

Covid-19 pandemic repercussions for adolescents in social vulnerability

Repercussões da pandemia da Covid-19 para adolescentes em vulnerabilidade social

Repercusiones de la pandemia del Covid-19 para adolescentes socialmente vulnerables

Jamile Mendes da Silva Santos¹, Bruna Prates Lopes Brasil², Climene Laura de Camargo³, Lucas Jesus Fernandes⁴, Cláudio de Águiar⁵, Maria Carolina Ortiz Whitaker⁶

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REVISA

1. Federal University of Bahia.
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4439-4940>

2. Federal University of Bahia.
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5246-9519>

3. Federal University of Bahia.
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4880-3916>

4. Federal University of Bahia.
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7657-8314>

5. Federal University of Bahia.
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8125-5595>

6. Federal University of Bahia.
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0253-3831>

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Refletir sobre as repercussões da pandemia da COVID-19 para adolescentes em vulnerabilidade social. **Método:** Trata-se de um artigo de reflexão fundamentado em revisão bibliográfica. Para subsidiar essa reflexão, foram realizadas leituras e análise de publicações entre os meses de abril de 2020 a setembro de 2021. **Resultados:** As condições de vida e saúde vivenciadas por adolescentes em vulnerabilidade social se intensificou durante a pandemia da COVID-19 o que pode acarretar prejuízos físicos e mentais para esse grupo. **Conclusão:** Se fazem necessárias políticas com direcionamentos interseccionais que atentem para as necessidades de saúde de adolescentes compreendendo as subjetividades e especificidades desse grupo.

Descritores: Adolescente; Vulnerabilidade Social; Infecções por Coronavírus.

ABSTRACT

Objective: Reflect on the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic for socially vulnerable adolescents. **Method:** This is an article for reflection based on a literature review. To support this reflection, readings and analysis of publications were carried out between the months of April 2020 and September 2021. **Results:** The living and health conditions experienced by adolescents in social vulnerability intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic which can lead to physical and mental damage for this group. **Conclusion:** Policies are needed with intersectional directions that address the health needs of adolescents, understanding the subjectivities and specificities of this group.

Descriptors: Adolescent; Social Vulnerability; Coronavirus Infections.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Reflexionar sobre las repercusiones de la pandemia COVID-19 para los adolescentes socialmente vulnerables. **Método:** Este es un artículo de reflexión basado en revisión de la literatura. Para sustentar esta reflexión, se realizaron lecturas y análisis de publicaciones entre los meses de abril de 2020 y septiembre de 2021. **Resultados:** Las condiciones de vida y de salud que experimentan los adolescentes en vulnerabilidad social se intensificaron durante la pandemia de COVID 19 que pueden derivar en daños físicos y psíquicos. para este grupo. **Conclusión:** Se necesitan políticas con direcciones interseccionales que aborden las necesidades de salud de los adolescentes, entendiendo las subjetividades y especificidades de este grupo.

Descriptores: Adolescente; Vulnerabilidad social; Infecciones por coronavirus.

Introduction

The current scenario, resulting from the pandemic of the new coronavirus, has had physical, social, emotional and financial repercussions on the population, besides exposing how much social inequalities influence the ways of coping with COVID-19. Since the beginning of March 2020, when the World Health Organization (WHO) decreed the pandemic, global society has suffered the impacts of the high potential for virus infection.¹ The developments caused by the new coronavirus have generated unprecedented impacts on the entire nation, however, they have not presented themselves in an equitable way for all ages and population strata. Elderly people, individuals with chronic diseases are the group at high risk of developing the most severe form of the disease and the population groups that are exposed in environments with agglomerations are exposed to the highest probability of contracting the virus.¹

In Brazil, the black population represents 54.9% of Brazilians, the most affected by social inequalities such as unemployment, inadequate housing conditions, low income and lower level of education.² In this population, adolescents who experience physical, psychological, social changes, typical of development and may be affected by the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic stand out.

