

THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY ON ANXIETY AND COMORBID DEPRESSION AMONG PATIENTS WITH LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES IN HONG KONG

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ABSTRACT

Patients who are nearing the end of their lives in Hong Kong frequently report experiencing feelings of anxiety and depression. According to the findings of the research, patients with breast cancer who participated in CCH suffered fewer serious side effects. Numerous studies have demonstrated that a variety of populations can observe the same beneficial effects. Additionally, the intervention has the potential to be an effective supplementary treatment for the alleviation of symptoms and the improvement of general health. When used as a therapeutic technique, it helps to calm nerves, elevate spirits, increase focus, and sharpen the brain. Those who took part in an intervention that lasted for eight minutes and utilised Chinese calligraphy reported significantly lower levels of anxiety, sadness, and tension. Patients suffering from breast cancer in Hong Kong underwent this surgical procedure. After the calligraphy session, the participants showed a decrease in physiological markers such as their heart rate, breathing rate, and systolic blood pressure, among other things. Calligraphy instruction has been shown to improve numerous bodily systems and minimise psychotic symptoms in people with schizophrenia, according to preliminary findings from a study that has been conducted in the past. The unreliable sampling and the relatively low number of participants were the most obvious issues with prior studies. These were just two of the numerous issues that arose. The purpose of this large-scale, randomised controlled trial was to investigate the relationship between calligraphy and a variety of psychological variables that were present in individuals who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Keywords: Anxiety reduction, Chinese calligraphy therapy, Comorbid depression, Hong Kong healthcare, Cultural therapy.

1. INTRODUCTION

This anxiety can make symptoms worse, reduce the effectiveness of treatment, and lengthen the amount of time it takes to recover from breast cancer. Many breast cancer patients worry about their anxiety. With the cultural background of breast cancer patients in Hong Kong in mind, this study investigated whether or not Chinese calligraphy may be used as an alternative treatment for these patients. In the course of the research, participants who engaged in the practice of Chinese calligraphy were asked to specify whether or not they experienced any reductions in feelings of worry and depression that were associated with breast cancer. The primary objective of this research, which was conducted in Hong Kong, was to determine whether or not the practice of Chinese calligraphy may assist breast cancer patients in coping with the emotional distress that the disease causes (Chiu et al., 2023). The art of Chinese calligraphy is both beautiful and ancient, and it has the potential to lift one's spirit out of a state of fear and grief. When it comes to managing their feelings, coping with stress, and improving

