



# **IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PEOPLE'S AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION TOWARDS HOME HEALTHCARE SERVICES**

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.52458/9788196869458.2023.nsp.eb.ch-20>

**Ch.Id:- IIHMR/NSP/EB/MWIIHHT/2023/Ch-20**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The World Health Organization formally recognized the coronavirus outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 31, 2020, and later declared it a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Most of the affected patients had a history of exposure to wildlife animals at Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market. Subsequent investigations identified the causative agent as a novel coronavirus, later identified as SARS-CoV-2.

As of June 20, 2021, the total cases worldwide are 179,147,193 with 11,567,574 being active cases and has taken a death toll of 3,879,320. Looking at the cases in India, the total cases stand at 29,934,361 with 709,668 being active and 388,164 being the death toll for the country [3]. With the continued spread of the same, India is currently battling a second wave. The public health response has been focused on 'flattening the curve', through the dual ideas of containment and preventive measures. The contagious nature of the virus has led to the interventions around isolation, maintaining social distancing, avoiding crowds and to say the least gave out the message of 'stay at home'. All this has certainly fuelled the rise of virtual health, use of medical equipment's at home, telemedicine, and home healthcare models in India [4].

The size of the global home healthcare market is forecasted to be USD 274.7 billion by the year 2025. As of 2020, the market is valued at USD 181.9 billion, and it is expected to experience a compound annual growth rate of 8.6 percent throughout the forecasted period [5]. Along with this the popularity around telehealth services and developing nations which are untapped present growth opportunities for various players in the home healthcare domain. The tentative growth being fuelled by rapid growth in the elderly population along with rise in chronic diseases, technological advancements of home care devices as well as growing want for cost-effective delivery. Nonetheless, limited insurance coverage, changing reimbursement policies in few countries, to patient safety being a concern the growth of this sector is also seeing some limiting factors.

Also skilled nursing services has taken up the largest share of home care services market in the year 2019 according to a report from markets and markets. Skilled nursing and medical care not only provide comfort for the patients at home but also is more comforting compared to residing at a hospital, nursing care homes or assisted living centres [5].

The home healthcare market globally has seen a good and established trend in the nations of North America and Europe regions. This can be attributed to the favourable regulations and policies here. Thereby the market being saturated now, market players are now shifting their focus towards emerging economies of Asia Pacific as the concept of home healthcare in counties like China and India is at the emerging phase. [5,6].

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

1. Does COVID-19 pandemic affected the general populations' knowledge and perception towards home healthcare?

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To examine the awareness and attitudes of the general population in India regarding home healthcare services.
2. To evaluate how the ongoing perception of the population regarding the utilization of healthcare services at home has been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research relied on primary data gathered through an online survey. Total 319 individuals were the part of the study, and the sampled population consisted of individuals aged 18 years and above, selected through convenience sampling. The data collection was executed through an online platform utilizing Google Forms, facilitating the creation of an electronic questionnaire. The distribution of the questionnaire occurred through various electronic channels. To uphold confidentiality, no personal information of the participants was included.

Participants were directed to the initial section of the electronic questionnaire only after providing consent to participate in the survey.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

The results indicated that a noteworthy proportion of the survey participants were informed about home healthcare services and possessed knowledge about the associated care. Seventy percent of the participants demonstrated awareness of homecare services. The majority of respondents expressed a preference for accessing services such as elderly care, physiotherapy, nursing, post-operative care, and doctor visits at home. Additionally, 94% of the respondents acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to heightened awareness of home healthcare services. Similarly, there has been a perceptible shift in perception and awareness post-pandemic, with 68% of the participants indicating an increased inclination toward availing home care in the future.

## **CONCLUSION**

The emerging home care market in India, catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic, has experienced notable growth. Despite a generally positive perception of the services, there exists an uneven distribution of awareness among the population. While the public's overall view of the services might be positive, there was a declining trend when considering the associated fees. Therefore, there was a need for increased awareness and marketing efforts for healthcare services and products to positively influence customer education standards in India.

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