



Evaluation of Clinical Manifestations Reported by the Public through Telephone Counseling of the Iran Health Insurance Organization in the Early Period of the COVID-19 Epidemic

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itation:

Fallahi S, Shojaee A, Zoghi G, Shahali Z, Ayoubian A, Mirhosseini SG. Evaluation of Clinical Manifestations Reported by the Public through Telephone Counseling of the Iran Health Insurance Organization in the Early Period of the COVID-19 Epidemic. *Iranian biomedical journal*. Supplementary (12-2024): 28.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a global pandemic has become a burden on the healthcare system of many countries worldwide, including Iran, and caused more than a million deaths by the end of 2019. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the symptoms of COVID-19 in Iranian people to reduce the spread of the disease and manage it.

Methods and Materials: Using the census method, we conducted cross-sectional analyses of 12125 people calling for COVID-19 screening from 2 March 2020 to 19 April 2020. A telephone number was given to people for consulting with more than 70 nurses, and 30 medical doctors were responsible for considering the first- and second-level questions. Subsequently, a checklist of COVID-19-related symptoms was filled out for each participant. A chi-squared test and univariate logistic regression with SPSS 25 were used for statistical analysis.

Results: Of the 12125 participants in this study, 43.5% were male, and their mean age was 37.76 ± 16.61 years. The most common symptom was cough (41.3%), followed by shortness of breath (32.8%) and fever (31.5%), which was more prevalent among men. The least common complaint reported was confusion (1.6%). Our study revealed that men were at a higher risk of COVID-19 than women (OR: 1.31; 95% CI: 1.10-1.55; $p = 0.002$). Also, positive relationships were found between fever, chills, sore throat, shortness of breath, cough, body aches, and gastrointestinal symptoms with COVID-19.

Conclusion and Discussion: Our study revealed that cough, fever, and shortness of breath are the most common symptoms in people calling for COVID-19 consultation. It suggests that telehealth practices must be optimized more effectively in future crises.

Keywords: COVID-19, Iran, Risk factors