their overall mental and emotional health, a lot of people claim that this method, which combines soothing the mind and relaxing the body, is helpful to them. It has been demonstrated through research that there are numerous positive effects on one's health. A slower heart rate, improved cognitive function, and reduced stress on the muscles are all examples of the benefits that are mentioned. Calligraphy is an excellent method for researchers to be able to relax and be in the here and now, which is something that they need to find ways to do. During the practice of calligraphy, it is necessary to devote undivided attention to every detail. Calligraphy is a form of mindfulness that helps the researcher concentrate, be creative, and relax. One way to become more relaxed and focused is to practise calligraphy, which is a form of mindfulness. Those who engage in calligraphy on a regular basis in order to strengthen their resilience may discover that it is simpler for them to deal with the pressures that are a part of everyday life. How well the researcher are able to deal with stress can have a positive impact on the researcher's mental and physical health, as well as alter the way the researcher perceive living. Approximately 296.77 million Chinese citizens were aged 60 or older by the end of the year 2023, as reported by the official statistics bureau of the country. Among the total population, this group accounted for 21.1% of the total. 216.76 million persons, or 15.4% of the total population, were considered to be 65 years of age or older. More than 400 million individuals will be aged 60 or older by the year 2035, which is about thirty percent of the total population of the world. The average age of Chinese people is expected to reach highly concerning levels as a result of this growth. Roughly 35 percent of the Chinese population is affected by chronic health problems, which renders 40 million people unable to work at all or just partially work. They have become significantly more concerned about their health as a result of this rise. According to the findings of scientific research, the COVID-19 outbreak is causing older individuals to become sicker than it did in the past. Prioritising the physical and mental health of individuals over the age of 60 who are at a high risk is of utmost importance (Cui et al., 2024).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Psychosis, an extremely severe mental condition, is characterised by outwardly apparent and persistent symptoms. These symptoms impair a wide range of cognitive capacities, such as understanding, emotions, cognition, conduct, and countless more. Conditions such as bipolar disorder and mental retardation link to many mental health issues. All of these conditions are accompanied by mental impairment (Lam & Hsu, 2024). On top of that, patients would rather not cope with the unwanted side effects that frequently accompany pharmacological treatment, and the treatment itself isn't always effective. The use of drugs is not the only option for treating mental disorders. As part of this treatment plan, the researcher will participate in psychotherapy, art therapy, and occupational therapy. These treatments may be both adaptable and inexpensive, which is great news for patients hoping to improve their rehabilitation and quality of life. This kind of art therapy places more emphasis on the characters' layout and general appearance than on the individual letters. This process is also known as "Chinese calligraphy treatment," or CCT, for short. Art therapy, health, behaviour therapy, and rehabilitation are just a few of the several sectors that utilise this style of calligraphy. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has the potential to improve people's outlooks on life, decrease stress, lessen unpleasant feelings, and increase control over their emotions, according to research. Counselling can help with all of these things. Several studies have shown that CBT can help people deal with anxiety and stress (Lam et al., 2024).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Studying the effects of Chinese calligraphy on stress reduction, emotional regulation, and meditation-like states of quiet focused concentration is the primary goal of research on the relationship between mental health and calligraphy. Researchers are searching the web for evidence that this widely available, inexpensive, and culturally important art form alleviates anxiety and depression in individuals, such as college students and cancer patients. The main objective of studying Chinese calligraphy and mental health issues, especially depression and anxiety, is to find out how it might help with stress reduction, emotion regulation, and experiencing contemplative states of calm and focus. College students and cancer patients alike may find relief from worry and sorrow through this culturally meaningful art form that is simple to acquire and inexpensive, according to scientists. Among the many forms of "artistic writing" that have evolved from the original six scripts used to express Chinese characters more than 3,000 years ago, calligraphy remains steadfast. There is a vast variety of writing styles, including Standard, Oracle Bone, Seal, Clerical, Cursive, and Running, among many more.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Some participants in the study reported less future worry and sadness after engaging in Chinese calligraphy. The researcher can use it to help yourself relax, stay focused, and acquire control of the researcher's emotions. The practice may be advantageous for individuals of all ages and health backgrounds because it integrates the mind and body via focused movement, breathing exercises, and artistic expression. Reducing stress and improving mood are both feasible outcomes (Leung & Li, 2023). Research into the potential of Chinese calligraphy to mitigate the social and psychological effects of illness has been carried out in Hong Kong, a place where Western treatment practices are increasingly blending with traditional Chinese medicine. Few studies have examined the impact of calligraphy on the emotional well-being of terminally ill patients, specifically how it might alleviate their anxiety and sadness. There is a lack of studies that look at the specific ways in which calligraphy could improve health in therapeutic or clinical contexts. There has been a plethora of research on mindfulness-based treatments and other approaches to stress reduction (Tam et al., 2025).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the effect of Chinese calligraphy on Life-Rising Illnesses?
- How does Life-Rising Illnesses influence Patients with Coordinate Depression?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research design:

Quantitative data were examined using SPSS version 25. Researchers employed the odds ratio and the 95% confidence interval to evaluate the strength and direction of the statistical association. The researchers established a statistically significant criteria at $p < 0.05$. Descriptive analysis revealed significant characteristics of the data. Quantitative techniques are frequently employed to assess data derived from polls, questionnaires, and surveys, as well as data analysed through computer statistical tools.

6.2 Sampling:

The research employed a simple sampling methodology. The study employed questionnaires to obtain its findings. A total of 340 specimens were selected using the Rao-soft approach. Out of 585 distributed questionnaires, 560 were returned; 75 were removed owing to incomplete responses. The study utilised 485 questionnaires.

