



COVID-19 IN BRAZIL: “HEALTH IS A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT OF THE CITIZENS”

COVID-19 NO BRASIL: “A SAÚDE É UM DIREITO CONSTITUCIONAL DOS CIDADÃOS”

COVID-19 EN BRASIL: “LA SALUD ES UN DERECHO CONSTITUCIONAL DE LOS CIUDADANOS”

Rafael Mozart da Silva ¹

Manuscript received on: May 10, 2021.

Approved on: October 18, 2021.

Published: October 25, 2021.

Keywords: Public Health; COVID-19; Vaccination; Coronavirus.

Palabras clave: Salud pública; COVID-19; Vacunación; Coronavirus.

Palavras-chave: Saúde pública; COVID-19; Vacinação; Coronavírus.

Dear Editor,

the COVID-19 pandemic caused by a serious acute respiratory syndrome has become a global issue^{1,2,3,4}. Brazil, just as many other countries, goes through an unprecedented crisis on its health system, with catastrophic socioeconomic consequences⁵. Brazil has reached the mark of 14,754,910 cases with 407,639 deaths caused by the COVID-19⁶ and it is observed a constant rising curve of contamination. It is known that the virus has high transmissibility⁷ and therefore the Brazil is facing a chaotic situation, crowded hospitals, some with more than 100% of occupation and a growing waiting line for a chance of an ICU bed⁸.

¹ Doctor in Civil Engineering by the State University of Campinas. Professor at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. Researcher at the Transport Systems Laboratory.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0314-757X>
Email: rafael.mozart@ufrgs.br



There is lack of respirators and oxygen cylinders which are highly needed for the treatment of COVID-19 patients. The current situation is so aggravated, that the doctors are having to choose between “who is going to live or die”, since it is not possible to save all the infected patients lives due to the lack of structure and hospital resources. The vaccination process is very slow, and it has become a logistic challenge to serve the entire population, because of the territorial extension of the country. It can be noticed that the delay on implementation the federal government's commercial agreements with different vaccine suppliers and the lack of government leadership and the political aspects, led to the change of four health ministers in the middle of the pandemic, contributed to the current situation in the country.

In addition to the collapse in health systems, Brazil is currently facing political and economic problems. In the political sphere, there is a “fight” between the different orders of power (federal, state and municipal). Recently, The President of the Republic Jair Bolsonaro filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Federal Court against measurements which were imposed by the governors of the States of Bahia, Rio Grande do Sul and the Distrito Federal, in which it was restricted the opening of business in non-essential activities, and also restricting the circulation of people at night and early morning.

The minister of the Supreme Federal Court (STF) Marco Aurélio de Mello has denied the request of the President Jair Bolsonaro to take down the decrees which impose restrictive measures to avoid the COVID-19 proliferation⁹. Several municipalities in Brazil, adopted the shared management system for the facing of the COVID-19, however, it is observed divergences among governors and mayors regarding the imposed restrictions, such as the ban on staying in public places without access control (beaches and squares), the opening of non-essential services and also the ban on holding public or private festive events, among other restrictions, as they end up generating an economic impact on cities.

The economic effects generated by COVID-19 in Brazil are severe. It is estimated that the pandemic will cost to the country of approximately 700 billion reais, that is, 10% of the Gross Domestic Product¹⁰ and this may cause another “crisis” to “economy” post-pandemic.



The COVID-19 pandemic has caused dramatic changes in people's lives, especially those with low incomes. Even with the advances and the reduction of income and education inequalities in the last decades in the country, socioeconomic disparities are still elevated and become a problem in the face of a pandemic scenario, as millions of Brazilians live in highly dense communities, with precarious housing conditions and very poor sanitation, increasing the risk of contamination by COVID-19¹¹.

The country faces the worst moment in the health area, as there is no national vaccination policy and it is noticed a lack of governance at the federal level, in order to face the pandemic. The impression that one has in the country, is that already there is an electoral dispute for the presidency and for the governors, scheduled for 2022, since many actions and resources to face the COVID-19 pandemic are already dictated according to political and economic alignment of the current management.

It is necessary to understand that the health care of Brazilian citizens is a matter of the State and not of the government, that is, regardless of the political party, social class, race, religious creed, everyone has the right to an adequate treatment for COVID-19, as this is envisaged in the country's Federal Constitution, according to "Art. 196. Health is the right of all and the duty of the State, guaranteed through social and economic policies aimed at reducing the risk of disease and other grievances and universal and equal access to actions and services for their promotion, protection and recovery¹²". Lives are worth more than votes.

REFERENCES

1. Huang C, Wang Y, Li X, Ren L, Zhao J, Hu Y, et al. Clinical features of patients infected with 2019 novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China. *Lancet*. 2020;395(10223):497–506.
2. Leite KFS, Cheng K, Kumar S, Chayamiti EMPC, Costa M, Tung MC, et al. Máscaras do Bem: An analysis of face-mask performance from a volunteer mask-making initiative in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil. *Public Heal Pract*. 2021;2(January):100094.
3. Sasaki N, Kuroda R, Tsuno K, Kawakami N. Workplace responses to COVID-19 associated with mental health and work performance of employees in Japan. *J Occup Health*. 2020;62(1):1–6.



4. Pereira RHM, Braga CKV, Servo LM, Serra B, Amaral P, Gouveia N, et al. Geographic access to COVID-19 healthcare in Brazil using a balanced float catchment area approach. *Soc Sci Med.* 2021;273(January).
5. Teixeira SC. COVID-19 and mass gatherings: emerging and future implications of the Brazilian carnival for public health. *Public Health.* 2020;187(2020):62–4.
6. WHO. Covid dashboard [Internet]. World Health Organization. 2021 [cited 2021 May 4]. Available from: <https://covid19.who.int/>
7. Santana VR, Aquino TR de, Brito BM de, Almeida CC, Barreto LB. COVID-19: TELEMONITORING AS A PROPOSAL FOR EDUCATION, CARE AND COPING IN PRIMARY CARE. EXPERIENCE REPORT. *Práticas e Cuid Rev Saúde Coletiva* [Internet]. 2021;2:1–12. Available from: <https://revistas.uneb.br/index.php/saudecoletiva/article/view/9967>
8. Taylor L. Covid-19: Is Manaus the final nail in the coffin for natural herd immunity? *BMJ.* 2021;372:2021.
9. BBC News. Marco Aurélio nega pedido de Bolsonaro para barrar medidas contra covid [Internet]. 2021 [cited 2021 May 3]. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-56503701>
10. Agência Brasil. Ações para enfrentar coronavírus totalizam R\$ 700 bi, diz Guedes [Internet]. 2021 [cited 2021 May 4]. Available from: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/economia/noticia/2020-03/acoes-para-enfrentar-coronavirus-totalizam-r-700-bi-diz-guedes>
11. Martins-Filho PR, Quintans-Júnior LJ, de Souza Araújo AA, Sposato KB, Souza Tavares CS, Gurgel RQ, et al. Socio-economic inequalities and COVID-19 incidence and mortality in Brazilian children: a nationwide register-based study. *Public Health* [Internet]. 2021;190(September 2020):4–6. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2020.11.005>
12. BRASIL. Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil: D.O. 5 de outubro de 1988 [Internet]. 1988 [cited 2021 May 4]. Available from: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constituicaocompilado.htm