Although adolescents have a lower prevalence for complications related to COVID-19, it is perceived that the challenges imposed by the social context may bring significant repercussions for this group. In the face of the above, the question is: How can the pandemic developments of the new coronavirus have repercussions for adolescents inserted in contexts of social vulnerabilities? In view of these considerations, this manuscript aims to reflect on the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic for adolescents in social vulnerability.

Method

It is an article of reflection based on a bibliographic review of scientific, journalistic productions, and information made available by the World Health Organization, The United Nations, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation and the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.

This study aimed to analyze the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic for adolescents in social vulnerability. To support this reflection, readings and analysis of publications were carried out between April 2020 and September 2021.

Results and Discussion

Adolescents in social vulnerability during the Pandemic

Adolescence should not be understood only in the physiological and/or temporal perspective, but by its intersections between biopsychosocial factors that directly reflect on the quality of life of the human being. Thus, the COVID-

19 pandemic intensely reveals how social differences can have serious repercussions for this age group.

Social vulnerabilities are understood as inadequacies or differences that are experienced by a group and negatively results in the access and availability of material resources and/or opportunities such as education, work, health, income, leisure and culture.³⁻⁴

The housing conditions of adolescents in social vulnerability reflect the reality of families who survive on minimum incomes, mostly have low levels of education and these disparities tend to reflect their quality of life. Unemployment rates rise globally, increasing the financial difficulties that compromise the acquisition of key amounts for survival.⁵ In the first four months of the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil, the unemployment rate rose from 12.4% to 13.1%, reaching 12.3 million people.⁶

The financial conditions and low income of families can cause repercussions for adolescents such as susceptibility to physical, verbal and/or sexual violence, difficulties in entering universities and the labor market, exposure to diseases and early pregnancy. Realities faced mainly by black adolescents in Latin America that can be enhanced during the pandemic.⁷

With the advent of the covid-19 pandemic, students in conditions of social vulnerability, for the most part, are having losses in their schooling process. Above all, due to the long period without classes, the difficulty of access to technological resources, and because they reside in environments not favorable to the modality of distance learning.⁸ This reality has caused deficits in the learning process and in the long run can corroborate to accentuate the difficulties already existing, especially with the access to higher education, constituting another obstacle that limit the process of social mobility of this population.

In addition to educational repercussions, idleness, stress, anxiety, possible domestic conflicts, deprivation of leisure and sports activities are conditions that can cause physical and mental damage. The intensification of living in homes has accentuated the existing burdens and weaknesses, exposing the adolescent to multiple violence within the domestic space itself.⁹ Associated with these factors, it is highlighted that the use of masks in public spaces by black adolescents triggered feelings of insecurity, fear and longing to be exposed to discrimination and violence.¹⁰ This uncertain and unsafe context may corroborate the severe mental illness.¹¹

With the pandemic, the spaces of psychological, social, leisure, security and protection support of these adolescents such as schools, community centers, non-governmental institutions for social, interactive and religious practices were closed, making it impossible for these adolescents to be close to their main support networks.

In view of this reflection, it is necessary to implement urgent actions that seek to offer an improvement in the health of the adolescent population within its biological, psychological and social dimensions. It is important to emphasize that the vulnerability that this group is immersed in, is directly linked to the existence of racism and an action to be implemented must be the fight against this structural oppression.

Conclusion

Adolescence is considered a decisive phase for the process of human construction. Social inequalities are more incisive in the pandemic period and tend to corroborate that adolescents in social vulnerability remain in social invisibility. Moreover, policies with intersectional directions are needed that affect the health needs of adolescents, understanding the subjectivities and specificities of this group.

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Correspondent Author

Jamile Mendes da Silva Santos
Universidade Federal da Bahia
241 Basílio da Gama St. Canela. ZIP: 40231-300.
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
jhamilemendes@gmail.com