Beck et al. found that among 153 families or relatives of COVID-19 patients, 22.9% showed symptoms of psychological distress and 2% showed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder [2]. The preliminary findings of the new services for neurological patients and their families of the Department of Neuropsychology at the National Hospital in London revealed that the family described anxiety about the impact of COVID-19 on the patients’ care, describing reduced or delayed services. Further, families also reported feeling excluded from the patients’ care and bereft of the usual support provided by hospital staff. Therefore, providing detailed information and keeping family liaisons for both patients and families is necessary for providing psychological support [5]. In addition, based on the experts’ consensus, Wang et al. also state that “help to communicate information to external relatives and provide patients with continuous information support” is part of psychological nursing that is

required in providing holistic nursing care [1].

Psychological supports from mental health professionals and nurses for patients and their families need to be done starting from preparation for the COVID-19 test, notification of test results, the process of hospitalization or self-isolation, until a hospital discharge. In these times, providing correct scientific knowledge, maintaining continuous communication between patient and family, and providing psychological first aid in the form of emotional support in a culturally appropriate manner is vitally important [6].

Declaration of competing interest

The authors have declared no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Wang H, Zeng T, Wu X, Sun H. Holistic care for patients with severe coronavirus disease 2019: an expert consensus. *Int J Nurs Sci* 2020;7:128–34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2020.03.010>.
- [2] Beck K, Vincent A, Becker C, Keller A, Cam H, Schaefer R, et al. Prevalence and factors associated with psychological burden in COVID-19 patients and their relatives: a prospective observational cohort study. *PLoS One* 2021;16(5): e0250590. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0250590>.
- [3] Mazza MG, De Lorenzo R, Conte C, Poletti S, Vai B, Bollettini I, et al. Anxiety and depression in COVID-19 survivors: role of inflammatory and clinical predictors. *Brain Behav Immun* 2020;89:594–600. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2020.07.037>.
- [4] Huang CL, Huang LX, Wang YM, Li X, Ren LL, Gu XY, et al. 6-month consequences of COVID-19 in patients discharged from hospital: a cohort study. *Lancet* 2021;397(10270):220–32. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)32656-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32656-8).
- [5] Foley JA, Chan E, van Harskamp N, Cipolotti L. Comfort always: the importance of providing psychological support to neurology staff, patients, and families during COVID-19. *Front Psychol* 2020;11:573296. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.573296>.
- [6] Indian Council of Medical Research. Guidance document for psychosocial counselling for COVID-19 positive patients and their family members. New Delhi: Indian Council of Medical Research; 2021.

Yasinta Betan*

Nursing Department, Faculty of Health, Citra Bangsa University,
Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia

Alexius Andiawati

Psychology Education, San Pedro University, Kupang, Nusa Tenggara
Timur, Indonesia

E-mail address: alexandiawati@gmail.com.

Erna Febriyanti

Nursing Department, Faculty of Health, Citra Bangsa University,
Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia

E-mail address: ernafebriyanti222@gmail.com.

Peer review under responsibility of Chinese Nursing Association.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2021.08.006>

2352-0132/© 2021 The authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of the Chinese Nursing Association. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Vinsensius Belawa Lemaking
Faculty of Health, Citra Bangsa University, Kupang, Nusa Tenggara
Timur, Indonesia
E-mail address: vinsenmaking@yahoo.com.

* Corresponding author. Nursing Department, Faculty of Health,
Citra Bangsa University, Jl. Manafe no. 17, Kayu Putih, Kupang City,
East Nusa Tenggara, 85111, Indonesia.
E-mail address: yasinta_betan@yahoo.com (Y. Betan).

14 August 2021
Available online 28 August 2021