

Situations like the coronavirus pandemic can quickly become a catalyst for social conflict due to misinformation, rumors and fake news, as we've seen in the past. Every day we continue to see more false information shared throughout communities, confusing citizens and leaving them unsure as to who can answer their questions.

The **Pakistan Coronavirus CivicActs Campaign (CCC)** captures rumors and perceptions among communities to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, humanitarian agencies and citizens. By providing the public with facts, these coronavirus bulletins aim to create a better understanding of needs regarding coronavirus and to debunk rumors before they can do more harm.

## Current Situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan

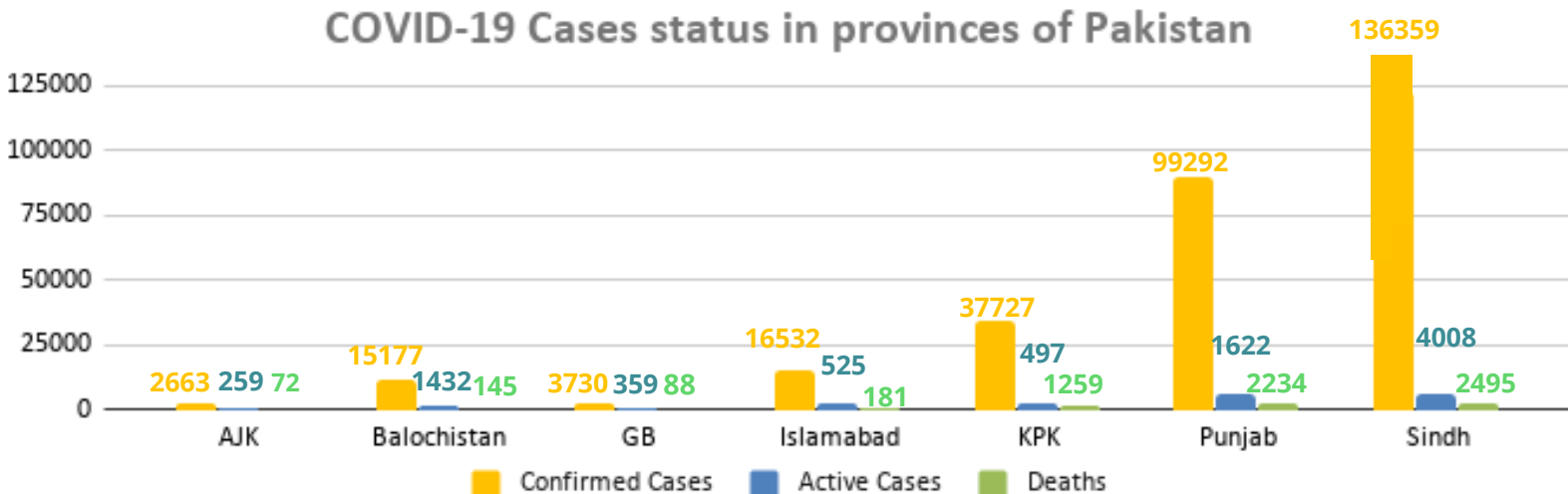
**Total Confirmed Cases**  
311,516

**Total Active Cases**  
8,702

**Total Deaths**  
6,474

**Total Recoveries**  
296,340

### COVID-19 Cases status in provinces of Pakistan



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regular updates  
through WhatsApp

1. Add our number **+27 60 080 6146** as a contact.
2. Send the word **"Pakistan"** as a message on WhatsApp.



# **The Impact of COVID-19 on Elderly Mental Health**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant psychosocial impact. Anxiety, panic, adjustment disorders, depression, chronic stress, and insomnia are the major offshoots. Aging comes with a myriad of psychological, social, and environmental vulnerabilities. Frailty in older adults comes with the risk of various infections and decreases all forms of immune response.

In addition, the elderly have multiple comorbidities and increased hospitalizations which increases the chance of being infected during a pandemic. Research has found that the progression of illness and risk of death is three times higher in the older age group. Furthermore, the rapid transmission of COVID-19, higher mortality rate, self-isolation, social-distancing and quarantine could exacerbate the risk of mental health problems among the elderly.

## **My Sister's Keeper**

“Since this virus came to Pakistan, the lockdowns and social distancing precautions imposed by the government have prevented people from visiting their relatives. Talking on phone or having video calls is only possible where the internet/network signals are stable, and many places are still lacking this facility. About two months into the COVID-19 outbreak, my older sister, who previously suffered from heart disease, became quite ill.