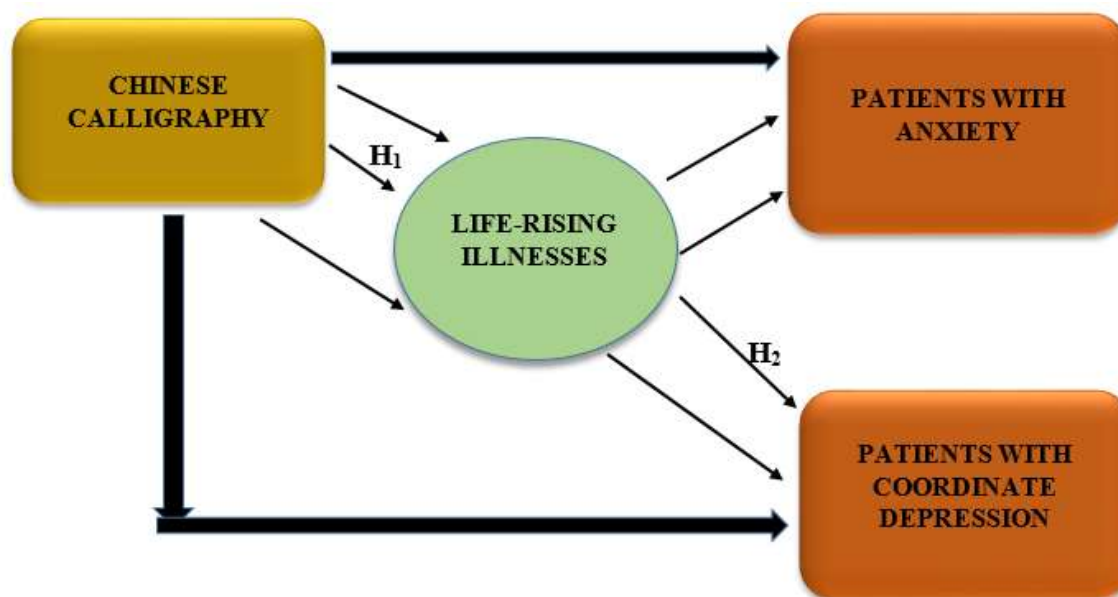
6.3 Data and Measurement:

The research mostly employed questionnaire surveys for data acquisition. Part B employed a 5-point Likert scale to assess the significance of many channels, both online and offline, while Part A collected vital demographic data. The requisite data was acquired from numerous secondary sources, including online databases.

6.4 Statistical Software: The statistical analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 25.

6.5 Statistical Tools: Descriptive analysis was employed to comprehend the essential attributes of the data. The researcher must analyse the data utilising ANOVA.

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESULTS

• Factor Analysis

A prevalent application of Factor Analysis (FA) is to reveal latent variables within visible data. In the lack of conclusive visual or diagnostic signs, it is standard practice to utilise regression coefficients for evaluations. In FA, models are essential for success. The objectives of modelling are to identify defects, intrusions, and explicit connections. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test is a method for evaluating datasets generated by multiple regression analyses. The model and sample variables are considered appropriate. The data exhibits redundancy, as indicated by the figures. Reduced proportions improve data comprehension. The KMO output ranges from zero to one. A KMO value ranging from 0.8 to 1 signifies a sufficient sample size. The following are the acceptable levels, as per Kaiser: The subsequent approval standards established by Kaiser are as follows:

A pitiful 0.050 to 0.059, below average 0.60 to 0.69

Middle grades often fall within the range of 0.70-0.79.

With a quality point score ranging from 0.80 to 0.89.

They marvel at the range of 0.90 to 1.00.

