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Dentistry

**STIGMATIZATION ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19**

Stigmatization, according to Cambridge dictionary, means the act of treating someone or something unfairly by publicly disapproving them.

COVID-19 has brought about many discriminatory acts across nations. Negative associations between certain people who have certain traits and a specific disease are being made. This may mean that a certain people are being discriminated, stereotyped, labeled and treated badly because of a perceived link with a disease.

Stereotype, in social psychology, is an over-generalized belief about a particular category of people. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group. Asian Americans advocates say that Donald Trump’s insistence on speaking of COVID-19 as “Chinese Virus” plays into centuries-old stereotypes of the community as perpetually foreign and unclean. It says that individuals of one ethnicity are responsible for spreading illness. Such ill treatment can negatively affect the bearers of the disease and those linked with them. The stigma may even be extended to those with similar ethnic background as well as anyone perceived to have been in contact with the virus.

Stigma can generate fear of being known to have the virus to avoid discrimination. This would prevent such people from seeking medical care thereby increasing the rate of spread of the virus. When talking about the virus, certain words, languages, tones or the manner in which we speak may have negative effects on individuals and increase stigmatizing attitudes. The backgrounds, race or ethnicity may be used to discriminate them.

The fear COIVD-19 arose has been used in the physical and verbal abuse against the Asian-Americans and other minorities. They are constantly being denied health care, accommodation and affection, making the most vulnerable in the last line of support. They have to be cared for and protected by the government and other individuals.

Corona virus is not a “Wuhan virus” or a “Chinese virus”. The disease should not be labeled with the Asian-American people.

Wejia Jiang, an Asian American, tweeted that a white House official referred to coronavirus as the “Kung-Flu” to her face. This situation and instance is no joke because the Asian Americans are being treated unjustly. An incident occurred where a middle school child in Los Angeles punched an Asian American in the head twenty times. He accused him of carrying the Corona Virus and he told him to go back to china. Several other violent situations have occurred centering on the Asian Americans. Discrimination, Ethnocentrism ad the likes should therefore be put to an end.

A man was not allowed to check into a hotel in a city in china because he was from Wuhan. He went into another hotel and without disclosing where was from, he was allowed to stay. When they later found out he was from Wuhan, the management threw him by five in the morning. He relayed his experience with pain. Many similar situations have happened all over the nation.

A more recent example is how the US president, Donald Trump, has been criticized and condemned. He referred to the recent global pandemic as Chinese virus, disrespecting science and World Health Organization. He was accused of using racist and xenophobic names to as blame for the outbreak on other countries. It can only reveal politicians’ irresponsibility and incompetence which will intensify virus fears. Trump says “it’s because it comes from china, that’s why” and “I want to be accurate”. Trump says it comes from China and his statement is not racist.

Materials have shown all ethnic groups and communities’ impacted, indicating that it doesn’t belong to a particular group of people. We should therefore watch what we say or post on social media. We should avoid hateful comments and be understanding. COVID-19 can infect anybody irrespective of ethnicity, gender or race. We should preach awareness and inform the minority on how to prevent spread of the virus.