

Lived Experiences of COVID-19 Survivors in Samar, Philippines



Dr. Abigail M. Cabaguing¹, Hanna Joyce Macawili², Ma. Jessa Pacoma³, Alvinco S. Porton⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Samar State University Philippines

ABSTRACT: The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic significantly threatened the health of million people all over the world. As early as September 20 of the year 2020, a total of 33,692,000 confirmed cases were recorded across the globe which resulted major restriction in human mobility as a response to contain its spread (WHO, 2020). A qualitative study using transcendental (descriptive) phenomenological approach was conducted to explore the lived experiences of Covid-19 survivors in Catbalogan City were active cases was recorded. Key informants of the study were identified using a purposive sample who qualifies with the criteria of those: (a) tested positive from RT-PCR and deemed as recovered from Covid-19 and; (b) specifically residing in city and of legal age. Data was saturated on the 10th informants. Result showed that these Covid-19 survivors experienced heightened challenges in their physical, psychological and social aspect. Dominant challenge was concerned on their psychological which stemmed from the distress due to the financial restriction they have to suffer from the inevitable quarantines that can affect their livelihood, the fear of unknowingly infecting others, the solitude of isolation and the thought of imminent death they attribute to the disease. However, despite the overwhelming challenges they are facing, they were able to endure and challenge their situation by redirecting themselves on their determination which concerns with their families/dependents welfare and their will to pursue own personal goals. Moreover, because of the support (monetary or non-monetary) they received throughout their recovery process, their intensified situation became manageable especially with the psycho-social support from their families and peers which significantly promoted their fast recovery. Over all, in spite of the challenges that these individuals have experienced, they were able to proceed with their respective lives by asserting their unique experience in an optimistic matter which is incumbent for their re-integration in the society.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19 Survivorst; Challenges; Re-integration to Society

1. INTRODUCTION

A global health emergency was declared due to the novel Corona Virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as it spread throughout the world in the first quarter of 2020 (WHO, 2020). From 1 to 33,692,000 confirmed cases of the virus as of September (20), the COVID-19 has been considered as one of the “dark days” in the global history which affected almost all countries in the world. It caused the world to shift to a “new normal” which limited the human mobility and hit the healthcare system of the entire world (Mehra & Siddiqi, 2020). As the Covid-19 pandemic rapidly sweeps across the world, it is inducing a considerable degree of fear, worry and concern in the population at large and among certain groups in particular, such as older adults, care providers and people with underlying health conditions.

Every day the world is counting increasing digits of confirmed cases with some who have died and more than half who have survived (Sahoo, 2020). The inflating rate of recovered cases of COVID-19 shed light that the containment of the spread of the virus is not too far to reach. In the Philippines, 0.29% of the population have been confirmed as COVID-19 positive and 1.8% of the confirmed patients have died due to the virus. Most of the patients are asymptomatic or have minimal symptoms, and 81% already have recovered (DOH, 2020).

Literature regarding the preventive measures, laboratory testing, and management protocols is ever increasing. Also, a large number of studies were conducted related to the health care workers’ experiences in the midst of the pandemic. However, few literatures have been documented regarding the experiences of the recovered patients (about how they fought the virus, what they felt during their isolation, etc.) in Samar.

Hence, with this study, the researchers explored and come-up with an empirical understanding on the unique lived experiences of COVID-19 survivors. In addition, a comprehensive analysis of COVID-19 survivors was provided which information generated

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would be valuable to the community, LGUs and other social entities whose are responsible in policy making and implementation of programs that shall assist these COVID-19 survivors as they re-integrate to the community.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

A qualitative study using transcendental (descriptive) phenomenological approach was used to examine the lived experiences of COVID-19 survivors. As defined, phenomenology is a qualitative scientific method that allows the researcher to consider phenomena, which take place in a given person.

Phenomenology moves between the descriptions of the phenomenon to our understanding of it. Its fundamental intention is to access the consciousness of the individual and grasp what this consciousness is capable of revealing regarding the phenomena that it has experienced (Coony et. al., 2012). The main idea of empirical phenomenology is that scientific explanation must be grounded in the first-order construction of the actors; that is, in their own meanings. Such type of research focused on meaning making of experience, behavior and narratives, etc. (Walters, 2017). Thus, it aims to describe the narratives and experiences of COVID-19 survivors.