Table1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Testing for KMO and Bartlett's

Sampling Adequacy Measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin .957

The results of Bartlett's test of sphericity are as follows: approx. chi-square

df=190

sig.=.000

This demonstrates that assertions made for sampling purposes are authentic. Researchers assessed the significance of the correlation matrices by Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. A value of 0.957 signifies that the sample is sufficient, as per the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure. The p-value obtained from Bartlett's sphericity test is 0.00. The correlation matrix does not appear to be an identity matrix, as shown by a favourable result from Bartlett's sphericity test.

Table: KMO and Bartlett's

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.957
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Moreover, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity confirmed the broad applicability of correlation matrices. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy is 0.957. The researchers performed Bartlett's sphericity test, resulting in a p-value of 0.00. The correlation matrix was deemed inefficient because of a significant result from Bartlett's sphericity test.

❖ **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

• **Chinese Calligraphy:**

Calligraphy is a style of art that originated in China and is characterised by the use of brushes and ink to create elegant and expressive characters. People traditionally wrote the characters on silk or paper. In Chinese culture, it represents the pinnacle of artistic perfection and serves as a fundamental tool for artists to use to assert their individuality. Not only is it beneficial in terms of exchanging ideas, but it goes beyond that. Due to its significant connection to thoughts and traditional spiritual rituals, calligraphy is more highly esteemed than painting. When calligraphers create and embellish various scripts using strokes that are smooth and under control, they demonstrate their mastery of the technique (Tang et al., 2025). It is from a Greek

word that means "beautiful writing" or "drawing" that the term "calligraphy" originates. Both the art of making letters seem attractive and the craft of putting those letters together in a pretty fashion are examples of what is meant by the term "calligraphy" in today's society. Good handwriting, unlike outstanding handwriting, strives to make the letters appear in a particular way. Discovering the distinctive form of Chinese calligraphy is an excellent method to gain an understanding of the art and culture that existed throughout the ancient era. Chinese calligraphy, a significant component of China's cultural inheritance, is also a source of great joy and pride for the Chinese people (Wong et al., 2023).

❖ **MEDIATING VARIABLE**

- **Life-Rising Illnesses:**

The term "life-rising illnesses" is not normally used in the medical field; however, it is likely that the individual is referring to diseases that are associated with their way of life. How much a person consumes, how much they exercise, whether or not they smoke, and how much alcohol they consume are all examples of the kinds of elements that fall into this category. On the list of the most prevalent health conditions are cardiovascular disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and a number of different cancers (Xie et al., 2025). These diseases are increasing at an alarming rate as a result of modern lifestyles and urbanisation, and a global health emergency should be on the horizon as a result of this. This is a problem for people's health all around the world because the number of diseases that are linked to lifestyle choices is increasing. Among the many potential challenges, some of the more common ones include heart problems, diabetes, obesity, and mental health problems. The primary objective of the research is to demonstrate, via the use of real-life examples, how poor lifestyle choices, such as dealing with chronic stress, not getting enough exercise, and eating poorly, can have negative consequences. If an illness continues to worsen over an extended period of time, medical professionals consider it to be chronic and incurable. Medications and other treatments can effectively alleviate symptoms in the majority of cases. In addition to various mental health issues, long-term health difficulties include conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, seizures, and asthma (Ye et al., 2023).

❖ **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

- **Patients with Coordinate Depression:**

"Coordinate depression" is managing depression using collaborative care practices, which involve coordinated treatment. Those suffering from difficult or severe illnesses, or those juggling multiple health issues at once (e.g., cancer, chronic pain), will find this aspect of primary importance. Care coordinators, primary care physicians, and specialists work together to assess treatment efficacy, find and remove obstacles to care, and make sure patients follow their treatment regimens. People who are depressed and dealing with other health problems or who are looking for additional support may benefit greatly from this comprehensive approach. By acting as a go-between for patients with mood disorders and their primary care doctors and mental health specialists, case managers help patients access the system-level intervention known as collaborative care. The people can then receive the help they need. To streamline the detection and diagnosis of mood disorders, this collaboration has set as one of its objectives the regular administration of diagnostic tests for these conditions. Anxious adults had poorer balance, moved more slowly, and scored lower on a jumping and landing test compared to their healthy counterparts. Participants' health was not a concern. Arm muscles that are more rigid are associated with sadness, according to a test that measures muscular tone (Yick, 2025).

