

## Answer to: Factors associated with psychic symptoms in patients with diabetes during the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Editor,

The study “Factors associated with psychic symptoms in patients with diabetes during the COVID-19 pandemic” showed that there was a higher frequency of signs and symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression in patients with Diabetes Mellitus during the COVID-19<sup>1</sup> pandemic. There was a higher prevalence of these factors in female individuals, having also shown that they are more susceptible to the above-mentioned signs and symptoms. This study concluded that these psychopathologies are associated with factors related to the period of social restriction currently experienced, highlighting the decrease in income, the practice of leisure activities and physical exercise and the history of contact with suspected COVID-19 as the main ones.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, it is a fact to point out that in patients with diabetes, the prevalence of symptoms of depression and anxiety is two to four times higher, approximately, compared to the general population. In this sense, the association between diabetes and mental disorders can be exacerbated in a stressful environment, and psychological distress can considerably increase depressive symptoms and, thus, cause adverse outcomes for the patient.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the pandemic context is a major factor in the creation of this environment, corroborating the psychological symptoms of these patients.

Uniquely, the study showed that there is evidence of significant psychological distress among patients with diabetes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, it was found as common concerns among the individuals surveyed the excessive anxiety about being infected, the label of the risk group and the inability to control diabetes if infected.<sup>1</sup> However, it is necessary to consider that in

this study the data on mental health that were not evaluated before the period of social distancing for comparison with this same population. Furthermore, the absence of a control group without diabetes is also a limitation of the study.

Overall, the results of the study in question serve as an alarm for the impact that the pandemic scenario has on the mental health of patients with diabetes and emphasizes the need for visibility on the psychological manifestations in diabetic patients. Thus, considering that the prevalence of depressive symptoms in people with diabetes is higher than in the general population.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the importance of regular tracking of symptoms in this group to prevent the onset of these symptoms is reflected. Considering this, further studies can also examine the development and effectiveness of psychosocial intervention strategies, since taking care of mental health in patients with diabetes would add to reduce depressive and anxiety symptoms.

Therefore, it is evident that the pandemic context is a stressful factor that contributed to a higher frequency of psychic signs and symptoms in individuals with diabetes. Accordingly, this study is an instrument capable of bringing significant changes in the prevention and screening of psychological signs and symptoms in diabetics.


### Author's contribution

Aumonde TZ and Lima MS wrote the text. Santos EM and Gomes E reviewed the text. All authors approved the final version.


The authors declare no conflict of interest.




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