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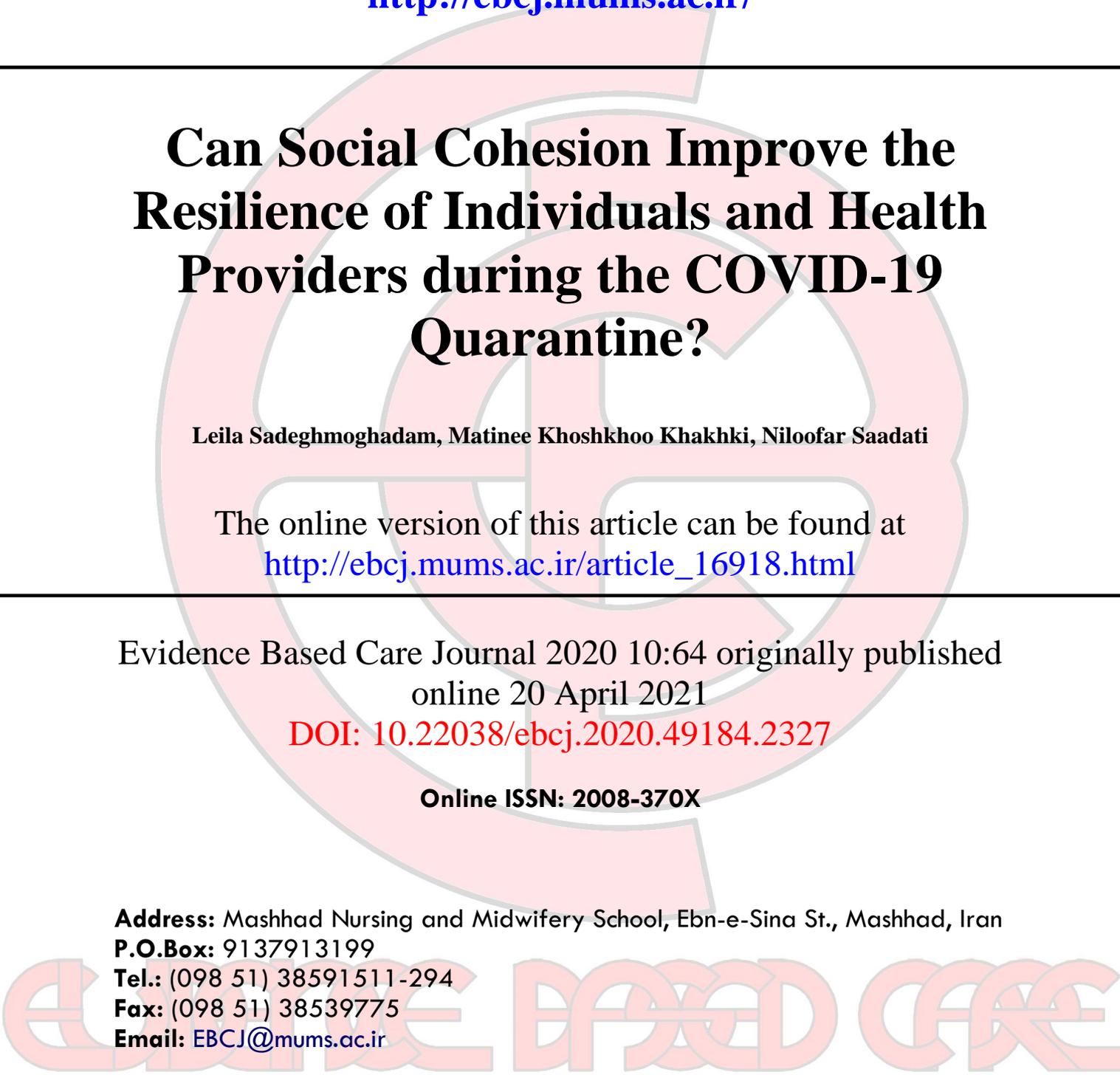
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Can Social Cohesion Improve the Resilience of Individuals and Health Providers during the COVID-19 Quarantine?

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Dear Editor

We read the published papers on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) with a focus on the psychological effects of quarantine. The results of studies showed that COVID-19, which was first observed in late December 2019 in Wuhan, China, has rapidly spread. On 19 February 2020, Iran reported its first confirmed cases of infections in Qom. The disease has rapidly spread around the world, and in March 2020 the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic (1). The rapid spread of the virus, along with the absence of effective medicines or vaccines against COVID-19, has prompted health policymakers in many countries to introduce quarantine policy as the most effective way to control the epidemic (2).

Quarantine has been considered an important early health measure in the epidemic of diseases, especially infectious diseases in the past (3), and investigated in several studies for its negative psychological effects, such as anxiety, depression (4), and isolation. In addition, the persistence of psychological symptoms is reported after the termination of quarantine. Researchers recommend interventions, such as remote counseling, web-based training (5) and other training activities, awareness, and transparency of information by health professionals and policymakers, for the reduction of anxiety and other psychological symptoms to lessen the effects of quarantine (6). In these types of epidemics, anxiety management is one of the most important factors affecting society and practicing health interventions and guidelines (4).

At the time when the corona crisis has become a public and pervasive issue and common danger to all individuals in society, although not everyone is equally affected, there is a greater sense of solidarity and no conflict of interest. In this situation, individuals try to help each other in various ways, such as providing the correct information about the condition of the disease and related issues (7) and singing at certain hours from the windows of buildings to relieve the loneliness and attention of each other (8). Studies over the past 20 years on the effects of pandemics on social cohesion can help observe the effects and best responses to COVID-19, especially in developing countries (9). Social solidarity in Iranian society has always increased in the face of adverse events, such as wars, floods, and earthquakes.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in Iran, popular spontaneous measures were aimed at helping in difficult epidemic conditions and leading to social cohesion in Iranian society. These measures may include renting out rentals, making jokes about COVID-19 shared on social

networks leading to increased resilience, and appreciating the dedication and hard work of nurses and doctors. Various ways also include lighting candles on balconies, going home to distribute disinfectants in disadvantaged areas, disinfecting ATMs, street surfaces, and passages by volunteers, and providing needs and shopping items for the elderly and disabled.

It is suggested to carry out studies on the psychological effects of quarantine with regard to issues, such as cohesion and social cohesion, cultural context, and positive dimensions of the issues. It seems that the consideration of these issues can provide valuable data for the formulation of health and even treatment policies and programs focusing on social capital (as a hidden force in the relationships between individuals in a society).

Keywords: COVID-19, Quarantine, Social cohesion, Iran

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