- **Relationship Between Chinese Calligraphy and Life-Rising Illnesses**

There is a relationship between Chinese calligraphy and those who are nearing the end of their lives because of the cultural, psychological, and therapeutic benefits that patients may experience through the art of Chinese calligraphy. These benefits are the reason why there is a connection between Chinese calligraphy and death. Creating an environment that is conducive to the development of inner peace is one of the benefits of practicing calligraphy. This is accomplished by devoting the practitioner's attention to the slow and deliberate strokes of the brush. Additionally, it assists in the management of feelings of emotional discomfort and relieving stress, both of which are beneficial. People who are suffering from terminal conditions, such as advanced cancer or chronic organ failure, may find comfort and assistance in writing down phrases like "peace" or "longevity." Writing down these words can be a very therapeutic experience (Tam et al., 2025). The very act of being in the same room as them is enough to instill optimism and spiritual power in them. Although calligraphy is not widely performed in Hong Kong, it is a form of art that is universally acknowledged to have strong cultural roots in China, from which it originated. In spite of the most trying of circumstances, patients are able to find comfort in the art of calligraphy. In addition to relieving the mental and physical suffering that individuals are going through, the process of working through their problems not only gives them a feeling of purpose and gratitude, but it also helps them feel less helpless. The practice of Chinese calligraphy is an all-encompassing strategy that can help people who are terminally ill alleviate their mental suffering, create their cultural identity, and improve their quality of life. The factors that were discussed earlier are the explanation for this. Learning and practicing Chinese calligraphy have been shown to have positive effects on a variety of mental and physical health measures, according to research that has been conducted on the subject. The levels of stress, physiological arousal, mood, focus, and cognitive capacities such as memory and attention are all included in these measures. Through the growth of emotional regulation and mental tranquillity, meditating on this subject may be able to assist in the alleviation of symptoms associated with anxiety, depression, and early dementia (Wong et al., 2023).

Consequently, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis: analyse the relationship between Chinese calligraphy and Life-Rising Illnesses.

“H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Chinese calligraphy and Life-Rising Illnesses.”

“H₁: There is a significant relationship between Chinese calligraphy and Life-Rising Illnesses.”

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	225	5655.586	1040.395	.000
Within Groups	492.770	259	5.436		
Total	40081.390	484			

This study produces significant findings. The F statistic is 1040.395, achieving significance with a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 alpha criterion. This indicates the, *“H₁: There*

is a significant relationship between Chinese calligraphy and Life-Rising Illnesses” is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

- **Relationship Between Life-Rising Illnesses and Patients with Coordinate Depression**

Depressive disorders are associated with an increased risk of developing chronic illnesses and have a negative impact on the prognosis of physical ailments. There exists a powerful relationship between the two that can be interpreted in both directions. Inflammation, changes in lifestyle (such as not spending enough time exercising or eating poorly), and the physical impacts of being sick for an extended period of time are the factors that contribute to this connection. Having a worse quality of life is one of the most apparent symptoms of depression. This can make it more challenging to deal with health problems and can also reduce the average lifespan (Ye et al., 2023). One of the most common mental health issues that people who are afflicted with life-threatening illnesses encounter is depression, which not only makes their situation much more stressful but also makes it more distressing. Cancer, heart failure, and end-stage renal disease are examples of serious or worst illnesses that can bring physical pain in addition to emotional distress, powerlessness, and dread of death. These illnesses can also cause physical agony. People who suffer from these disorders experience increased levels of pain, fatigue, and general sadness, which in turn increases the likelihood that they may develop depression. When a person who is suffering from an illness that poses a threat to their life develops depression, they may find it difficult to adhere to their treatment plan, they may lose the motivation to take care of themselves, and they may also hinder the effectiveness of medical therapies. The quality of life of patients and their family is negatively impacted when they experience feelings of pessimism, withdraw from social situations, or struggle to cope with their condition during their treatment. When people who are suffering from serious illnesses also suffer from depression, they find themselves caught in a vicious cycle: the illness makes them more mentally weak, and the melancholy makes it more difficult for them to deal with their illness. In order to provide an all-encompassing level of care, it is necessary to simultaneously attend to the patient's physical and mental health (Chiu et al., 2023).

