

.Research Article

Social Distancing and Its Effect on Social Connectedness In the Algerian Society

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Abstract:

The researchers aimed through this study to identify the impact of Social Distancing on Social Connectedness in the Algerian society, where a descriptive-comparative method was used, the sample size reached 287 respondents, represents 287 family who were randomly selected from the statistical community, which consisted of parents and adult sons and daughters. The study's field were in the Chlef state, which located within 250 km west of the Algerian capital, and lasted for one month (from 15 March to 15 April 2020), the comparison was made at the level of social connectedness indicators, between the individuals who practice social distancing and individuals who didn't. The study reached the following results:

- 1- Social distancing increases the daily Family-disputes by 70.05%, and it multiply eight times for individuals practicing the social distancing more than individuals who don't. And 80.91% of the population practicing the social distancing has daily family-disputes. While 71.73% of the population who didn't Practice the social distancing didn't ever face any family-dispute.
- 2- The daily domestic-violence of individuals who practice social distancing is three times more than those who don't. So 52.28% of the population who practice social distancing, has daily cases of domestic-violence. While only 15.21% of the population who didn't practice social distancing had daily cases of domestic-violence.
- 3- Individuals who didn't practice social distancing visits their neighbors two times more than those who did practice social distancing.
- 4- Individuals who practice social distancing made daily inter-family phone-calls almost three times less than who didn't practice social distancing.

Keywords: The Social Distancing; Social Connectedness; Family-Dispute; The Domestic Violence

Introduction:

We meet because we have to, we need to feel safe, and we are used to meet so that we feel strong and belonging, we gather because the meeting makes us

feel that everyone of us is important, certainly we meet to give meaning to our lives. Human contact, whether in public places or narrow places, neutralizes real problems such as loneliness, fear and depression, as well as social chaos and social imbalance. The

closure of schools, noting that there are more than 9.2 million school-children during the 2019-2020 school year in Algeria, they found themselves overnight locked up between the houses walls. Universities and institutes, layoffs, even though the unemployment rate in Algeria was 11.4% in May 2019^[1], preventing individuals from moving freely due to the curfew, stopping public transportation and trains, stopping air traffic and closing land, sea and air borders, all of which cause severe social confusion, and its social consequences may last for many years longer than the health crisis itself. This crisis will compel us to rearrange our priorities, reflect on the possible and impossible, re-consideration of important sectors in society such as the health sector and the scientific and academic sector, make comparisons between countries and the methods used by them to protect their societies. In general, everyone is affected by this closure, while the elderly those over the age of 60 remain the most affected (Elderly according to the United Nations classification), not only from the health point of view and the mortality rate is greater than without those with Covid-19, but even the social consequences of social distancing measures in the world countries. Especially when we know that the number of Algerians aged 60 years and over in 2019 is nearly 11 million, out of Algeria's total population of 43 million, 55.3% of them suffer from chronic diseases^[2], in addition, the few visits that they receive from others, what makes them live in a situation of social exclusion, which causes what we call "intergroup anxiety" during the quarantine period. The human being has never known this method of communication like what we are seeing today from "conversations" and "video calls", and we think controversy between individuals may be less harmful than moving away or build walls between each other

The Problematic:

The social distancing that the world has known since the WHO declared Covid-19 as a pandemic, has left more than half of the world's population in a compulsory quarantine, thus we enter into an atmosphere of "Social Uncertainty", which if further exacerbated, may lead to "Social Depression", Eric

