

## Challenges of the pandemic: The reality of health professionals in the face of COVID-19

**Pedro Fechine Honorato<sup>1</sup>, Dhiego Alves de Lacerda<sup>2</sup>, Anaylle Vieira Lacerda de Oliveira<sup>3</sup>, Hugo Felipe Rodrigues da Silva<sup>4</sup>, João Vitor Guimarães Lima<sup>5</sup>, Sara Gonçalves Barros<sup>6</sup>, Francisca Evelyn Abreu de Lira<sup>7</sup>, Lorena Nogueira Xavier Rolim<sup>8</sup>, Lohany Custódio Pereira de Carvalho<sup>9</sup>, Ana Carla de Oliveira Johnen<sup>10</sup>, Advisor: Dr. Caio Visalli Lucena da Cunha<sup>11</sup>.**

### ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers faced serious physical and mental challenges, such as work overload, PPE shortages, and the risk of SARS-CoV-2 contamination, resulting in heightened stress and psychological upheaval. The study reveals that these workers suffered not only from psychological pressure, but also from a lack of resources and adequate support, which aggravated mental exhaustion. The research underlines the urgent need for health policies that offer better psychological support and safe working conditions.

**Keywords:** Health Professionals, Pandemic, COVID-19.

### INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, exposed health professionals to physical and mental challenges, such as work overload, shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and constant risk of contamination by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (Bezerra *et al.*, 2020; Teixeira *et al.*, 2020). Nurses, nursing technicians, physicians, and physiotherapists face stress and psychological disorders in high-pressure environments and crowded hospitals (Lopes *et al.*, 2022; Prado *et al.*, 2020; Miranda *et al.*, 2020).

The main objective of this study is to explore the specific challenges and various difficulties that these health professionals have constantly faced during the pandemic, highlighting the implications for mental and physical health, hospital logistics, and public health policies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Santa Maria University Center (UNIFSM) – PB

<sup>2</sup> Santa Maria University Center (UNIFSM) – PB

<sup>3</sup> Santa Maria University Center (UNIFSM) – PB

<sup>4</sup> CESMAC/Fejal – AL

<sup>5</sup> Unex-Itabuna – BA

<sup>6</sup> Faculdade Paraíso (FAP) – PE

<sup>7</sup> Educational Center of Higher Education of Patos (UNIFIP) – PB

<sup>8</sup> Santa Maria University Center (UNIFSM) – PB

<sup>9</sup> Santa Maria University Center (UNIFSM) – PB

<sup>10</sup> City University of São Paulo (UNICID) – SP

<sup>11</sup> Santa Maria University Center (UNIFSM) – PB



## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study uses a literature review to explore the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on health professionals. Scientific articles from journals registered in virtual libraries and databases such as the *Scielo portal* were consulted, focusing on texts that address the coronavirus and the experience of health professionals.

Articles outside the scope of the theme or that deal with other aspects of the health system were excluded. The analysis also includes official documents and specific theoretical references to enrich the understanding of the challenges faced by these workers.

## **RESULTS**

Health professionals face not only the risk of contamination by the coronavirus, but also a deep mental exhaustion caused by psychological pressure, work overload, and distance from family (Bezerra *et al.*, 2020; Teixeira *et al.*, 2020; Miranda *et al.*, 2020). Living with deaths and the lack of adequate structures intensify the feeling of lack of protection and excessive responsibility, severely impacting the mental health of these workers (Lopes *et al.*, 2022; Duarte *et al.*, 2021; Prado *et al.*, 2020).

During the pandemic, they faced multiple challenges, such as work overload due to increased patients and extended shifts, shortages of PPE and other essential resources, and high levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress (Ramos-Toescher *et al.*, 2020; Bezerra *et al.*, 2020). Although coping measures such as psychological support and training have been implemented, their effectiveness has varied between institutions and regions (DANTAS, 2021; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2020; Vedovato *et al.*, 2021).

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed weaknesses in health systems and highlighted the need for robust policies to ensure adequate resources, psychological support, and safe working conditions for health workers. Building resilient health systems is essential to protect and support these workers and ensure quality care. It is urgent to address the current problems affecting the mental health of these professionals, who continue to work under intense pressure and wear and tear while the pandemic persists.



## REFERENCES

- Lopes, J. M., et al. (2022). Uso elevado de psicofármacos durante a pandemia da COVID-19: Uma análise a partir de levantamentos epidemiológicos. *Research, Society and Development*, 11(8), e47511831180-e47511831180.
- Duarte, N., et al. (2021). Estratégias de promoção da saúde mental na atenção primária à saúde no contexto da Covid-19: Uma revisão integrativa. *Research, Society and Development*, 10(11), e176101119527-e176101119527.
- Prado, A. D., et al. (2020). A saúde mental dos profissionais de saúde frente à pandemia do COVID-19: Uma revisão integrativa. *Revista Eletrônica Acervo Saúde*, (46), e4128-e4128.
- Bezerra, G. D., et al. (2020). O impacto da pandemia por COVID-19 na saúde mental dos profissionais de saúde: Revisão integrativa. *Revista Enfermagem Atual in Derme*, 93.
- Teixeira, C. F. de S., et al. (2020). A saúde dos profissionais de saúde no enfrentamento da pandemia de Covid-19. *Ciencia & Saúde Coletiva*, 25, 3465-3474.
- Miranda, F. M. D.'A., et al. (2020). Condições de trabalho e o impacto na saúde dos profissionais de enfermagem frente a Covid-19. *Cogitare Enfermagem*, 25.
- Ramos-Toescher, A. M., et al. (2020). Saúde mental de profissionais de enfermagem durante a pandemia de COVID-19: Recursos de apoio. *Escola Anna Nery*, 24, e20200276.
- Dantas, E. S. O. (2021). Saúde mental dos profissionais de saúde no Brasil no contexto da pandemia por Covid-19. *Interface-Comunicação, Saúde, Educação*, 25, e200203.
- Ribeiro, A. P., et al. (2020). Saúde e segurança de profissionais de saúde no atendimento a pacientes no contexto da pandemia de Covid-19: Revisão de literatura. *Revista Brasileira de Saúde Ocupacional*, 45, e25.
- Vedovato, T. G., et al. (2021). Trabalhadores (as) da saúde e a COVID-19: Condições de trabalho à deriva?. *Revista Brasileira de Saúde Ocupacional*, 46, e1.