2.2. Participants

Using purposive sampling, respondents were identified who qualifies the inclusion criteria set forth by the researchers which include: 1) only recovered patients above 18 years old; and 2) participants who publicly declared in social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) that they were COVID-19 positive. Data was saturated on the 10th informants.

2.3. Data Gathering Procedure

A semi-structured, in-depth telephone interview was made at a time convenient for participants. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded. Semi-structured Interview guide was validated by experts in the field of social sciences/psychology. Preliminary interview includes participants' age, marital status, and employment if there is. It was followed by broad-generating questions on their experiences as COVID-19 survivors followed up by open-ended questions relating to their physiological, psychological, and re-integration experiences to the community. Lastly, informants were also given the chance to express their thought/s voluntarily to ensure that they were given enough consideration that relates to their experiences.

2.4. Data Analysis

The responses of the participants served as the units of analysis of the study. It made use of the Colaizzi's method. The analysis includes reading of the transcript several times to gain an understanding of the meanings, identify significant meanings, phrases, codes and organizing it into categories and developing of themes.

Hyper RESEARCH software was used to code, retrieve and conduct qualitative data analysis. It is a licensed commercial software package used by researchers within the sciences, social sciences, and professions including education and medicine. It helps the qualitative researcher analyze a range of multimedia data in addition to text-analysis date, including video and audio.

2.5. Ethical Consideration

The researchers were fully aware on the sensitivity of the study relating to the experiences of Covid-19 survivors. Hence, ethics approval for this research was sought from the Institutional Research Ethics Review (IRERC).

Moreover, the study objectives and voluntary nature of the study was explained to the participants and oral informed consent was obtained before each telephone interview. Confidentiality was assured by using numbers instead of names and removing identifying information from the transcripts.

Furthermore, all audio-recording and transcripts was secured and discarded after using the data for analysis.

3. RESULTS

From the data analyses, 5 major themes emerged on the lived experiences of these Covid-19 survivors.

Each theme was explained by its corresponding subthemes that relates to the experiences of these Covid-19 survivors from dealing the disease until their re-integration process to the community.

Illustration below shows the findings emerged from the analyses of the data.

Table 1. Summary of Results emerged on the data analysis

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LIVED EXPERIENCES OF COVID-19 SURVIVORS IN CATBALOGAN	
THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Adversities Owing to Contraction of Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Exhaustion • Psychological Distress • Dealing Stigma • Financial Restrain
Major Concerns on Isolation Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Distribution • Poor Utility • Regular Monitoring
Enthusiasm towards Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconditional Love for Families and Dependents • Pursuing Personal Goals
Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monetary Support • Non-monetary Support • Psychosocial Support
Re-Integration Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceiving Positively • Spiritual Resiliency

3.1. Theme (1): Adversities Owing to Contraction of Covid-19

The first theme can be best explained by four (4) subthemes which include; **physical exhaustion, psychological distress dealing the stigma and financial restrain** that surrounds from being contracted of Covid-19. From the analysis, it can be understood that these Covid-19 survivors experienced heightened challenges in dealing with the disease.

3.1.1. Subtheme A: Physical Exhaustion

Informants were asked about the physical symptoms that they experienced of being contracted from Covid-19. It was reported that they experienced restless coughing, colds, fever and even headaches which can be attributed to the symptoms of Covid-19 as specified by the World Health Organization (WHO) that a person who is contracted of this infectious disease can experience mild to severe respiratory illness that can disrupt their daily functioning (WHO, 2020). They also emphasized that experiencing these symptoms heightened their situation in dealing with the disease making them feel uneasy and lethargic.

Significant statements that illustrate this subtheme are as follows:

- “Una, sge akon ubo tapos nagkahiranat ako. After 3 days, nawara na akon panrasa ngan panhamot tapos danay masakit akon ulo. Makuri kay napaluya ha lawas. (At first, I am coughing restlessly and a fever. After 3 days, my sense of smell and taste disappeared and sometimes I experience headache. Its difficult because I feel lethargic.)” **[Informant 3]**
- “Although mild la an akon symptoms, makuri gihap kay sge imo ubo nga danay madali ka hingalon. (Although my symptoms were just mild, it’s still difficult because of coughing which leads to catching your breath.” **[Informant 7]**

Subtheme B: Psychological Distress

The constant fear on the health risk associated of Covid-19 that may bring to the family members of these contracted individuals, the feeling of helplessness, the isolation they must undergo to protect their loved ones and other losses they have to experience owing to quarantining their closed-contact which is commonly their family members has put these Covid-19 survivors under immense pressure.

