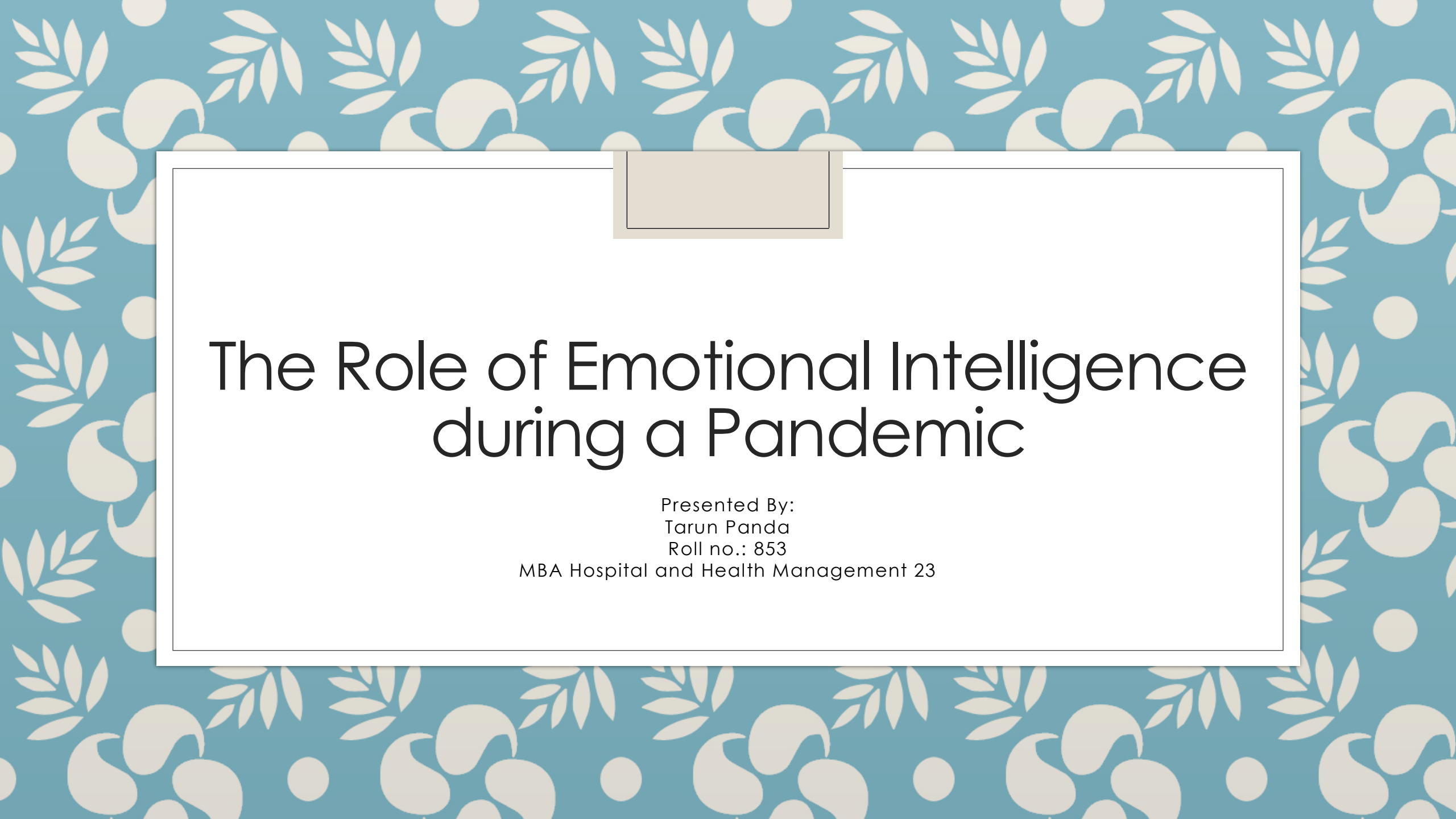




The Role of Emotional Intelligence during a Pandemic

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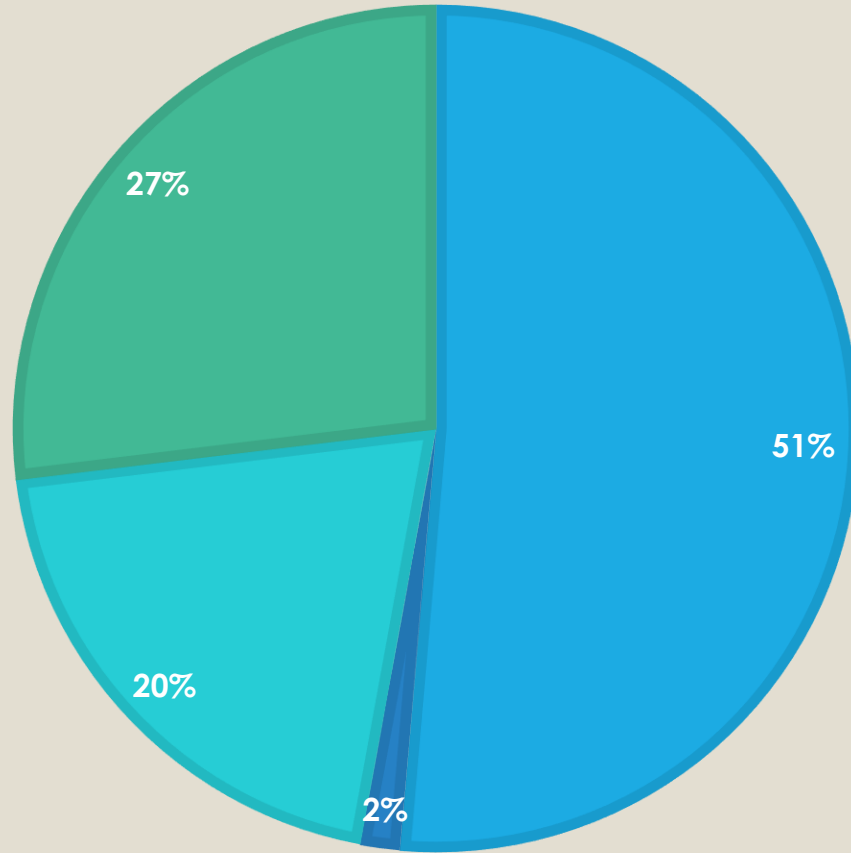
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Introduction

