

## ACADEMIC STUDENTS IN THE VACCINATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST COVID-19

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**Abstract:** With the spread of COVID-19 around the world, global dynamics have changed, so the rapid and effective development of vaccines has become necessary to reduce deaths from the pandemic. In this context, an emergency National Immunization Plan (PNI) was developed and, therefore, volunteers were needed for the development and application of the vaccination campaign against COVID-19. Thus, health science students were protagonists of the immunization program with the highest percentage of volunteers. This work is a descriptive study, in the model of experience report, which aims to demonstrate the experiences, positive and negative of the academics about the elapsed months of volunteering. In addition, the results of the interaction between several students, from public and private institutions of various courses, were positive, as there was a break in the social and academic bubbles, in addition, it was undoubtedly enriching for the training of health professionals more qualified to deal with real situations of the Unified Health System (S.U.S.).

**Keywords:** Immunization program, COVID-19, health science students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the end of 2019, the first cases of pneumonia began in Wuhan, a city in China, which quickly spread around the world and became a pandemic. During 2020 most countries closed borders, schools joined the distance learning modality and physical companies closed and moved to the home office HUANG C, et al., 2020. With the arrival of vaccination against COVID-19, it was created hope for the return of previously experienced normality (WHO, 2021). Being considered by the World Health Organization (WHO), in January 2020, a state of emergency, due to its rapid expansion (OLIVEIRA AC, et al., 2020).

In Brazil, 5,323,630 cases and 155,900 confirmed deaths of COVID-19 were officially recorded in the first 6 months, according to the Federal Government platform, Coronavirus Panel (<https://covid.saude.gov.br/>). In this context, a lockdown was adopted in the country, in order to contain the spread of the disease, in addition to hand hygiene measures and the use of masks (SILVA, 2020).

With this, it was undoubtedly necessary to develop vaccines to minimize the pandemic, and thus, reduce the number of deaths and provide the return of daily life with face-to-face coexistence (BRASIL, 2020). The speed of submission of proposals for vaccines against COVID-19 demonstrates the scientific advance of science and public health, in addition to the need for investment in science (SOUZA, 2021a).

Vaccination against communicable diseases is one of the most effective methods for minimizing their spread, being essential to face a pandemic caused by a virus that is transmitted by the respiratory route. For vaccination to be effective, equitable distribution is necessary, so that the results are effective (CASTRO, 2021a).

The vaccine is a defense mechanism, of biological preparation that aims to stimulate the immune response with the production of defense cells to protect vaccinated people from infectious diseases. Thus, minimizing the occurrence of vaccine-preventable diseases, being the greatest epidemiological control mechanism ever developed (AKIRA HOMMA, et al, 2020).

It is the responsibility of the nursing team to organize and manage the vaccine, with the fight against COVID-19, the importance of this workforce and its protagonism at all levels of care became clear (SOUZA, 2021b). Thus, nursing students need to have experience during their academic trajectory in order to train qualified professionals.

In February 2021, the vaccination campaign against COVID-19 started throughout the Brazilian territory, thus, it needed volunteers to develop mass immunization. In addition, academic training is based on the tripod of teaching, research and extension, with the immunization process being a possibility to join the university tripod and helping in an academic preparation (CAVALCANTE et al., 2019).

In this context, students in the health area made themselves available for work, which included registering the vaccinated in the system, filling out vaccination cards and assisting in the management of vials within the posts.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This is a descriptive study of the experience report type, with the aim of describing the experience of working together with other professionals in the front line of the fight against COVID-19 in Brazil. Being using reports of academics about their experiences, positive and negative.

## **EXPERIENCE REPORT**

During the period of phase one of the immunization campaign against COVID-19, an undoubtedly necessary role was played by students of health sciences, the vaccination posts, throughout the territory of the state of Pará, churches, basic health units and schools, given to the municipality to temporarily house the immunization post. For the management and administration of some immunizers, it was necessary to use refrigerated environments because of their sensitivity to external temperature, which in Pará is higher than that recommended by the manufacturer. The period carried out was during the first phase of the vaccination journey, starting in January 2021 and ending in November 2021. It was organized by the

municipal health departments together with the Ministry of Health based on the National Immunization Program (PNI).

Health science students, regularly enrolled in a higher education institution, public or private, who participated voluntarily and with availability in the morning and/or afternoon shift. In this context, volunteers perform various functions, such as supporters, vaccinators, aspirators and registrars.

Regarding the vaccination schedule, the municipal health department was responsible for designating the public who would receive the vaccine, according to the needs presented. Starting with the groups with the highest risk of worsening the disease and the highest rate of exposure to the coronavirus.

Carrying out the anamnesis was the responsibility of the academics who were assigned to the record. In addition, an analysis was made of whether the individual who was waiting fits in the group selected to receive the immunizer at that time.

The aspirators were responsible for separating the dose, this group was responsible for noting in the minutes how many doses were given in a bottle. In addition, the vaccinators were preferably professionals trained in higher education institutions in the area of health and nursing technicians, this group only had contact with the syringe already filled and administered it.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND REFLECTIONS**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the routine of the entire Brazilian population, bringing uncertainty about numerous everyday factors, in addition to increasing fear, anxiety, stress and other negative points in the lives of most of the population. The probability of an effective vaccine brought hope to Brazilians, being a possibility to minimize the number of deaths and the fear

of losing a loved one.

Being of paramount importance for academic training that students have practices in the daily life of the UNIFIED HEALTH SYSTEM, the immunization campaign against COVID-19 served as support for the development of more qualified professionals to deal with the reality experienced in vaccine rooms, resource management and sectoral organization.

In addition, the practical interaction between the various courses in the health sciences helps in the training of more qualified professionals to carry out an integrative work. In addition, there is an exchange of knowledge and experiences of the reality of each course and each institution, minimizing pre-existing ideas among academics, being possible through the integration of activities and the formation of critical opinions about the way an individual acts through a problem based on its socio-cultural context.

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