This claim is reflected in statement below:

- “I feel helpless. I have to be alone and isolated so that my family won’t get infected from the virus.” **[Informant 5]**
- “When I tested positive, my mind went blank. I was shock with the thought na positive ako kay waray man akon symptoms na gin aabot. Aside from the shock, nahadlok ako para ha safety han akon family labi nagud akon mother. Knowing na pati hira sigura ig ka-quarantine gud kay close-contact man, nabaraka ako duro para ha ira. (When I tested positive, my mind went blank. I was shock with the thought that I am positive because I don’t have any symptoms. Aside from the shock, I feared for the safety of my family especially my mother. Knowing that they’ll be quarantine for sure since they were a closed-contact, I am extremely worried for them). **[Informant 2]**
- “didto han nakadto na ako ha facility ha covered court, damo la nga negative akon naiisip. Danay naiisip ko, what if mamatay ako? Mga sugad hito na butang, dre ko naiiwasan isipon sanglit nagtitinagis ako mag-usa ha akon kwarto bago kumaturug. (During my stay in the facility, I keep on thinking a lot of negativities. Sometimes I thought what if I die? I can’t help to think things like that so I cried myself to sleep). **[Informant]**

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3.1.2. Subtheme C: Dealing the Stigma

Negative comments and judgement looks are anxiety-provoking situations either received directly or indirect. Informants shared that aside from the physical exhaustion, the sense of imminent death and the fear of unknowingly infecting others, dealing with the stigma has also heightened the situation of these Covid-19 survivors not only for themselves but also to their families.

This was reflected in the following statement:

- “It was hard not only for me but to my family as well. After my discharge from the isolation facility in Juvies Resort, I still have to undergo home quarantine for 7 days. We order our foods and basic necessities through Hi-Bes and Food Panda which is basically online. The problem is, people were reluctant to accept or deliver our order because of fear they might get infected.”

[Informant 5]

- “Pagna-gawas ako ha balay, napapansin ko baga han naiwas akon mga kapit-bahay ha akon. Waray ako nababatian ha ira directly, pero mafefeel man gihap ito naton ha ira action diba?. (Whenever I go out from our house, I noticed that our neighbour avoids me... I don't hear anything from them directly, but we can feel it through their action, right? [Informant 10]

3.1.3. Subtheme D: Financial Restrain

Financial problem also added to the predicament of these Covid-19 survivors. It was remarked by some of these informants that due to the inevitable quarantine and isolation they must undergo not only themselves but also their closed-contact family, it impacted great deal of losses on their livelihood.

- “...even before dida han positive ko ha test, kami na tanan ginquarantine na kay closed-contact man kami han akon kilala na nagpositive liwat...naperdi an amon pakabuhi kay waray man mag-aabri han amon tindahan kay taman man kami kailangan igquarantine... nagkakadudunot gad an mga gulay na amon paninda. (Even before I tested positive, my whole family was quarantined since we were a closed contact of someone we know who tested positive as well... our livelihood was negatively affected because no one will tend since all of us were quarantined... the vegetables we sell got rotted)” [Informant 1]

3.2. Theme (2): Major Concerns on Isolation Facilities

The second theme explained the experiences of these Covid-19 survivors during their stay on the health care facilities provided for their isolation. Subthemes emerged from the experiences of the informants constitute to the problems they perceived that must be given proper address to alleviate the burden of these Covid-19 patients for their fast recovery.

3.2.1. Subtheme A: Food Distribution

Upon asking about the informants' experiences during their stay on the isolation facilities they were assigned, it was reported that it was hard for some of them since not all are capable of providing their own food. Participants expressed gratitude that somehow, they were provided free foods however, they can't help to feel disappointment with the portion given to them. Others were fortunate to have someone send support for food personally but for some, it was a challenge for them.