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Klinenberg, a New York University sociologist, said "we've also entered a new period of social pain, there's going to be a level of social suffering related to isolation and the cost of social distancing that very few people are discussing yet."^[3] Therefore, it was necessary to study the effects of social distancing on social connectedness. Getting closer to each other means more opportunities and less pain, so Brigham Young University published research showing that people with weaker social ties had a 50% increased likelihood of dying early than those with stronger ones,^[4] And even if we look at the issue in terms of the health response of individuals, a study shows that the non-social students responds more weakly to influenza vaccinations than the social-students do.^[5] And according to the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine report on February 2020, Individuals who practice social distancing are more likely to use alcohol and tobacco and exercise less,^[6] the latter makes it difficult for the individual to maintain good relations with family members and with peers, friends and neighbors. Forty systematic reviews of mainly observational studies were identified, largely from the developed world. Meta-analyses have identified a significant association between social isolation and loneliness with increased all-cause mortality and social isolation with cardiovascular disease.^[7] Loneliness which is an inevitable consequence of the generalized social distancing measures, scientists from the University of Pittsburgh put 304 individual into isolation, and afterward presented the volunteers to a chilly virus, those with more social contacts were less likely to develop symptoms,^[8] what turns our perceptions about the relationship between social contact and infection of Covid-19. For these reasons and others there is a widespread tendency to change the term "social distancing" by "physical distancing", so on 20 March 2020, WHO started using the term "physical exclusion" instead of "social exclusion" during press briefings^[9] on COVID-19, when the WHO said: "We're changing to say physical distance and that's on purpose because we want people to still remain connected",^[10] this is an attempt to avoid the harm caused by social distancing which it's maybe greater than the pandemic its more than half of the world's population in a compulsory quarantine, thus we enter into an atmosphere of "social uncertainty", which if further exacerbated, may lead to "social depression",

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distancing which it's maybe greater than the pandemic itself.With regard to indicators in Algeria during the period of quarantine and social distancing applied in the country, traffic accidents in Algeria decreased in the fifteen days that followed the authorities request that citizens stay at home by 34.73% over the same period before that announcement,^[11] a big number especially when we know that the number of vehicles in Algeria reached more than 6.4 million at the end of 2018,^[12] this means less movement of individuals in the streets, less shaking hands and questions about the conditions of friends less, less outings, especially with the presence of partial roaming in all states of the state except for the state of Blida, which is classified as a local senter of the pandemic. The relationship between social engagement and mortality was first identified in a pioneering study conducted by Berkman and Syme in 1979.^[13]This research focused on Californians aged between 30 and 69 years and found that those who lacked social contacts were more likely to die earlier than those who were well connected.^[14] On this basis, the study was launched from the following general question: What are the social distancing effects on social connectedness in the Algerian Society

Study Questions:

- 1- Does social distancing affect family-disputes rates?
- 2- Is there a differences in the rates of domestic-violence between individuals who practice social distancing and those who don't?
- 3- How are neighbors-visits affected by social distancing?
- 4- Is there a differences in the rates of daily phone calls between individuals who practice social distancing and those who don't?

Study Hypotheses:

- 1- The social spacing increases daily family conflict rates.

2- There is an increase in the rates of domestic-violence for individuals practicing social distancing more than for those who don't.

3- Neighbours-visits are declining among individuals who practice social distancing.

4- There is a decrease in the rates of daily phone calls for individuals practicing social distancing more than for those who don't.

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks:

The social distancing: The word distancing has its origin in Latin word distare, distant meaning standing apart,^[15] add to it the "social" term to mean you stay away from others whoever they are, your friends, your neighbors or people you used to see in your daily life. CDC see that social distancing means maintain a distance of at least 6 feet (2 meters) from others. Stay out of crowded places,^[16] also it defines the social distancing by keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice social or physical distancing: Stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people. Do not gather in groups. Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.^[17] European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) defines the social distancing by an action taken to minimise contact with other individuals; social distancing measures comprise one category of non-pharmaceutical countermeasures aimed at reducing disease transmission and thereby also reducing pressure on health services.^[18] The side effects of social distancing measures are often overlooked in most countries.

