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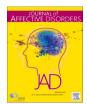
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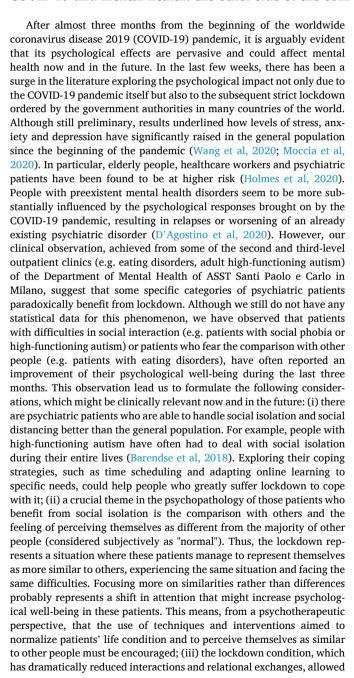
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COVID-19 and mental health: the other side of the coin





us to further highlight how the drive for achievement and competition/comparison with others are pervasive in our culture and deeply influenced our social interactions. These drives can be implicitly present in many situations related to the relationship with others, such as work activity. Although for some people they might represent a motivational factor, for others they represent a constant reference to incapacity and failure, which contributes to further fostering a state of suffering and psychological malaise. Social attention should therefore be diversified in order to produce drives connected also to the sense of common belonging and sharing; (iv) the lockdown condition, through messages addressed to common suffering and social responsibility, has enhanced the experience of feeling part of a community of individuals, supporting the perception of sharing, at the expense of the attention paid to individualism and personal achievement. Thus, we might hypothesize that, in these patients, the perception of belonging to a group, the feeling of sharing the same emotions/sensations/thoughts of others can promote their psychological well-being. From a psychotherapeutic angle, the use of techniques that enhance mentalization or metacognition might promote psychological well-being in these patients; (v) patients who paradoxically benefit from the lockdown condition might be at high risk of sudden worsening of their psychiatric symptoms during the period immediately after lockdown, when they are forced to come back to their pre-lockdown life condition (rebound effect). This risk should be carefully addressed by mental health services.

In conclusion, our clinical observation suggests that patients with difficulties in social interactions and who fear the comparison with others might benefit from a lockdown condition. However, future research studies are needed to confirm our impression.

Author statement

BD and FF designed and conceptualized the study; drafted the manuscript for intellectual content

VN drafted the manuscript for intellectual content AD and OG revised the manuscript for intellectual content

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Declaration of Competing Interest

Authors have no conflict of interests to declare.

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