- “makuri gihapon labi na an “rasyon”, sobra kaguti an ginhahatag. Ultimito usa nga baduya, gintutunga pa nira. Imbes na iisipon nala namon kun paano kami mauupay hine na amon sakit, nakakadugang pa ha pinsaron an pagkaon. (It was difficult especially the food ration, they gave us too little. Even a piece of fritter was divided into two. Instead that we focus on how we can get better with the disease, thinking about food also adds to our concern).” [Informant 1]

- “an pinaka- una ko nga napansin han nakadto ako ha facility is an panhahatag han pagkaon. Dre gud nasusunod an distancing kay may pila man... naisip ko, paano kaya mauupay kun ma e-expose kami ha kada-usa. (The first thing I noticed during my stay in the facility is the process of food distribution. Social distancing was not followed because we need to line-up... I realized how we can get better if we will be exposed to each on another). [Informant 9]

3.2.2. Subtheme B: Poor Utility

Some informants affirmed that inadequate and poor utilities on the isolation sites heightened their circumstances on dealing with the disease. They added that not only it contributes to their inconvenience but also they feared that it might implicate their condition.

Significant statements illustrated on the following:

- “...kamakuri han tubig... (...insufficient supply of water)” [Informant 2]
- “...an C.R. usa la sanglit permi pila an paggamit. Nag-aalang ako danay paggamit kay bangin lumala lugod akon sakit kay tirimpo manla kami ginagamit na C.R. (... there is only one C.R. so we need to line-up to use. I am hesitant sometimes to use because what if, my condition worsen since we are only using one C.R.” [Informant 4]
- “didi ako na-assigned ha may Payao na facility... grabi, kapapaso duro han lugar sanglit, naduroy la panluya amon lawas. (...I was assigned in Payao facility... the place was very hot which makes us more feel exhausted).” [Informant 8]

3.2.3. Subtheme C: Regular Monitoring

Regular or continuous monitoring to patients ensures the clinical process to minimize the risk of developing further complications of ill patients (Physiopedia, 2021). According to some informants, the moment they were admitted to the facility,

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they seldomly received further assistance regarding their health condition. They affirmed that this lack of attention heightened their feelings of helplessness.

- “tikang han nagpagsulod ko ha facility hasta nala na discharge ako, as in, ika-usa la ako kumustaha han doctor kun ano akon pamati... para ha akon makuri it sugad hito kay dre kami maaram kun naupay ba amon condition or nalala. (...from the moment I was admitted until my discharged, really, I was assessed by the doctor just once about my condition... for me, it was hard because we don't know about our condition if it gets better or gets worsen).” [Informant 1]

- “after 14 days, gin-inform ako na magawas na kuno pero kailangan la gihap mag home quarantine for 7 days... Nag worry ako para ha akon family nga mag-quarantine ako ha balay kay waray na ako igtest utro kun negative ba, basta tapos na an 14 days, ginpapagawas na nira. (After 14 days of my quarantine, I was informed that I will be discharged from the facility but still, need to home quarantine for 7 days. I feel worried for my family with the thought of undergoing home quarantine because I was not tested again to prove that I am already negative from Covid-19, as long as 14 days were over, they permit discharge).” [Informant 6]

3.3. Theme (3): Enthusiasm Towards Recovery

The third theme emphasized the juggles of these Covid-19 survivors to in dealing with the disease. In spite of their heightened situation, they were able to overcome their dilemma by getting the strength and motivation from their families and dependents to avoid giving them further inconvenience, even for the sake of pursuing their own happiness.

3.3.1. Subtheme A: Unconditional Love for Families and Dependents

Majority of the informants shared that they were the breadwinner of their family. They were the hope and strength of their families and dependents. Apart from being the breadwinner, others were also aware of their families' situation and capacity. Being aware of the role they have and the situation of their respective families, these Covid-19 survivors gave their best to overcome the challenges owing to the disease despite of their condition to avoid further inconvenience for their families and dependents.

This claim was reflected on the following statements:

- “bisan makuri an akon kamutangan ngadto ha facility, naniguro ako na maupay. Naisip ko, mag iniha pa ngani ako, mas kukurian akon family bisan hit pagdinulong la hit akon pagkaon asay pa kay waray gud adto na time pasaherosan kay ECQ pa adto. (Even though my situation in the facility was not good, I persevered to get better. I realized, the longer my stay here (facility), the more my family will suffer even delivering food to me especially there's no public vehicle that time due to ECQ).” [Informant 3]

- “para ha akon anak... siguro asya ito pagkag-anak kana ginhihimo mo nga tanan bisan ano pa kakuri imo kamutangan para ha ira. Waray ako magpadara akon sakit, ginbuhat ko tanan, pag-exercise ngan proper hygiene para mapadali akon pag-upay. (...for my child... probably, it's an instinct of a parent to do whatever it takes no matter how hard your situation for the sake of your child. I did not allow myself to be defeated with the virus; I exercised and keep myself with proper hygiene to fasten my recovery).” [Informant 5]

