

THE INCREASE IN THE INCIDENCE OF MENTAL DISORDERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic represented a major challenge for global public health, in addition to significant changes in people's lives. Going beyond the physical consequences of the disease, the pandemic also compromised the mental health of individuals. Social isolation, uncertainty about the future and changes in routines can generate stress, anxiety, sleep disorders and depression. In this context, it is important to understand how the pandemic affects mental health and what are the possible interventions to minimize the negative effects.

OBJECTIVE

This article aims to review the literature on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health with an emphasis on depression and anxiety and discuss possible interventions to prevent or treat mental problems related to the pandemic. Methodology: Searches were carried out in the Pubmed, Cochrane and Virtual Health Library databases using the terms "COVID-19", "mental health", "depression" and "anxiety". Articles published between January 2020 and March 2023, in Portuguese, English or Spanish, were selected, which addressed the topic of mental health in the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESULTS

The COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with an increased prevalence of mental problems such as post-traumatic stress symptoms, sleep disorders, substance use disorders, with a significant increase in the prevalence of anxiety disorders and depression in several countries. Furthermore, the pandemic generated greater social and economic vulnerability, considered an aggravating factor for these disorders. We found that the most affected groups were healthcare professionals, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses, informal workers and

minority groups. The research showed that the main stress factors were fear of infection, financial losses and duration of the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated significant impacts on mental health, with an increase in the prevalence of anxiety and depression disorders in several countries. We emphasize that strategies are developed not only to contain the physical damage caused by illness, but it is also imperative that strategies are implemented to prevent and treat these psychiatric disorders, including the adoption of public health measures. It is important that there is special attention to the most vulnerable people, such as health professionals and minority groups, and that appropriate interventions are developed to prevent or treat mental problems related to the pandemic, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, conversation circles and support Remote psychological care are effective alternatives to guarantee access to necessary care, and can be implemented in primary care.