

Fast-track for COVID-19 at CSP

Marilia Sá Carvalho ¹
Luciana Dias de Lima ²
Cláudia Medina Coeli ³

doi: 10.1590/0102-311X00204820

In March 2020, we published the first article in CSP on COVID-19 ¹. At the time, the role of timely and effective national epidemiological surveillance was the central point. However, building up an integrated data infrastructure to orient the necessary interventions did not happen, even in the developed countries. The chronicle of a health crisis with gigantic proportions was already the tragic reality ².

In this context, scientists from around the world have mobilized in the search for alternatives to decrease the number of lives lost and the suffering of millions of persons. Efforts have focused on the production, systematization, and dissemination of knowledge in streamlined and timely fashion, including interviews on radio, television, and social networks, creation of websites and observatories, technical notes, and recommendations. The Brazilian Association of Collective Health (Abrasco) established a regular virtual debate program in Brazil called *Agora Abrasco* ³ and joined with other Brazilian organizations in a broad alliance in defense of life, which resulted in drafting a National Plan to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic ⁴.

Within the scope of scientific publication, the number of articles also grew exponentially with contributions from various areas of knowledge ⁵. It has become essential to understand in depth the meaning and social, economic, and humanitarian repercussions of a complex crisis with multiple dimensions, significantly impacting the future of nations ⁶.

As a scientific journal in Public Health/Collective Health, in April 2020, CSP created a fast-track mechanism to decrease the time in the evaluation and publication of articles on COVID-19. It was necessary to open a space and create a special routine for promoting high-quality scientific debate facing countries with serious problems of infrastructure, poverty, and inequality, valuing the diverse approaches and focuses in the field.

From April to July 10, 2020, when we performed this assessment, 548 manuscripts were submitted. Beyond the concerns with the pandemic's dynamics and evolution, we highlight the publication of themes related to global health, the states' and health systems' response capacity, the supply, organization, and quality of health services (from primary care to hospital care), and the pandemic's impacts on mental health, domestic violence, physical activity, and food security.

¹ Programa de Computação Científica, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

² Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

³ Instituto de Estudos em Saúde Coletiva, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.



CSP initially received mainly position papers for the Perspectives section. We created a Thematic Section entitled *COVID-19 – Public Health Contributions* to organize the publication of these articles. More recently, we began to receive essays and empirical articles, many using Internet data collection or web-surveys. Seeking to maintain the high quality, our July Editorial featured the CSP guidelines ⁵, based on the necessary methodological care in the development of surveys based on social networks ⁷.

Fast-track processing, as the name itself says, shortens the time between the manuscript's submission and publication. But even seeking to reduce this time, we have maintained the peer review process, thereby ensuring the quality of the published articles. Our average time between submission and approval of manuscripts was 12 days. And between approval and publication on the CSP, it was 14 days. How did we do this? With great effort and dedication. Each editor and each reviewer reserved space on their busy agendas to work on these articles. The new versions were reevaluated at the same pace. All of this without jeopardizing our usual article flow. The proportion of approved articles remained within the habitual CSP standards.

During this period, CSP proceeded swiftly with science dissemination. With the support of a professional journalist and an undergraduate student and the Center of Institutional Communication, Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health at Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (ENSP/Fiocruz) we launched a series of videos broadcast on the YouTube channel of the ENSP/Fiocruz. In the series, called *Interviews with the Authors*, authors and editors debate recently published articles, which in the current period have focused on COVID-19.