Social Connectedness:

The broad concept of social connectedness refers to the desire people have to create and maintain relationships, the social bonds they have with others, and the feeling of belongingness that results from these bonds,^[19] where Samuel Family Foundation and Synergos defines social connectedness as a socially connected people have meaningful and trusting relationships and bonds with those around them, including their peers, families and communities,^[20]

and these relationships are somewhat characterized by relative stability.

Family-Dispute:

These are the sharp differences that occur between the parents most of the time, and in other times between the children among themselves or between the parents and their children, and in general the rates of family disputes are in their normal rates on normal days, but the psychological and social pressure accompanying the pandemic, in addition to the individuals who saty more times with each other Some are due to exceptional practical holidays, layoffs and students from schools and universities, also narrow home space.

The Domestic Violence:

Domestic and family violence is characterised by patterns of abusive behaviour in an intimate relationship or other type of family relationship where one person assumes a position of power over another and causes fear,^[21] also it's a pattern of Coercive tactics that can include physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse, perpetrated by one person against an intimate partners, with the goal of establishing and maintaining power and control.^[22]

Methods:

The study aimed to identify the impact of social distancing measures on the relationships of Algerian individuals inside and outside the family, and across the virtual world of social networking sites. We relied on the comparative descriptive approach, and a sample of 287 volunteers was randomly selected, from the Chlef state, area of study. Where the individuals were divided into two groups, the first group includes individuals who practice social distancing, and the second group is the group of individuals who don't practice social distancing. The researchers relied on data collection in the survey tool that was designed to include indicators of study variables, which consists of seven questions:

I do it voluntarily	I do it involuntarily	I don't practice it	
1- Social Distancing:			
	No case	Few cases/ week	Daily cases
2- Family-dispute cases: (during 30 days)			
	No case	Few cases/ week	Daily cases
3- Cases of exposure to domestic violence:			
	Daily calls	Weekly calls	No calls at all
4- Interfamily phone calls: (during 30 days)			
	Daily visits	Weekly visits	No visits at all
5- Neighbors' visits :			
	Daily watch	Weekly watch	Don't ever watch
News			
6- TV Channels: General	7-	8-	9-
Comedy/drama			
	Daily use	Weekly use	Don't ever use
10- Social medias: Facebook	11-	12-	13-
Instagram			

Results and discussion:

Social Distancing" Practicing Data:

		Practicing social distancing voluntarily		Practicing social distancing involuntarily		didn't Practice social distancing		Total			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Fathers	Employed	37	22.56 %	18	23.37 %	4	8.69 %	59	20.55 %	65	22.64%
	Unemployed	1	0.6 %	1	1.92 %	4	8.69 %	6	2.09 %		
Mothers	Employed	21	12.8 %	8	10.38 %	3	6.52 %	32	11.14 %	73	25.43%
	Unemployed	3	1.82 %	15	19.48 %	23	50 %	41	14.28 %		
Sons	Employed	20	12.19 %	9	11.68 %	5	10.86 %	34	11.84 %	92	30.05%
	Student	37	22.56 %	2	2.59 %	0	0 %	39	13.58 %		
	Unemployed	4	2.43 %	12	15.58 %	3	6.52 %	19	6.62 %		
Daughters	Employed	15	9.14 %	6	7.79 %	0	0 %	21	7.31 %	57	19.86%
	Student	23	14.02 %	4	5.19 %	0	0 %	27	9.40 %		
	Unemployed	3	1.82 %	2	2.59 %	4	8.69 %	9	3.13 %		
Total		164	100 %	77	100 %	46	100 %	287	100%	287	100%
		57.14 %		26.82 %		16.02 %					

