

Lives for older people in the context of Covid-19

Lives para pessoas idosas no contexto da Covid-19

Lives para las personas mayores en el contexto del Covid-19

Cristiane Koeche¹, Letycia Parreira de Oliveira², Luciola Silva Sandim³, Eduarda Rezende Freitas⁴, Gustavo de Azevedo Carvalho⁵, Henrique Salmazo da Silva⁶, Luiz Sérgio Fernandes de Carvalho⁷, Maria Liz Cunha de Oliveira⁸

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REVISA

1. Catholic University of Brasilia, Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Gerontology. Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4083-5961>

2. Catholic University of Brasilia, Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Gerontology. Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6933-7803>

3. Catholic University of Brasilia, Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Gerontology. Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6541-0014>

4. Catholic University of Brasilia, Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Gerontology. Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0315-9549>

5. Catholic University of Brasilia, Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Gerontology. Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4155-1514>

6. Catholic University of Brasilia, Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Gerontology. Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3888-4214>

7. Catholic University of Brasilia, Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Gerontology. Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6465-356X>

8. Catholic University of Brasilia, Stricto Sensu Graduate Program in Gerontology. Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5945-1987>

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Investigar as lives disponibilizadas nas redes sociais de instituições e conselhos profissionais brasileiros sobre pessoas idosas no contexto de enfrentamento da Covid-19, publicadas entre abril e setembro de 2020. **Método:** Realizou-se um estudo retrospectivo, exploratório, descritivo e infométrico. **Resultados:** Três instituições relacionadas diretamente a pessoas idosas divulgaram lives voltadas para essa população ou para cuidadores e familiares. Entre os profissionais que mais tiveram participações nas lives encontram-se os médicos geriatras. O maior número de acesso (quase oito mil) ocorreu em uma live intitulada "Pandemia Covid-19", realizada em junho, por um geriatra. Ela foi divulgada no YouTube da Sociedade Brasileira de Geriatria e Gerontologia – instituição que mais divulgou lives sobre a temática. A rede social mais utilizada para esse fim foi o Instagram. **Conclusão:** há uma carência na atenção e no cuidado com a pessoa idosa no contexto da pandemia de Covid-19.

Descritores: Idoso; Covid-19; Lives.

ABSTRACT

Objective: Investigate the lives made available on the social networks of institutions and professional advice about people going to s in the face of Covid-19 to verify which institutions most disseminated these lives which was the most used social network and which professional had more participations. **Method:** A retrospective, exploratory, descriptive and infometric study was conducted. **Results:** Three institutions, SBGG, FNILPI and ABG – directly related to elderly – disseminated lives aimed at this population or at caregivers and family members; among the professionals who had the most participation in the lives were geriatric doctors, the largest number of access was given to the live entitled "Covid-19 Pandemic", which was held in June by a geriatrician, and which had 7.829 accesses, being disclosed in the YT of SBGG. SBGG was the institution that most disseminated lives, the most used social network was IG, and July was the month with the highest number of disclosures. **Conclusion:** There is a lack of attention and care for the elderly.

Descriptors: Elderly; Covid-19; Lives.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Investigar las lives puestas a disposición en las redes sociales de instituciones y asesoramiento profesional sobre personas que acuden a s frente al Covid-19 para verificar qué instituciones más difundieron estas lives, cuál fue la red social más utilizada y qué profesional tuvo más participaciones. **Método:** Se realizó un estudio retrospectivo, exploratorio, descriptivo e infométrico. **Resultados:** Tres instituciones, SBGG, FNILPI y ABG – directamente relacionadas con las personas atendidas – difundieron vidas dirigidas a esta población o a cuidadores y familiares; entre los profesionales que más participación tuvieron en la live fueron los médicos geriátricos, el mayor número de acceso se dio al live titulada "Pandemia Covid-19", que se realizó en junio por un geriatra, y que tuvo 7.829 accesos, siendo divulgado en el YT de SBGG. SBGG fue la institución que más difundió lives, la red social más utilizada fue IG, y julio fue el mes con mayor número de divulgaciones. **Conclusión:** Hay una falta de atención y cuidado para los ancianos.

Descriptores: Adultos mayores; Covid-19; Lives.