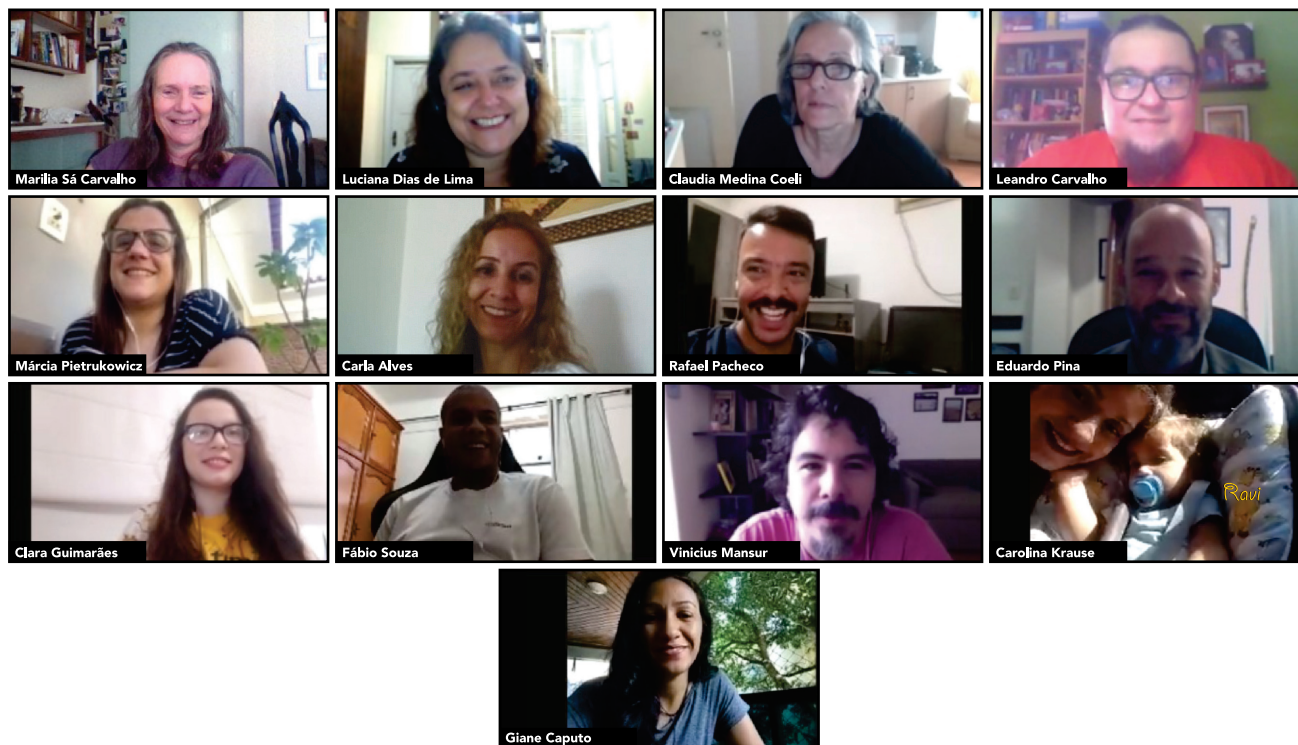
It is now time to publicly acknowledge the dedication of all involved in this endeavor. Editors and reviewers guaranteed the scientific quality; the office staff provided backup for the authors; assistant editors conducted the editing process, including standardization of the texts and verification of references; language proofreaders and translators (yes, the journal provided bilingual versions of all the articles) were dedicated to the texts' quality; graphic artists and programmers responsible for the production of XML (the format that allows online publication) worked painstakingly in the articles' final formatting. And the process culminated with the team in charge of posting on Twitter and Facebook. Everyone, absolutely everyone, displayed steadfast professionalism. From beginning to end.

All of this work has been done on a "home office" basis, with the difficulties everyone knows. Children learning to study online, family members needing support, rare moments of relaxation: the private world and the world of work mixing.

But as we said in the April Editorial ⁸ (p. 2), "*Scientists worldwide will certainly generate the knowledge that will allow us not only to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to back policies for adequate organization of patient care*" where it is up to scientific journals to publish "*honest, well-conducted scientific research*". That is our contribution.

As of this month of July, we are concluding the formal fast-track process. We will continue accelerating, as far as possible, the evaluation of innovative manuscripts that bring substantial contributions in facing this very serious health emergency.

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone.



CSP team in social isolation due to COVID-19.

Contributors

All authors contributed to the conception, writing and approval of the final version.

Additional informations

ORCID: Marília Sá Carvalho (0000-0002-9566-0284); Luciana Dias de Lima (0000-0002-0640-8387); Cláudia Medina Coeli (0000-0003-1757-3940).

1. Lana RM, Coelho FC, Gomes MFC, Cruz OG, Bastos LS, Villela DAM, et al. The novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) emergency and the role of timely and effective national health surveillance. *Cad Saúde Pública* 2020; 36:e00019620.
2. Werneck GL, Carvalho MS. The COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil: chronicle of a health crisis foretold. *Cad Saúde Pública* 2020; 36:00068820.
3. Dias BC. Agora Abrasco, uma nova forma da Saúde Coletiva produzir respostas à pandemia. <https://www.abrasco.org.br/site/noticias/institucional/agora-abrasco-uma-nova-forma-da-saude-coletiva-produzir-respostas-a-pandemia/46521/> (accessed on 12/Jul/2020).
4. Frente pela Vida. Plano nacional de enfrentamento à pandemia da COVID-19. <https://frentepelavida.org.br/uploads/documentos/pep-covid-19-completo.pdf> (accessed on 13/Jul/2020).
5. Coeli CM, Lima LD, Carvalho MS. Good practices in conducting and reporting studies based on web surveys. *Cad Saúde Pública* 2020; 36:e00169120.
6. Lima NT, Buss PM, Paes-Sousa R. COVID-19 pandemic: a health and humanitarian crisis. *Cad Saúde Pública* 2020; 36:e00177020.
7. De Boni RB. Web surveys in the time of COVID-19. *Cad Saúde Pública* 2020; 36:e00155820.
8. Carvalho MS, Lima LD, Coeli CM. Science during the pandemia. *Cad Saúde Pública* 2020; 36:e00055520.