The above table shows that 83.96% of the Algerian population practiced social distancing during the thirty days of study period, and that positive response to official requests is due to the awareness of the Algerian people towards the Covid -19 pandemic, As the factors that lead to human gathering in that period are very small, there are no collective prayers in mosques, art shows or clothing stores. 56.52% of the population who didn't Practice social distancing are mothers, although this category (mothers) represents only a quarter of the sample size, this is explained by the rise in the category of women workers, especially in the medical sector and in services and other government sectors, as these sectors continued to open their doors to their workers. And only 12 out of 149 of young people (adult sons and daughters), or 8.05%, didn't respond to the procedures of social distancing, meaning that

young people are more serious trend toward the spread of Covid-19, due to their familiarity with social media on the different ways of transmitting the disease. This is the opposite of what researchers found in their study at Stanford University, United State of America, the new study surveyed 20,734, they found that the youngest group aged 18 to 31, had the highest rate of non-compliance, compared to other age groups, with 52.4% failing to follow the rules, and they failed to observe social distancing guidelines.^[23]The Algerians' acceptance of social distancing with conviction, this means that they are widely aware of the health, social and economic developments that are due to the pandemic, and this is what they indicate to them as a result of the fact that 68.04% of the population who practiced social distancing did this voluntarily

Social Distancing And Family-Dispute:

	Family-dispute cases (during 30 days)											
	Practicing the social distancing						didn't Practice the social distancing					
	No case		Few cases/ week		Daily cases		No case		Few cases/ week		Daily cases	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Fathers	0	0%	16	28.07%	41	71.92%	5	62.5%	1	12.5%	2	25%
Mothers	1	2.12%	7	14.89%	39	82.97%	19	73.07%	5	19.23%	2	7.69%
Sons	5	5.95%	8	9.52%	71	84.52%	6	75%	1	12.5%	1	12.5%
Daughters	0	0%	9	16.98%	44	83.01%	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%
Total	6	2.48%	40	16.59%	195	80.91%	33	71.73%	8	17.39%	5	10.86
	241						46					

Social distancing increases the daily Family-dispute by **70.05%**, and it multiply eight times to individuals practicing the social distancing more than individuals who don't. The reason for this is due to many factors combined, the blurring of the pandemic scene, the lack of clarity of what is to come and fear of the future, the difficulty of the economic situation, the tightness of the home that leads to increased anxiety and other disturbances resulting from it. And also fears of contagion, which leads us to become more conformist and less accepting of eccentricity, our moral judgments

become harsher and our sexual attitudes become more conservative.^[24]

Another result that we note is that 80.91% of the population practicing the social distancing has daily family-disputes.

The number of individuals is a lot in the house for long periods due to the obstruction of schools, universities and the various factories in the country. It made individuals spend more time with each other, into a real nightmare, where repetition has become the most shared feature of individuals. While 71.73% of the population who didn't Practice the social distancing didn't ever face any family-

dispute, because those individuals practices their lives more regularly, away from lockdown, they spend more hours with their counterparts in the streets and in economic institutions and work. Families worry about their children's future, due to the closing of schools and nurseries. Experts say that while some parents may worry about the impact stay-at-home orders can have on a child's social development, they will likely bounce back quickly if isolation only lasts a few months,^[25] so far, families are spending their second month in quarantine, which is likely to further exacerbate these concerns.

The economic difficulties that stand in the way of individuals are also causing a wave of anxiety and mistrust, which increases the rates of family disputes. The results of a study in New River Valley area of Virginia show that the most important factor responsible for preventing income loss is the modification of individual behavior; it drops the total income loss by 62% compared to the base case. The next most important factor is the closure of schools, which reduces the total income loss by another 40%.^[26]

Social Distancing And Domestic-Violence:

Cases of exposure to domestic-violence (during 30 days)												
	Practicing social distancing						Didn't practice social distancing					
	No case		Few cases/ week		Daily cases		No case		Few cases/ week		Daily cases	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Fathers	57	100%	0	0%	0	0%	8	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Mothers	2	4.65%	9	20.93%	36	76.59%	14	53.84%	6	23.07%	6	23.07%
Sons	12	14.28%	15	17.85%	57	67.85%	6	75%	2	25%	0	0%
Daughters	9	16.98%	11	20.75%	33	62.26%	3	75%	0	0%	1	25%
Total	80	33.19%	35	14.52%	126	52.28%	31	67.39%	8	17.39%	7	15.21%
	241						46					

