

Thank you for the review for our manuscript, “The Effect of Social Isolation due to the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Mental Health of Geriatric Patients in an Outpatient Clinic in Illinois: An Exploratory Pilot Study.” We have attended to the reviewers’ comments (detailed below and in the manuscript) and believe that the manuscript is further improved because of the additional revisions made. We hope that you find it suitable to be published.

- This study was an exploratory pilot project. The rule of 12 was followed, and 50 patients were randomly selected from the psychiatry clinic based on their age, previous history of mental health, and cognitive capacity to answer the questions. This selection was done by a psychiatrist and his residents. They were established patients in a geriatric psychiatry outpatient clinic, where the primary method of treatment is with the help of medication.
- The study was conducted in a small town in central Illinois for a period of three months at a geriatric outpatient clinic. The population in the area is less diverse with a total geriatric population of 2,850. Over a period of three months, we could gather the data from 50 geriatric patients wanting to participate. As this is a pilot study, we confined the sample size to 50 geriatric patients. Further study needs to be done with a bigger sample. This information has been clarified throughout the manuscript, including the Materials and Methods and Discussion sections.
- The questions were formulated based on the DSM-5 criteria and Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). In a study by Corapcioglu (2004) and Sawaya et al. (2016), the PHQ-9 has shown validity and reliability in content and internal consistency. Results showed that the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 are reliable screening tools for depression and anxiety. Based on the evidence, we used the PHQ-9 questionnaire under the guidance of a psychiatrist to formulate the study tools. The questionnaire also includes a comparative question if their condition worsened during pandemic than before.

References

(Corapcioglu A, Ozer GU. Adaptation of revised Brief PHQ (Brief-PHQ-r) for diagnosis of depression, panic disorder and somatoform disorder in primary healthcare settings. *Int J Psychiatry Clin Pract.* 2004;8(1):11-8. doi: 10.1080/13651500310004452. PMID: 24937578. Sawaya, H., Atoui, M., Hamadeh, A., Zeinoun, P., Nahas, Z., “Adaptation and initial validation of the Patient Health Questionnaire – 9 (PHQ-9) and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder – 7 Questionnaire (GAD-7) in an Arabic speaking Lebanese psychiatric outpatient sample”, *Psych. Res* 2003, (239), 245–252. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2016.03.030>).