



Help-Seeking Behavior and its Correlates among Individuals Bereaved due to COVID-19

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Introduction

Background

Bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic may lead to elevated mental health problems. Help-seeking behavior may be beneficial to the recovery of one's psychological function. Perceived usefulness of the help also play a significant role.

Research gaps

- Little study has focused on the help-seeking behavior among people who bereaved due to COVID-19.
- Little research had explored the factors associated with help-seeking behavior among people who bereaved due to COVID-19.

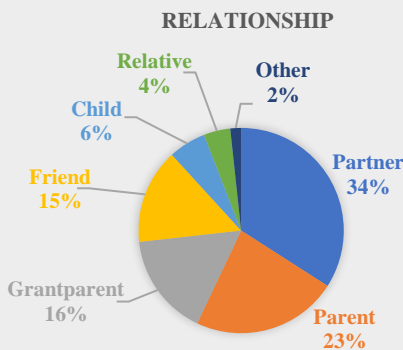
Objective

To investigate the help-seeking behavior, perceived usefulness of the help one had sought, and their associated among people who had lost a close one due to COVID-19.

Methodology

Participants

- 408 bereaved Chinese adults: 55% male; 32.87±9.41 years old; 5.1±1.74 post-loss months



Measures

Questionnaires	Variables
General Help Seeking Questionnaire	Source of help-seeking Perceived usefulness of the help one sought
International Prolonged Grief Disorder Scale (IPGDS)	Prolonged grief symptoms
PTSD Checklist (PCL-5)	Post-traumatic stress symptoms
Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS)	Anxiety, depression

Procedure

- Recruited from memorial websites, WeChat, Weibo, Baidu, etc
→ Participants completed online survey

Statistical Analysis

- Descriptive analysis, logistic regression analysis, and linear regression analysis performed from SPSS18.0

Results

- Nearly all bereaved people (n =401 , 98.3%) sought help because of the lost of a close one due to COVID-19.
- Most of them utilized informal support from friends (n =269 , 65.9%), partners (n =168 , 41.2%), or parents (n =182 , 44.6%), while less of them sought professional help (14.7%~0.2%), including psychological counselors, social workers, psychiatrists, and crisis hotlines.
- Chinese people whose close one died from COVID-19 perceived support from partners, friends, parents, children and people who had the same experience are more useful than professional help.

Impact factors of the help-seeking behavior

Help-seeking (Yes/No) (Odd Ratio)	Source of help (Standard regression coefficient)	Perceived usefulness (Standard regression coefficient)
Relations: parents (14.59)*	Depression (-0.19) *	Male (vs female) (-0.14)**
Relations: friends (32.62) *		Employed (vs unemployed) (0.13)*
PTSD (1.25) *		PGD (0.16) *
		PTSD (-0.15) *

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Discussion

- The cultural context of filial piety in China may help to understand the finding that Chinese people whose parents have died from COVID-19 tended to seek for help.
- Psychological distress caused by the more severe symptoms of PTSD may prevent bereaved people from seeking help.
- Higher levels of depression may indicate impaired of social functioning, which may lead to fewer sources of help.
- Difference of the patterns on the association between perceived usefulness and PTSD and PGD may reveal the distinct core symptoms and mechanism of these two constructs.

Conclusion

Bereaved individuals with different gender, relationships with the deceased, and mental health problems showed various patterns regarding their help-seeking behavior and the perceived usefulness of the help they have received. Clinicians should pay attention to the role of informal support, help men better benefit from seeking help and encourage all kinds of bereaved to actively seek help.

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