Introduction

Population aging is a growing reality and an undeniable fact. In 2020, the world's elderly population was already composed of 1.1 billion inhabitants.¹ Since the 1970s, Brazil has been undergoing a demographic transition, migrating from a predominantly young situation to an increasingly significant contingent of people aged 60 years or older.² Currently, it is estimated that the Brazilian elderly population is composed of 29.9 million inhabitants. And, despite representing a large number, this group has little visibility and suffers devaluation.¹

This accelerated aging requires the planning of actions in the short, medium and long term and has demanded responses and adaptations from the State through the structuring and implementation of public policies aimed at the care of the elderly, since, along with aging, the health demands that involve not only the health system increase, but also the social security system.² According to the World Health Organization, the aging process is, at the same time, a triumph and a challenge to society.² Triumph for representing a significant increase in life span, if compared to previous decades, and a challenge to be able to meet the demands of access to medical care, especially geriatric, and multidisciplinary team, without distinctions/limitations, as well as being able to maintain the pension system, among other demands.²

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, elderly people were already experiencing many difficulties, stereotypes and prejudices, but the experience of this pandemic not only ratified but intensified some demands.⁴ Examples are issues related to the health system and financial, social, ethical and moral.⁴ In addition to these demands exacerbation, Covid-19 drew the attention of the population to the health of elderly people, evidencing the importance of discussions on care and prevention strategies for individuals in this age group.^{2,4-6}

Nevertheless, the pandemic has also brought to light discrimination and ridicule of the elderly and, in this scenario, they have become the center of attention, being considered as a risk group due, mainly, to the loss of the body's ability to respond to infections and immunological memory, natural consequences resulting from aging.⁵ Thus, elderly people have an unfavorable prognosis, demonstrated in data that show a higher mortality rate in this group: about 14.8% are 80 years or older, 8.0% are between 70 and 79 years old and 8.8% between 60 and 69 years old.^{5,7} As a result, older people have been associated with a high risk of death from Covid-19, being forced into a situation of social isolation without any kind of preparation or support.^{5,7}

In Gerontology, studies indicate that social isolation negatively impacts the health and quality of life of older people, and is also considered as a geriatric syndrome managed by intrinsic factors - fear of falling, urinary incontinence, depression - and extrinsic factors, such as social stigmas, the risk of contagion by Covid-19, among other diseases.³ This situation of isolation has been reinforced as one of the main strategies to combat the new coronavirus and, In this context, age stratification strengthened society's prejudices - mainly because the elderly population was considered the main risk group, even generating family conflicts to impose social distancing.^{3,5}

Thus, it is important to understand how the elderly person received information about the virus and the disease and how they were represented by the media. This is especially relevant because it can contribute to the construction or improvement of public policies aimed at aging and also evaluate the impact of the media on the construction of "visions" and age stereotypes.⁷

The media is an important source of information for society, being a means of promoting popular education, especially in cases of health emergency, such as the pandemic. However, the spread of images of elderly people as frail and of contaminating agents was largely through the media. Such age discrimination is widespread in various cultures and has as a consequence the silencing of the vulnerabilities, demands and potentialities of old age.⁵

Contrary to this phenomenon, and in view of the scarcity of information and the need to provide resources to cope with Covid-19, academic associations, gerontologists, professionals and class councils promoted a series of lives and virtual meetings to disseminate qualified information about health and lifestyle to the elderly population, family members and professionals working in this segment.³ Technology has proved to be an important ally in the face of social distancing policy, to maintain social contacts, preserve bonds and communication between the elderly, the services, the professionals, the community and the family. Through communication applications it was possible to perform physical and cognitive stimulation activities at home, as well as family meetings, exchanges with friends, access to education content for aging and increased social interaction.¹

Thus, from the context presented, the objective of this study was to investigate Brazilian lives directed to elderly people about coping with Covid-19, and that were made available in the social networks of institutions and professional councils. We analyzed the themes, the institutions, the months, the accessibility, the professionals who participated in the event and the most used social network.

The development of this study is justified by the need to know the capacity for dialogue between Gerontology – as a science – and the community, through information and communication technologies. It is also important to consider the importance of raising questions about the ability to disseminate content and generate social responses in the face of the unpredictability and broad scope of Covid-19 in the social life of older people, in politics and in society.

