


Impact of social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the health of older adults

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevned2024.012-059>

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ABSTRACT

The study reveals results obtained from the interview of 1195 older adults, regarding the impact of social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the health care of these people.

Keywords: Elderly, COVID-19, Impact of the pandemic, Health of the elderly.

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INTRODUCTION

The social isolation adopted in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic had a great impact on the lives of Brazilians. The elderly population, as they are considered a risk group, was especially affected by this measure, since the recommendations to these individuals were even more rigorous, which may have even impaired their medical follow-up, access to treatments, and the performance of other important health activities. Despite this, few studies have evaluated this effect in this portion of the population.

OBJECTIVES

In this sense, this study aims to evaluate the impact of social isolation on access to health care in the elderly population in the period between March and November 2020.

METHODS

An extension project was developed by the Academic League of Geriatrics and Gerontology of UFRJ (LIAG-UFRJ) divided into two stages, whose participants were students of health courses at the FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO. First, 8 theoretical classes on elderly health were taught through the StreamYard and YouTube platforms. Then, based on the knowledge obtained in the course, each extension worker was in charge of interviewing 2 to 5 elderly people aged 60 and over, remotely, through a standardized questionnaire made available with 69 varied and objective questions on topics covered in the theoretical classes, through the Google Forms platform.

For the formulation of this study, 7 questions were selected, divided into three axes: Adherence to social isolation, repercussion of access to health services and access to regular medications. All data were analyzed in groups and anonymously.

RESULTS

Responses were obtained from 1195 older adults, of which 95.6% (1142) partially or fully adhered to social isolation between March and November 2020. During this period, although 76.7% (916) of the interviewees stated that they had regular follow-up before the pandemic, 44.3% (529) did not go to any medical appointment during this period.

In addition, 41.3% (494) stopped performing scheduled exams and 36.5% (436) interrupted activities such as physiotherapy, speech therapy and other activities important to their health. Regarding the use of medications, the majority - 94.2% (1008) - stated that they had continued the use of their routine medications.



CONCLUSION

The study revealed, therefore, that there was a great impact of social isolation measures on the care routine of these older adults, since most of them partially or fully adhered to isolation. In this sense, it was observed that there was a loss in access to health services for a significant portion of this population, as well as the discontinuity of activities and treatments that were important for their well-being. Thus, the consequences of this impact must be evaluated in the long term.



REFERENCES

The study is a field analysis, no references were used for its elaboration