- Emotional Intelligence or Emotional Quotient is one's ability to understand and manage their emotions and of people around them effectively. It is "a type of intelligence that involves the ability to process emotional information and use it in reasoning and other cognitive activities" (Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, 1990).
- According to Vladimir Takšić (2002), emotional intelligence is significantly important in maintaining various aspects of human life: emotional self-concept, stress management, maintaining positive mood, sensitivity for others as well as one's own emotions, among other things.
- Over the years, there have been multiple pandemics that have threatened the human civilization in one way or another. Most of the time, we focus on the pandemic's effects on economic and medical fronts. But we fail to pay attention to another important factor – mental health. Moreover, the emotional intelligence of the people.

HOW COVID-19 COMPARES TO PREVIOUS PANDEMICS

■ Covid-19 ■ Ebola Virus ■ Yellow Fever ■ Swine Flu



Covid-19 has proven much more fatal in comparison to some other previous pandemics, such as Ebola Virus, Yellow Fever and Swine Flu.

Review of Literature

- The closures of schools had a devastating effect, especially on children with mental health needs. For them, they were not able to access the resources that they used to get at their schools in order to manage their condition better. 83% of the participants in the study, who suffered from mental health issues, said that the Pandemic has made their conditions worse. 26% stated that they couldn't access any support to manage their mental health. For many young people, in order to maintain their emotional intelligence, a school routine is very important, and due to this situation, that has been taken away from them (Lee J., 2020).
- Emotional intelligence is a positive motivator in an individual's life and should be considered as one of the most important factors amongst those who develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) due to Covid-19 (Mehrad, A., 2020).

Review of Literature

- In the initial phases of the Covid-19 outbreak, more than 50% of the participants said that they were suffering from moderate to severe psychological impact either directly or indirectly due to the pandemic. Certain characteristics that were significantly related to the high psychological impact due to the outbreak were female gender, certain health symptoms and student status (Wang, C. et al., 2020).
- During the SARS epidemic, it became evident that the need of increased emotional intelligence is quite high among the nursing personnel. It was necessary to face a crisis situation such as the SARS outbreak (Shih, F. et al., 2009).

- **RESEARCH QUESTION:** What is the status of Emotional Intelligence among people during an ongoing pandemic-like situation and how can it be improved?
- **AIM:**
- The aim of the research is to study the effects of a pandemic on the emotional intelligence of people.
- **OBJECTIVES:**
- To collect, study and synthesize the information on the effects of a pandemic on emotional intelligence studied in the past 13 years
- To suggest some ways to improve emotional intelligence after Covid-19 by studying the suggestions for the same given after previous disease outbreaks

Research Methodology

- **STUDY DESIGN:** Integrative Literature Review
- **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH:** A review was conducted and researches panning over a period of 13 years were studied. A total of 60 studies were studied, out of which 20 were considered, excluding the ones where there was either no connection between the effects of a pandemic on a person's emotional intelligence or the ones which talked about epidemics only.
- **SEARCH METHODS:** Search terms identifying levels of emotional intelligence during a pandemic-like period were trialled and the accompanying inquiry terms were created: truncations "emotional" joined with "intelligence OR regulation" (truncated) and "pandemic" (truncated), utilizing the Boolean administrator "AND".

- **Effects of a Pandemic on Emotional Intelligence:**

- The control measures of pandemics, such as, country-wide lockdowns also have a great influence on people's emotional health. This includes people of all age groups – from children to elderly, and across all professions from students to medical practitioners.
- It was found that a higher level of emotional intelligence was directly related to less burnout. EI was identified as a factor that helps in understanding medical practitioners' issues related to work (Weng, H. et al., 2011). With low emotional intelligence, medical practitioners can feel burnout which can lead to bad decision making on their part which, consequently, could prove devastating for their patients. This cycle could get worse during a pandemic-like situation.

- The control measures of pandemics, such as, country-wide lockdowns also have a great influence on people's emotional health. This includes people of all age groups – from children to elderly, and across all professions from students to medical practitioners. Also, people have extremely less chances to revive their intellectual and emotional assets which are getting drained because of the steady satisfying requests by family and work.
- More than 80% of the population felt that there was a need to seek for a professional help in order to deal with their emotional issues during the initial spread of Covid-19. Around 72% said that they were concerned about their loved ones and themselves contracting the virus. Mostly 12% of the population had difficulty sleeping due to constantly being worried about the pandemic (Roy D. et al., 2020).

- **Suggestions to improve Emotional Intelligence:**

- There should be regular Emotional Intelligence trainings in work areas especially in the highly stressful fields, such as medicine and the police force.
- Third-person self-talk has been recognized as a technique to improve emotional regulation and it was found that it led to reduction in the level of worry related to Ebola among the people who worried a lot about contracting the virus (Kross, E. et al., 2017).

Conclusion

- It can be stated that a situation of crisis at a national level can produce devastating effects on individuals' mental and emotional health. The side aspects of the situation such as lockdowns, protests, mass hysteria, can make things even worse. It is of extreme importance that people's emotional intelligence and mental health is paid heed to at an equal level as their physical health.

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Thank You