- “Tulo (3) naman la kami han akon bugto na grade 7 ngan ako lola kay amon parents bulag man tapos may iba na nga pamilya, waray gud iba na nasuporta ha amon panginahanglan kun dire ako. One time han nakadto ako naka isolate ha covered court, nagkachat kami han akon bugto, nagpakiana ako kun kumaon na hira...naluoy ako kay waray kuno hira bugas kay sarado an tindahan na amon nauutangan. Waray ko na huna-hunaa kun ano man an kakulangan ngadto ha facility, importante makagawas na ako kay dre la ako it apektado kundi pati hira gihap. (...there were 3 of us in the family with my grade 7 younger brother and my grandmother because our parents were separated and they have their own families already so, no one supports our needs except me. One time during my isolation in covered court, my brother and I have a chat (messenger) asking him if they already ate... I felt bad for them for they don't have food because the store we can ask for credit was close. Right then, I decided to focus on getting my condition better because I am not the only one affected but them (family) as well).” [Informant 9]

3.3.2. Subtheme B: Pursuing Personal Goals

Pursuing personal goals allows individual to develop sense of determination to take responsible for their own action. It was remarked by some of the respondents that apart from being motivated for the sake of their families and dependents, they were able to challenge their circumstances through developing resolution that aroused from their personal life goals. Additionally, they affixed that they were able to endure the hardships for the sake of not putting all their sacrifices in vain.

Significant statements that reflect this claim are as follows:

- “Naisip ko, kagagraduate ko la ngan damo pa akon pangarap. Kailangan ko maniguro para maabot ko akon mga hingyap...Gusto ko pa magkapamilya... (I realized, I just graduated and I still have a lot of goals. I need to overcome this for the sake of my aspirations. I wanted to have a family).” [Informant 6]

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- “Always ko gin re-remind akon sarili, mas damo pa na kakurian an akon gin-agihan para la mahingadi ako yana tak posisyon (work). Dre ako masuko para tak kabubuwason. (... I always reminding myself that, I already experienced a lot of struggles to be in this position. I won’t give up for my future). [Informant 10]

3.4. Theme (4): Assistance

The fourth theme explains the assistance that these Covid-19 survivors received which supported them to endure and challenge their circumstances. Informants expressed their heartily gratitude to the innumerable people who extended themselves in supporting both monetary and non-monetary assistance that alleviated the burdens owing to their heightened situation. Subthemes emerged include: financial, non-monetary supplies and the unconditional love and support of their families and peers that boosted their moral.

3.4.1. Subtheme A: Monetary Support

The heightened situation of these Covid-19 survivors in providing the basic necessities to aid their recovery process somehow become manageable because of monetary assistance they receive from the government.

- “dida han nagpositive ako, nakakarawat ako han 5K tikang ha gobyerno... nakabulig gihapon adto hin dako parti han akon talagugti na panginahanglan. (When I tested positive, I received 5K (five thousand pesos) from the government. It helped me a lot for my basic needs). [Informant 4]

3.4.2. Subtheme B: Non-Monetary Support Aside from the monetary assistance that these informants received, some of them also reported that they were provided with medicinal supplies from the provincial and municipal offices.

Significant statements illustrated on the following claims.

- “...thankful gihap kami kay libre kami tanan han mga bulong ngadto ha facility sanglit dire na kami namomroblema parti han medisina. (...We’re thankful because we are provided with free medicine so we do not worry about it anymore).” [Informant 5]

- “waray gud akon family kuri-e hin duro kay gintatatagan man kami hin medisina.. dire na paraliton. (...it’s not too hard for my family because we are provided with free medicine.. we don’t have to buy).” [Informant 7]

3.4.3. Subtheme C: Psychosocial Support

The heightened feelings of isolation due to the inevitable quarantines that these informants must go through became bearable for because of the unconditional love and support they received from their families and peers. They were able to endure their circumstance despite of the shortcomings in their resources and the facilities.

