

**PRIMARY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS VERSUS COVID 19: IMPACT OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS?**

Mariluce Rodrigues Marques Silva^{1,2}, Waleska Maria Almeida Barros^{1,2,3}, Ana Patrícia da Silva Souza^{1,2}, Ana Beatriz Januário da Silva^{1,2}, Matheus Santos de Sousa Fernandes¹, Roberta Karlize Pereira Silva^{2,3}, Karollainy Gomes da Silva^{2,3} and Viviane de Oliveira Nogueira Souza^{4*}

¹Programa de Pós-Graduação Em Neuropsiquiatria e Ciências do Comportamento, Centro de Ciências da Saúde, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Recife, Pernambuco, Brasil.

²Centro Integrado de Tecnologias em Neurociência (CITENC), Centro Universitário Osman Lins (UNIFACOL), Vitória de Santo Antão, Pernambuco, Brasil.

³Departamento de Fisioterapia, Centro de Ciências da Saúde, Centro Universitário Osman Lins (UNIFACOL), Vitória de Santo Antão, Pernambuco, Brasil.

⁴Núcleo de Nutrição, Centro Acadêmico de Vitória (CAV), Universidade Federal de Pernambuco – Vitória de Santo Antão, Pernambuco, Brasil.

*Corresponding Author: Viviane de Oliveira Nogueira Souza

Núcleo de Nutrição, Centro Acadêmico de Vitória (CAV), Universidade Federal de Pernambuco – Vitória de Santo Antão, Pernambuco, Brasil.

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 is a contagious infectious disease caused by the coronavirus (SARS-COV2), it manifests itself mainly affecting the respiratory system and its course can evolve as a simple cold or progress to a severe respiratory syndrome. This condition emerged as a pandemic event, totaling more than 40 million cases worldwide, with substantial records of deaths. Health professionals appear in this scenario as true agents that promote the care of these patients, being involved in direct and / or indirect care, which has left many in a situation of vulnerability in several aspects, especially psychological ones. Several surveys highlight the professionals of the emergency services in the performance and coping of COVID-19. However, it is not only emergency services professionals who are exposed to this threat. Likewise, professionals who work in primary care services and serve a large contingent of patients, being the first gateway to serve the population, which puts these professionals at risk. Therefore, the objective of this work is to highlight the importance of research that shows the performance of these primary care professionals in the care of patients with COVID-19.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Primary care, Health professionals.

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the coronavirus (SARS-COV2), an agent that mainly affects the respiratory tract and that can cause a common cold, MERS syndrome in the Middle East and even a severe respiratory syndrome.^[1] Worldwide, recent data register 48,534,508 cases of COVID-19 with a balance of 1,231,017 deaths, Brazil continues with 5,590,025 cases, respectively, of these 161,106 are death records.^[2] COVID-19 is inserted in a violent and often fatal context that presents itself as a pandemic challenge for everyone and leaves health professionals vulnerable to psychological aggressions.^[3]

Researchers have published articles on the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health professionals, however, professionals working in primary health care were not included in the study.^[4] This proposal aims to offer services to the general population based on scientific evidence, which makes health services accessible to the population, representing the first level

of contact between the family and the community with the national health system. Primary health care is focused on the main health problems that involve the community and, according to their needs, provides prevention, protection, healing, and rehabilitation. In addition, professionals can early identify serious cases that should be referred to specialized services.^[5]

Therefore, professionals working in primary and / or basic care, in the same way as other services, can have direct contact with healthy patients or those affected by insults; therefore, they are also in a situation of vulnerability when related to exposure to infectious agents and susceptible to COVID-19 and, consequently, to diseases that may reflect psychological illness.^[6]

Public health actions were created in the country specifically for this situation, such as the protocol for the management of patients and health professionals in primary care, which requires guidelines such as

stratification of the severity of cases, guidance on isolation, case notification, prevention measures, support for active surveillance among other guidelines.^[7] Thus, it would be appropriate to include this population in high-level research, since these professionals play a very valuable role for society in general, and in this pandemic situation, the demand for primary care was stimulated, avoiding the overcrowding of emergency services, which reaffirms the importance of these professionals in combating COVID-19.

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