Subsequent to the aforementioned dispute, the researcher posited a hypothesis aimed at investigating the relationship between Life-Rising Illnesses and Patients with Coordinate Depression.

“*H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Life-Rising Illnesses and Patients with Coordinate Depression.*”

“*H₂: There is a significant relationship between Life-Rising Illnesses and Patients with Coordinate Depression.*”

Table 3: H₂ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	163	5655.579	1050.052	.000
Within Groups	492.770	321	5.386		
Total	40081.390	484			

The findings of this study will be significant. The F statistic is 1050.052, signifying significance with a p-value of .000, which is below the .05 alpha level. This indicates the, “*H₂: There is a significant relationship between Life-Rising Illnesses and Patients with Coordinate Depression*” is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

9. DISCUSSION

The primary objective of the study is to improve the mental health of college students by the methodical collection, analysis, and evaluation of a variety of approaches taken by the researchers. An exhaustive review of previous research forms the foundation of this study. Many different strategies for enhancing mental health were discovered by the research. Therapy for mental health difficulties, social support, positive thinking, physical activity, and creative activities are some of the strategies that fall under this category. CCH is an innovative programme that is driven by social motivation from the ground up. Following the conclusion of this chapter, the researchers will conduct an analysis of the specific CCH capabilities that empirical studies have demonstrated to be useful in reducing risks associated with mental health difficulties. Through the use of positive literary sources, seal writing, and tracing as key strategies, as well as the careful selection of characters with advantageous geometric qualities, the purpose of this study is to offer a persuasive rationale for a particular methodology. According to the conclusions of the research, the incorporation of these components into calligraphy therapy may have the potential to either promote mental health or reduce the symptoms of mental disease. Using a complete examination and analysis of previous studies, the purpose of this study was to determine whether or not calligraphy treatment is successful in reducing the symptoms of mental disorders. Twenty-one objects were added to the collection after a thorough evaluation since it was determined that they were suitable for inclusion. The majority of studies have demonstrated that cognitive-cognitive therapy (CCT) is effective in assisting individuals who are experiencing neuropsychiatric symptoms in enhancing their ability to objectively evaluate their mental functioning and in altering specific behaviours.

10. CONCLUSION

Patients in Hong Kong who are affected by CCH and who are suffering from terminal illnesses, such as breast cancer, report that their feelings of worry and depression significantly improve. CCH has been shown to have beneficial effects, including an improvement in mood and cognitive function, a reduction in feelings of anxiety and depression, and a slowing down of biological processes within the body, according to research conducted on the topic. CBT is a great replacement treatment and intervention that needs to be considered by these individuals if they truly want to enhance their health and fitness. Individuals who participated in the Chinese calligraphy therapy included in the cancer treatment programme in Hong Kong, which included breast cancer patients, demonstrated a significant reduction in feelings of anxiety and hopelessness after the completion of the treatment. By investigating the effects of calligraphy on a wide range of parameters, such as attention, quality of life, psychotic symptoms, mood, and others, the researchers in this study attempted to answer the question, "How does calligraphy influence the mental health of individuals with schizophrenia?" Individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia experienced improvements in their attention and cognitive performance after engaging in calligraphy workouts. In contrast, the results were equivalent to those linked with TAU, which is another term for occupational therapy. At both the post-test and the follow-up, the control group displayed a higher likelihood of exhibiting psychotic symptoms than the calligraphy group did. A lesser rise in pleasant feelings was observed in the calligraphy group during the second examination, however. When compared to the TAU group, this group experienced a more modest increase in positive symptoms. As a result of the fact that this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is highly probable that the findings took into account the outbreak. It is of utmost significance to conduct assessments of one's mental and emotional wellness in this current circumstance.

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