- “waray gud ako kahulop duro kay akon mga kasangkayan sge man an kumusta ha akon. Damo la an napadara ha akon mga pagkaon tikang ha akon mga ka officemate ngan kasangkayan. (I did not lose hope because my friends constantly checked on me. I received lot of food deliveries from my colleagues and friends).” [Informant 2]
- “...ha facility, pasalamat ako han akon mga nakaupod ngadto kay ginshi-share nira an ira mga foods sanglit bisan dre sakto para ha akon an rasyon. (...I am thankful to the persons I’m with, in the facility because they shared their foods even the food rations given to us was not enough for me).” [Informant 8]
- “waray ko napansin an adlaw kay sge man communication namon akon family ngan mga kasangkayan. Waray ko gud ako na bored ha isolation facility. (I did not notice the days passing because we constantly communicate with my families and friends. I did experienced boredom in the isolation),” [Informant 10]

3.5. Theme (5): Re-Integration Process

After the recovery on the disease of these informants, another level of challenge they have to deal concerning on how they re-integrate to the mainstreaming in the community. Despite of the fact that some of the informants reported negative experiences relating to being positive from the virus, somehow, they were able to re-integrate in the community by developing personal and spiritual resiliency.

3.5.1. Subtheme A: Perceiving Positively

In spite of the negative setbacks that these Covid-19 survivors received directly or indirectly from their community, their neighbors in particular, they were able to re-integrate in the society by perceiving things in a positive perspective by keeping a mindset that this will eventually pass somehow.

It was reflected on these following statements:

- “damo akon nababati na dire maupay ha amon hagrani pero dre ko nala gin ma-mind. Instead na ig- stress ko tak sarili hito na mga maglain na yakan, naging thankful lugod ako kay mas nakikilala ko an mga tawo na ungod an pagbulig ha akon hine na mga panahon. (I am hearing a lot of unpleasant things from my neighbors but I don’t mind it at all. Rather than stressing

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myself over such negative statements, I am grateful instead because it allows me to know the persons who genuinely help me during these times).” [Informant 5]

- “initially, makuri hiya. Nalugi amon business kay nagkadudunot man an gulay pero tungod hadto na eksperyensya, mas nakilala namon an kakayahan han amon pamilya ha pagsolve hit problems. (Initially, it was hard. Our business suffered losses because our vegetable products got rotten but through that experience, we came to know the capability of our family to deal with problems).” [Informants 8]

3.5.2. Subtheme B: Spiritual Resiliency

On the process of re-integration of these Covid-19 survivors to the community, these informants have developed their spiritual aspects to deal with the challenges throughout their lives. They affirmed that they were able to manage and proceed with the challenges through contemplating with their actions and building strong relationship to our Almighty God.

- “nabubuhay ko pagpadayon ha akon kinabuhi tungod hit akon pagtuo ha aton Ginoo na nabulig ngan naalay ha akon permi labi na gud para ha akon pamilya. (I was able to proceed with my life because of my faith to our God who guides me and blessed me in every step of the way, especially for my family).” [Informant 1]

- “...narealized ko gud na, life is short. As much as possible, buhaton naton an maupay para ha aton igkasi-tawo kay at the end of the day, igbabalik gihap nira ito na maupay na imo binuhatan. (I realized that, life is short. As much as possible, we must do good deeds to other people because at the end of the day, they will reciprocate the good deeds you did to them).” [Informant 7]

- “Maaram ako na makuri gud talaga labi na damo it mga tawo na makakasina ha imo. Ayaw la kita pagpadara ha iba nga mga tawo, instead pagpray nala kita kay ha katapos-tapusan Diyos la gehap it makakbulig ha aton. (I am aware that it’s difficult because lot of people will criticize you. We should not get swayed by these people. Instead, let’s pray because in the end, it is only God who can help us).” [Informant 9]

4. DISCUSSION

Based from the result of the study, it showed that Covid-19 survivors have faced intensified challenges owing to their experience. Findings revealed primary adversities they suffered which include; physical challenges associated from the symptoms of the disease which resulted exhaustion to their bodies and, the psychological challenges from the anxiety-evoking situations owing to the contraction of the virus. It was confirmed by these informants that dealing with such adversities have heightened their circumstances. It was consistent with the study conducted by Moradi et al., (2020) which the results showed that during pandemics such as the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to physical and exhausting symptoms of the disease, patients experience disturbances such as psychological distress and the burden of being a carrier that practically threatened their condition.

It was emphasized that the dominant factor that contributes to their psychological distress is the fear of putting their families’ health on the risk of the virus and unknowingly infecting others. Other factors include their heightened financial sources, the feeling of isolation and the sense of imminent death.