Methodology

This is a retrospective, exploratory, descriptive and infometric study – which allows the use of the flow of information on the web.⁸

A live is characterized by a live broadcast, either by audio or video, through various social media, such as Instagram (IG), Facebook (FB) and YouTube (YT).⁹ It involves dialogue between an agent and the spectators, or between two or more agents and spectators.⁹ During this interaction, the information is transmitted live on the chosen platform, and sometimes saved in a virtual environment for later access. The advantage of this type of communication is its wide reach and the ability to disseminate information quickly and comprehensively.⁹

Conducted in October 2020, the search took place through the profiles on social networks (FB, IG and YT) of the bodies or institutions related to the theme of health and / or old age, and that were disclosed between the months of April 2020 – a month marked by the expansion of Covid-19 in Brazil and when it became the 5th leading cause of death in the country¹⁰ – and the month of September of the same year. After this active search, the lives that were saved were assisted.

The selection of data from this study included live broadcasts on the channels of the Ministry of Health (MS), Osvaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), World Health Organization (WHO Brazil), National Health Council (CNS), National Council of Health Secretariats (CONASS) and National Council of Municipal Health Secretariats (CONASEMS). Class councils were also investigated, such as the Federal Council of Medicine (CFM), Federal Council of Pharmacy (CFF), Federal Council of Psychology (CFP), Federal Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy (COFFITO) and Federal Council of Nursing (COFEN). In addition to these, the Brazilian Medical Association (AMB), the Brazilian Society of Geriatrics and Gerontology (SBGG), the Brazilian Association of Gerontology (ABG) and the National Front of Long-Term Care Institutions for the Elderly (FNILPI) were also analyzed.

As inclusion criteria, we considered the lives whose title indicated that the figure of the elderly person would be addressed during the Covid-19 pandemic and that became available, that is, saved in the social network disclosed. Those who did not have the elderly as their focus, who did not analyze the moment of the pandemic, or who, even though it was related to old age during the pandemic, were directed to health professionals, presenting a technical language, were excluded.

Results

34 live posts were selected, but 18 were not saved and, therefore, were not watched. Thus, the final sample of this study was composed of 16 lives (Table 1).

Of the 15 institutions analyzed, only three had lives that met the inclusion and non-exclusion criteria in the study, namely SBGG, FNILPI and ABG (Table 1). It should be noted that they are specific institutions for the elderly and, therefore, their lives addressed a language that was easy to understand (less technical) and covered several points related to contagion and forms of prevention. Other institutions, such as the CNS and CONASS, released lives (which were available for later viewing) with the theme of the elderly in the pandemic, but the content addressed was presented in a technical way and with debates among professionals, being, therefore, excluded.

The themes addressed in the 16 lives analyzed basically included assistance to the elderly in times of pandemic, coping with chronic diseases in this period of isolation, attention to the caregiver, the consequences of isolation and how to mitigate them (Table 1). The lives were performed by professionals from various backgrounds, such as geriatricians (n=7), gerontologists (n=3), psychologists (n=1), and a multidisciplinary team composed of nurses, social

workers, journalists, prosecutors, physicians and consultants of financial institutions (n=5) (Table 1).

The largest number of accesses was given to the live entitled "Covid-19 Pandemic", which was held in June by a geriatrician, and which had 7,829 accesses. It was disclosed in the YT of SBGG, being this the institution that most divulged lives. The most used social network was the IG, and the month with the highest number of disclosures was July (Table 1).

Table 1- Lives about older people in the covid-19 pandemic held between the months of April and September 2020.

Institution	Channel	Theme	Month	Professional	Views
SBGG	IG	Emotions, confinement and psychic health: possible care	May	Psychologist	592
		The impact of the pandemic and isolation on sleep	June	Geriatrician and Neurologist	
	IG	- therapeutic options in the treatment of insomnia in the elderly			435
	YT	Covid-19 pandemic	June	Geriatrician	7.829
	YT	Treatment: perspectives and research	June	Geriatrician	2.226
	IG	Reflections and attitudes on the care of elderly people in the pandemic	July	Geriatricians	2.287
		Cancer in the elderly: how to maintain a safe treatment in times of Covid	July	Oncogeriatrician	2.015
		Immunization - preventive approach and perspectives	July	Geriatrician	1.416
		Communication with family members and approach to suspected cases of Covid-19 within the LTCF		Multiprofessional	
FNILPI	FB	approach to suspected cases of Covid-19 within the LTCF	May		2.200
	YT	Covid-19 panel in Brazil: gerontocide?	July	Geriatrician	225