The results shown in the table showed that the daily domestic-violence of individuals who practice social distancing are three times more than those who don't, we also find that 67.39% of individuals who didn't exercise social distancing were never subjected to domestic-violence. 52.28% of the population who practice social distancing, has daily cases of domestic violence. And only 15.21% of the population who didn't practice social distancing had daily cases of domestic-violence. 76.59% of mothers who practice social distancing, has daily cases of

domestic-violence, while 100% of fathers in the two groups have never experienced domestic-violence. First, fathers often leave the family home on a daily basis, to spend a different time buying supplies, even fathers who practice social distancing feel more free to go outside their homes, to sit for longer periods with their counterparts, and if they keep a distance between each other, in addition to being in an eastern society where male values are reconciled, it is difficult to find a father who was mistreated or declare of it. The high rates of domestic - violence, among mothers, are due to the routine in which they

live, as well as the increased time (unusually) that family members spend with each other at home. This affects the general mood of mothers who are not used to a single routine every day, in addition to children's skirmishes at home and the increased number of complaints submitted to mothers. The reason behind the high rates of domestic-violence for individuals practicing social distancing three times more than individuals who don't, is due to the imbalance in social relations compared to the situation in the past, where they can no longer see their loved ones, friends and closest people, in addition to the terrible decline in visits family. This causes a feeling of unacceptability of the situation and tension, just as an individual who is deprived of

social relationships feels emotional instability. Often the individual gets used to a certain type of social communication, and suddenly depriving them of them for a long time causes him depression, boredom, frustration and anger that turns into violence, which may be unilateral or multiple. The increased number of tense family members makes any disagreement no matter how large it turns into violence by one of the parties. The individuals observes new social behaviors about them, such as not shaking hands with others, avoiding hugs, and not approaching them, may lead some people to feel offended, leading them to take reactions that may be violent.

Social Distancing And Its Effect On Interfamily Phone Calls And Neighbors' Visits:

		Interfamily phone calls						Neighbors' visits					
		Daily calls		Weekly calls		No calls at all		Daily visits		Weekly visits		No visits at all	
Practicing social distancing	Practicing social distancing voluntarily	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
			41	25%	94	57.31%	29	17.68%	37	22.56%	86	52.43%	41
	Practicing social distancing involuntarily	7	9.09%	41	53.24%	29	37.66%	6	7.79%	18	23.37%	53	68.83%
Didn't practice social distancing		27	58.69%	15	32.60%	4	8.69%	18	39.13%	16	34.78%	12	26.08%

68.83% of the population who practice social distancing involuntarily, never visited their neighbors during the quarantine period. Individuals who didn't practice social distancing visits their neighbors two times more than those who did practice social distancing. Social distancing leads to a decrease in the number of visits by individuals to their neighbors, where it is possible that the neighbors are old and in need of assistance. Not visiting neighbors means staying alone for longer, and it causes not only social problems but even health problems. According to a new report from The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, social isolation has been linked to a 50 percent increased risk of dementia, a 29 percent increased risk of heart disease and a 32 percent increased risk of stroke.^[27]

In fact, chronic loneliness produces a similar mortality risk to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.^[28] This decline in visits is caused by hesitation and fear of infection, and the failure to ensure that the social

distancing measures are applied well without ensuring that the safe distance is left between individuals and their neighbors. Individuals who practice social distancing made a daily inter-family phone-calls almost three times less than who didn't practice social distancing. So 58.69% of the population who didn't practice social distancing, made daily interfamily phone calls. While less than 20% of the population practicing social distancing make a daily phone calls with their family members. The vast majority of individuals practicing social distancing have no daily contact with their family members outside the home, or with members of the extended family, but rather several times a week, unlike individuals who do not practice social distancing, due to the fact that these last two are more sense of balance between fear and hope for improvement of the situation in the future, and they feel more comfortable and it let them to check the health and economic conditions of others.