The second theme highlighted the problems that these informants have perceived must be given proper attention to alleviate the burden of the infected patients on the isolation facility towards fast recovery. They affirmed that, factors under quality of utility, poor management and inconsistent closed-monitoring amplified their circumstances. According to a recent survey from the Indian Psychiatric Society, it was reported that there is an increase amounting to 20% on to the mental illnesses in their country since the corona virus takes place (OCHA, 2020). They also emphasized that this scenario calls for the importance of psychosocial support and regular monitoring for Covid patients to minimize the risk of developing mental related health problem.

Majority of the respondent remarked that upon their admission to the facility until their discharged, they were assessed only once and did not received follow-ups. Some of the informants also added that, even after their discharged they were reluctant to undergo home quarantine for they feared infecting their family due to lack of evidence-based assessment proving that they were already recovered from the disease. In the study of Wen Li et al. (2020) findings showed that most clinically stable COVID-19 patients suffered from significant posttraumatic stress symptoms associated with the COVID-19 prior to discharge. From the result, the authors emphasized that appropriate crisis psychological interventions and long-term follow-up assessments should be initiated to these individuals considering the negative detrimental impact of their experience. Additionally a scoping review on the evidence-based for intervention concerning with the public health due to the outbreak of pandemic was conducted by Kunzler et al., (2020) where they reported that responding immediately to the needs based on the availability of proper intervention showed for beneficial effects that enable people to better cope with the distress of the high-risking disease.

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The third major theme comprises the juggles of these Covid-19 survivors towards recovery. Sources of motivation emerged from their determination to continuously support the needs of their families and even pursuing their personal goals in life. They were able to challenge their circumstances by strengthening their mentality that the love they had for their families and their determination to pursue their personal goals were much stronger than the disease.

Moreover, the fourth theme explains the assistance that these Covid-19 survivors received which is incumbent for their recovery and played an important role in minimizing the burden associated from being a carrier of the disease. Informants constantly confirmed that aside from the monetary and non-monetary supports that they received from the government and concerned agencies, the psychosocial support from their families and peers has imparted a significant positive effect for their recovery process. They affirmed that they were able to endure the solitude owing to their isolation because of the constant communication they had to one another even at the expense of online platforms. In addition, the feelings of helplessness and distress in fulfilling their basic needs became manageable for them because of the genuine solicitude coming from their families and peers. This findings show that psychosocial support that stems from the people close to you played a vital role towards recovery of these Covid-19 survivors. This finding was supported through a study conducted by Foley et al. (2020), examining the importance of psychological support during Covid-19. Their study highlighted the need and importance of these psychological supports from people around us, may it be our family; caretaker or clients must be initiated in alleviating the psychological distress associated in this time of pandemic. The result of their study showed that there is an increase psychological distress and as experienced by their participants resulted from too little psychological support they received.

Furthermore, rather than manifesting obstructive resolution to the negative issues that revolves around with their experience to the community, these individuals asserted the situation in a more optimistic perspective and redirecting their spiritual resiliency which is essential for their re-integration to the society.

5. CONCLUSION

Covid-19 survivors experienced heightened challenges in their physical, psychological and social aspect. These challenges derived from the following: (a) primary symptoms of being a carrier which leads them to experience mild to severe physical exhaustion; (b) psychological challenges stemmed from the distress due to the financial restriction they have to suffer from the inevitable quarantines that significantly affected their livelihood, the fear of unknowingly infecting others, the solitude of isolation and the thought of imminent death they attribute to the disease. However, despite the overwhelming challenges they are facing, they were able to endure and challenge their situation by redirecting themselves on their determination which concerns with their families/dependents welfare and their will to pursue own personal goals. Moreover, because of the support (monetary or non-monetary) they received throughout their recovery process, their intensified situation became manageable especially with the psycho-social support from their families and peers which significantly promoted their fast recovery. Over all, in spite of the challenges that these individuals have experienced, they were able to proceed with their respective lives by asserting their unique experience in an optimistic matter which is incumbent for their re-integration in the society.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it is humbly recommended that government and other concerned agencies to provide appropriate and necessary informational materials to help empower the society, understand and see situation of these survivors with a silver lining.

It is also important that these survivors should be provided or supported with necessary assistance which is in paramount importance of their re-integration process.

Additionally, further studies were recommended to understand its implications to survivors and individual, in general.

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