

## Editorial

### *Contributions of Psychology in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Thematic section*

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Humanity has faced several epidemics and pandemics over the centuries, with the Black Plague in 14<sup>th</sup> century Europe being very much remembered, and more recently, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS, *Síndrome Respiratória Aguda Grave*) and the Middle East Respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS, *Síndrome Respiratória do Oriente Médio*), which arose in the China and the Middle East, respectively. Faced with the third pandemic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, now caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2, *Coronavírus da Síndrome Respiratória Aguda Grave 2*), we seek to learn from the experience of people affected by diseases that decimated their populations (Peeri et al., 2020). These events can also be opportunities for revising cultural practices and generating scientific knowledge, as well as in situations of war, such as the development of areas such as Medicine, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychometrics, and Health Psychology, especially after World War II (Souza & Faro, 2011). Fields of knowledge linked to Mass Communication, the use of Arts and Advertising, as a way to promote political actions in the fight against diseases are seen in these difficult times in several countries (Yan, Tang, Gabriele, & Wu, 2016).

What sets us apart in the face of the new pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), identified on December 30, 2019, in the province of Wuhan in China, which is affecting virtually all peoples on the planet?

We can state that, for the first time, we have a more advanced science in knowledge about Epidemiology, Genetics, Infectiology, Data Sciences, and Evidence-based Psychopathology, as well as media never imagined, such as the Internet. We have a worldwide organization, the World Health Organization, which seeks to concentrate and guide countries on how to proceed more safely and effectively (World Health Organization, 2020).

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We do not only need to count the dead, as if it were a divine scourge, allowing us to risk relevant questions focused on the care of survivors, affected or not by COVID-19. Questions, analyzes and propositions have been directed to cultural practices and health care, about teaching and learning in this new reality, for changes in job and the economy, and particularly about the vulnerabilities and resilience of population and people. Thus, experts, scientists, heads of nations have been called upon in their responsibilities to help understand and deal with this scenario that has left thousands of people orphaned every day since January 2020.

Despite advances, even to a certain extent, in understanding the functioning of the coronavirus itself, including the participation of Brazilian scientists (Jesus et al., 2020), as well as for the treatment of the most serious cases (Beigel et al., 2020), quarantine and social isolation are the most efficient recommendations we have so far, in which a vaccine is not available (Liang, 2020).

These major abrupt changes in the way of daily living associated with the systemic effects of the pandemic on the body, particularly on the brain and cognition (Holmes et al., 2020), bring the issue of mental health to the top of the concerns. Likewise, they demand integrated actions between the different areas of knowledge (Holmes et al., 2020).

As we have well identified in the article in this thematic section, "... the body of knowledge about the psychological aspects of people, in the context of the pandemic, needs to be built" (Linhares & Enumo, 2020, p.2). We need to obtain quality data on the direct and indirect effects on the mental health of the population and, in particular, on vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, children, people with disabilities, people with chronic diseases, and health professionals.

Considering the speed of the natural course of this disease, what we have as a way of generating knowledge to help in this joint effort to help people and public policies are studies of literature reviews. Within one to two months, scientific journals began to provide studies showing the possibility of the occurrence of symptoms of post-traumatic stress, mental confusion, and anger (Brooks et al., 2020). We collaborate with these initiatives by presenting review studies, addressing the psychological changes associated with COVID-19, with recommendations for the general population and health professionals (Faro et al., 2020; Oliveira, Oliveira-Cardoso, Silva, & Santos, 2020; Schmidt, Crepaldi, Bolze, Neiva-Silva, & Demenech, 2020; Zanon, Dellazzana-Zanon, Wechsler, Fabretti, & Rocha, 2020), highlighting an extreme condition, which is dealing with grief (Crepaldi, Schmidt, Noal, Bolze, & Gabarra, 2020).

At the present time, we already have data showing anxiety, fear, depression and panic, as well as concerns regarding its dissemination and psychosocial and affective implications (Do Bú, Alexandre, Bezerra, Sá-Serafin, & Coutinho, 2020; Holmes et al., 2020; Maia & Dias, 2020). However, there is a lack of further studies on the impacts on children's psychological development (Linhares & Enumo, 2020; Moratori & Ciacchini, 2020). Seeking to fill this gap, we present in this thematic section an essay with reflections on theoretical-conceptual foundations and scientific evidence that can be applied and generalized, for understanding and interventions in childhood (Linhares & Enumo, 2020).

The need to generate products applicable to the general population has led researchers to transform the scientific knowledge of Psychology, particularly in the area of stress and its coping (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2016). The popularization of science became a priority, through booklets and guides (Alvarenga, Silva, Coutinho, Freitas, & Soares, 2020; Enumo, Weide, Vicentini, Araujo, & Machado, 2020; Zamora et al., 2020), with emphasis on the propositions of Positive Psychology (Zanon et al., 2020) and practices associated with Contemplative Sciences, such as meditation and mindfulness (Dorjee, 2016).

The context of the pandemic has required changes in the professional practices of Psychology, in terms of assessment and interventions. Thus, the psychologist's practice and research locations change, with a predominance of online activities (Marasca, Yates, Schneider, Feijó, & Bandeira, 2020; McCord, Bernhard, Walsh, Rosner, & Console, 2020).

These themes are addressed in the journal *Estudos de Psicologia* (Psychological Studies) *Campinas*, in volume 37, 2020, which presents 10 articles that make up the Thematic Session: “Contributions of Psychology in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic”, with the collaboration of national authors and international ones. So far, this thematic section is the first national publication in Portuguese on psychological aspects important for understanding and intervention in the area. We hope to contribute with the scientific knowledge of Psychology to face the pandemic and its repercussions.

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