TV Channels Watching And Social Media Uses During The Social Distancing Measures:

		TV Channels						Social media			
		News		General		Comedy/ drama		Facebook/ Messenger		Instagram	
	Daily watch/ use	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	M	F	%
	Practicing social distancing voluntarily	Daily watch/ use	61	37.19%	55	33.53%	85	51.82%	41	25%	38
Weekly watching/ use		58	35.36%	62	37.80%	42	25.60%	74	45.12%	69	42.07 %
Don't ever watch/ use		45	27.43%	47	28.65%	37	22.56%	49	29.87%	57	34.75 %
Practicing social distancing involuntarily	Daily watch/ use	61	79.22 %	31	40.25%	3	3.89%	38	49.35%	49	63.63 %
	Weekly watching/ use	12	15.58%	28	36.36%	5	6.49%	21	27.27%	16	20.77 %
	Don't ever watch/ use	4	5.19%	18	23.37%	69	89.61%	18	23.37%	12	15.58 %
Didn't practicing social distancing	Daily watch/ use	5	10.86%	19	41.30%	24	52.17%	17	36.95%	11	23.91 %
	Weekly watching/ use	22	47.82%	18	39.13%	14	30.43%	25	54.34%	23	50%
	Don't ever watch/ use	19	41.30%	9	19.56%	8	17.39%	4	8.69%	12	26.08 %

89.61% of the population who practice social 89.6

Earlier this month, Singapore's communications and information minister S. Iswaran said that the use of fake news during the pandemic strengthened the government's decision last year to introduce the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (Pofma).^[31] That was one of the government's serious steps to confront fake news, and to dent its effects on social connectedness. Whereas 52.17% of the population who didn't practice social distancing watched comedy/ drama channels on a daily basis. 51.82% of the population practicing social distancing voluntarily daily watch comedy/ drama channels, this percentage decreases among the population practicing social distancing involuntarily to 3.89%. The good results that have been achieved at the level of social connectedness and the world. In Algeria the top three ranks are Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, and together they make up over **92%** of usage.^[32] At March the numbers of Algerian accounts (Facebook, Messenger and Instagram) increased by 1 755 000 who don't, and social distancing makes individuals made a daily interfamily phone calls almost three times less than those who didn't practice social distancing. Thus, we ask about the side effects of social distancing for long periods of time, and its implications for our social relations and their durability? Especially with the voices which warns us of the possibility of the pandemic continuing for a

among individuals who didn't practice social distancing are somewhat due to a sense of humor and comic and taking things simply, as their lack of social distancing led them to be more open to ridicule and lack of interest in daily and the pandemic news. 63.63% of individuals who practice social distancing involuntarily, use Instagram on a daily basis, and 49.35% of them use Facebook every day. While those ratios are balanced for practitioners of social distancing voluntarily, they are more balanced for individuals who didn't practice social distancing. These numbers mean that the social distancing measures increase the rates of individuals' use of social media, due to the long spare time and for pursuit of the latest developments in the pandemic in Algeria

(4.37%) account from the previous month, while those numbers decreased in February by -88 000 (-0.21%) from the previous month.^[33] This significant increase in the rates of social media usage explains the decline in neighbors visits, in family long time, one of the best solutions remains is to replace the "social distancing" by the "physical distancing", not just a change in the phrases but rather in how to deal with the covid-19, in a way that does not produce social problems for us in our attempt to find medical solutions to confront the pandemic.

Acknowledgments:

We thank the Police officers working in the Chlef district for the material and moral support which aimed to completing the field study a best way they can. We thank the Civil Protection services in Chlef and Tenes for their assistance, as well as for accompanying us in the field study and providing us with exclusive statisti

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