With hospitals overburdened by the flow of COVID-19 patients, she was denied the care she required. A few weeks later, my son gave me the news of her death. Given that she was my only sibling, this hit me hard. I asked my son and daughter-in-law to take me to her burial ceremony, which was to take place in my remote village. But they told me that I couldn't go as the lockdown was still in effect and only limited people were allowed in ceremonies as per state orders. I couldn't seem to understand the words coming from their mouths. They added that being old myself, I would contract COVID-19. I was not able to attend her ceremony and this left me in a depressed state. I can never forgive myself.”

(Punjab)

## **Elderly & Isolated**

“I haven't even stepped outside of my house in about six months. I have not been able to go for walks, to chat with my neighbors, or even to go to the mosque for prayers. My wife and I have been living with my son and his family, and ever since the pandemic began to spread, I have never seen a change in my family's behaviour.

Ever since we heard that COVID-19 affects the elderly more compared to the young and is more likely to result in death for those in my age group, my wife and I have been shifted to the first floor of the house. There is a door that partitions the access to the ground and first floor, which my son and daughter-in-law keep closed to prevent our grandchildren from coming upstairs. With no terrace on the floor, we feel enclosed within the same pale and opaque walls. At times this has left me to become depressed and aggressive, causing disputes with my wife.”

(ICT)



# **The Impact of COVID-19 on Elderly Mental Health**



## **Miles away from home**

“I fear for what will happen to me if something happens to my husband. After losing one child, when we were blessed with another, my husband and I left no stone unturned in ensuring our son received the best. Last year he graduated and without wasting any time, applied and went abroad for his Masters. We were happy that he was studying and working a job. His semester was about to end and he had planned on visiting us

this year. But before that could happen, COVID-19 took over.

With lockdowns and flights suspended, we were left apart and on our own. We have been in distress and unease ever since. I have had sleepless nights for a long time now just wondering what would happen to us? If something does happen, how would our boy reach us? Being the only male at home, even in his early 70's, I get anxious when my husband has to leave home for groceries or to receive pension. This has mentally affected me into overeating which I didn't use to do before. I worry about the issues that one of us would have to face if we get infected. I am just a house-wife; I don't even know how to deal with a doctor. I wonder what would we do if something happens to our son, who is miles away, unreachable.”

(Sindh)

## **What steps can be taken to overcome this issue?**

Pakistan, being a collectivistic culture, depends on an extended joint filial and fraternal family system. This includes a predominant role for the elderly, especially grand-relatives, as well as group dining and joint sleep-overs, seeking social-cohesion and family support through multiple events led by older members of the family. A family's social and economic dependence on the elderly and the decision-making of the household through older adults are some of the main tenants in Pakistan's system.

There is a need to ensure that all older persons at risk of contracting COVID-19, especially those with underlying health conditions and those living alone, are identified and attended to as early as possible. Ensure continuity of adequate care services for older persons such as mental health services, palliative and geriatric care, including through support for unpaid caregivers in homes and communities, and for paid care workers who provide home-based care or care in institutional settings. Increase mobile services to ensure access to more isolated older persons or those with limited mobility to assess their needs and to provide support.

In the longer term, financial assistance may be extended to retired personnel and pensioners, perhaps by means of subsidies, favorable interest rates and incentives on pension schemes to provide peace of mind and a sense of financial security.

## Coronavirus symptoms Include:

- Fever
- Dry Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Tiredness

Contact your doctor or the coronavirus helpline at



**1166**



## Where can I get tested?

### Karachi

#### Aga Khan University Hospital

Stadium Road, Karachi

#### Civil Hospital

DOW University Campus  
Mission Road, Karachi

#### Dow Medical Hospital

Ojha Campus  
Suparco Road, Karachi

#### Indus Hospital

Opposite Darussalam Society, Korangi  
Crossing, Karachi

### Lahore

#### Punjab AIDS Lab

PACP Complex  
6 - Birdwood Road, Lahore

#### Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital

7A Block R-3 M.A. Johar Town, Lahore

### Islamabad

#### National Institute of Health

Park Road  
Chak Shahzad, Islamabad

### Rawalpindi

#### Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

Range Road  
CMH Complex, Rawalpindi

### Multan

#### Nishtar Hospital

Nishtar Road,  
Justice Hamid Colony, Multan

For more cities visit the

[COVID-19 Health Advisory Platform](#)

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