

Anxiety in times of pandemic: Analysis of Latin American scientific production

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Abstract

A retrospective study was conducted in which articles on anxiety in times of pandemic published and indexed in the Scopus database were examined, and whose authors are affiliated with Latin American institutions. Latin American scientific production on anxiety continues to increase. Brazil is the country that contributes the highest production, representing 44.67% of production, followed by Mexico, Argentina and Peru. Research on psychological variables and their relationship with COVID-19 in Latin America is still limited with respect to world production. It is necessary to increase the collaboration of international authors through the formation of professional and academic groups within and outside the region.

anxiety; pandemic; scientific production; COVID-19

TO THE EDITOR

We read with interest the article “The impact of anxiety, stress, and burnout symptoms in Brazilian health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic” by Salvador et al. [1], that sought to determine the psychological impact of COVID-19 on healthcare professionals working directly with patients diagnosed with COVID-19. The pandemic has affected the social, economic and psychological spheres [2]. In the last one, the biopsychosocial perspective of health concept has led to a greater appreciation and reflec-

tion on the presence of stress, anxiety and depression in medical specialties [3,4]. Conducting research on COVID-19 and its psychological impact on health professionals contributes to the formulation of therapeutic strategies and will provide evidence of the prevalence of psychological distress due to confinement [5].

We conducted a retrospective study in which we examined articles on anxiety in times of pandemic published and indexed in the Scopus database, and whose authors are affiliated with Latin American institutions. It was decided to use this database due to the large number of multidisciplinary journals included, and its rigorous journal selection process, which allows the collection of the most relevant studies on the variable. The search included all articles published and indexed from January 2020 to April 2021, considering the following fields Article Title, Abstract, Keywords, using descrip-

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tors in the search terms: "Anxiety" OR "Anxiety Disorders" OR "Panic Disorder" OR "Panic" OR "Agoraphobia" OR "Social Anxiety" and its relation to the terms "2019-nCoV" OR "SARS-CoV-2" OR "2019 novel coronavirus" OR "COVID-19" OR "Coronavirus disease 2019". A total of 347 articles were found, including in the analysis 8 documentary articles: Articles (80.69%); Reviews (10.95%); Letters to the Editor (4.03%);

and others (4.32%). The Latin American scientific production on anxiety continues to increase. Brazil is the country that contributes to the highest production, representing 44.67% of the production, followed by Mexico, Argentina and Peru, countries that have 25 to more publications. There are 4 countries (Puerto Rico; Bolivia, El Salvador and Costa Rica) with at least 1 publication (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage distribution of scientific production on anxiety in times of pandemics in Latin American countries.

Country	2020		2021		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Brazil	70	20.17	85	24.50	155	44.67
Mexico	19	5.48	19	5.48	38	10.95
Argentina	17	4.90	10	2.88	27	7.78
Peru	16	4.61	10	2.88	26	7.49
Colombia	15	4.32	9	2.59	24	6.92
Chile	15	4.32	11	3.17	26	7.49
Ecuador	11	3.17	10	2.88	21	6.05
Paraguay	5	1.44	2	0.58	7	2.02
Panama	3	0.86	0	0.00	3	0.86
Cuba	2	0.58	2	0.58	4	1.15
Dominican Republic	1	0.29	2	0.58	3	0.86
Honduras	1	0.29	2	0.58	3	0.86
Jamaica	1	0.29	1	0.29	2	0.58
Bolivia	1	0.29	0	0.00	1	0.29
El Salvador	1	0.29	0	0.00	1	0.29
Uruguay	0	0.00	2	0.58	2	0.58
Venezuela	0	0.00	2	0.58	2	0.58
Costa Rica	0	0.00	1	0.29	1	0.29
Puerto Rico	0	0.00	1	0.29	1	0.29

Research on psychological variables and their relationship with COVID-19 in Latin America is still limited with respect to world production. It is necessary to increase the collaboration of international authors through the formation of professional and academic groups within and outside the region. It is necessary to strengthen psychological therapy studies and healthy lifestyle habits in order to achieve an adequate management of patients and their families, avoiding the aggravation of the symptoms of the disease.

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