	FB	Support to combat Covid-19 - LTCF	August	Multiprofessional	2.500
	FB	Support to combat Covid-19 LTCF - resume	September	Multiprofessional	1.700
	FB	Booklet of guidelines for the management of visits in LTCF	September	Multiprofessional	3.400
	YT	Social impact initiatives in response to Covid-19	September	Geriatrician	53
ABG	IG	Covid-19 and the elderly: cognitive activities in quarantine	July	Gerontologists	392
	IG	Home management for the elderly and Covid-19	July	Gerontologists	421
	IG	Guidance for Covid-19 family members and carers	August	Gerontologists	292

SBGG: Brazilian Society of Geriatrics and Gerontology. ABG: Brazilian Association of Gerontology. FNILPI: National Front of Long-Term Care Institutions for the Elderly. IG: Instagram. FB: Facebook. YT: Youtube.

Discussion

The elderly population has been neglected by much of Brazil's institutions or class councils during the Covid-19 pandemic. Only organizations that deal directly with the issue have produced content and discussions about older people, caregivers and/or family members in the pandemic. They are SBGG, FNILPI and ABG; institutions created for the purpose of fighting for the rights of individuals aged 60 and over. In addition to the reports, SBGG also produced information on the management of Covid-19 on its website, where it stressed the need to adhere to preventive measures as a collective action in the fight against the coronavirus.¹¹

It was possible to verify that the selected lives presented themes related to care and assistance, but only three addressed care and assistance specifically to the elderly, and this theme is essential for informal and formal care directed to this portion of the population in times of pandemic. In formal care, the Long-Term Care Institutions for the Elderly (LTCF) stand out, which were addressed in four lives, highlighting that there is a high rate of transmissibility and mortality among residents, a fact that is mainly due to the great fragility and degree of dependence.¹²

The themes of the lives highlighted the importance of the prevention and control of Covid-19, emphasizing measures to be taken, which are related to the control and prevention of the disease, and which are effective tools to prevent the spread of the virus. Another live brought a booklet of information for visits to the LTCFs, as an educational means for the population, facilitating communication and later the identification of suspected cases.

With the pandemic it became essential that technology be introduced as an alternative for access and inclusion of people in old age in order to consolidate communication and information with quick and direct access. This adaptation to which the individual aged 60 years or more had to submit, despite having been suddenly and unexpectedly, facilitated relationships and interactions, as well as the possibility for active aging.^{13,14} In addition, it provided remote assistance, considered as a form of social protection, due to the need for social distancing to avoid gerontocide.¹²⁻¹⁴

The low level of education and the difficulty of access to these resources by the majority of the elderly population in the country directly interfere with the knowledge and prevention actions related to the pandemic. This fact brings important limitations regarding the process of dialogue between health professionals and the elderly, thus hindering the correct orientation regarding prevention measures.^{1,5,6} It is noteworthy that the understanding of how the elderly person has received the information and how this population has been represented by the media is important in contributing to the construction or improvement of public policies aimed at aging.^{4,7}

IG is a very popular social network among Brazilians, covering all age groups and has been a great communication tool used in recent years and, especially, in this time of pandemic. In the dissemination of the analyzed lives could not fail to be different and, within the respective study, it was the social network that had more disclosures of lives. According to the epidemiological bulletin of the Ministry of Health, in the month of June there were approximately 60,000 deaths from Covid-19 and, in that month, 10 lives were disclosed, which corresponded to the highest number of lives per period, according to an analysis carried out.

Not all the lives were available for later viewing – which can already be anticipated, represents the greatest limitation of this study –, but it can be verified that most of them were performed by geriatric physicians, which highlights the need for interdisciplinarity since, the more information is made available to this population, the more elderly people can be prevented. This is a population in need of intergenerational and interdisciplinary solidarity.^{13,14}

Conclusion

We perceived that there are still deficiencies regarding the attention and care with the Brazilian elderly, evidencing the need to outline strategies and health policies aimed at this population segment. In this sense, Gerontology is invited to generate social responses that mobilize efforts in the short, medium and long term, given that Covid-19 has revealed structural problems that require collective commitment and action to be remedied.

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Correspondent Author

Cristiane Koeche
QS 07 - Lot 01 - EPCT. ZIP: 71966-700 Taguatinga. Brasília,
Distrito Federal, Brazil.
criskoeche@hotmail.com