

EDITORIAL**Health: understand and disseminate it, in order to advance it**

2020 was a year marked by attempts to change national mental health policies in Brazil, as well as physical health issues in the entire world. The environment calls for thoughts on what we know about health.

It lack basic information on the health conditions of indigenous people, *quilombolas*, residents of communities and agglomerations, homeless people, and LGBTQIA+, just to name a few examples.

Numerous aspects of the health of Brazilians have not yet received adequate attention from governments and legislators or from researchers. There is a lack of information on the physical health of people with mental disorders, the impact of stigma on the LGBTQIA+ population, the impact of health promotion, harm reduction and the relationship between illness and cultural and economic-social conditions. There is also a lack of sharing and understanding of said information by the Brazilian population.

With the continental dimensions of Brazil and the recent challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be argued that it is difficult to know all the realities of the Brazilian population, and such difficulty is enlarged by the lack of proper funding. But a simple answer is rarely enough for a complex question like the one involving the health of Brazilians.

The lack of investment in research, the logistical and financial difficulties to proceed with population and longitudinal investigations in the country, the scrapping (financial and social appreciation) of education and public health services, the worsening of the quality of professional training with the commercialization of education, the adoption in public health policies of practices with no scientific evidence or with openly pseudoscientific ones, the lack of sanitation and other basic conditions for maintaining life, the bureaucracy that involves new care proposals (for physical and mental health) and disability communicating science to the entire population are aspects that weigh on the health situation in the country.

It is necessary to talk about health, plan health measures and research health. These debates need to be conducted with the participation of the academic community, strategic political sectors, and community representatives, as only the combination of knowledge and competent sectors will promote health care and concrete actions for different Brazilian realities.

Many points for improving health go through government decisions, but some involve an academic position. There is a challenge for higher education, at all levels (undergraduate, *lato sensu* and *stricto sensu*) to discuss mental health.

Health professionals may act more directly, but certain aspects - such as the technology used, the laws that regulate the possibilities of action, education for reducing misinformation and adherence to pseudoscience, and the broader understanding that well-being generates health - make it necessary for all areas to be involved in the health discussion. Investigations have even shown that the health of students and professionals needs to be brought into the discussion as well.

Governments must learn to respect science in all their decision-making, and that does not mean choosing aspects that corroborate what they already want; while the academy must learn to make the population an agent of production and dissemination of this knowledge, which will bring greater meaning to the studies carried out, greater understanding of how knowledge is produced and the impact of including it in everyday life.

In this sense, the present issue of REFACS collaborates to this matter by bringing reports of studies developed by researchers from different regions of Brazil, which address mental health and public policies in investigations and examples of intervention.

The language used still attends more to what the academy requires than what a good part of the Brazilian population would be able to understand, but it is an important step for us to continue thinking about health and science in our country.

We hope that the themes explored in the articles can foster debates, future research and interventions for the most diverse population groups. In addition, we expected that all start thinking about the importance of scientific dissemination, for our peers and for those who can use the findings (and those who are sometimes still seen only as “participants” or “research subjects”).

Good reading!

Sabrina Martins Barroso

Psychologist. Specialist in Psychological Assessment and Human Development. Master in Psychology. PhD in Public Health. Adjunct Professor at Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro. Guest editor.

Camila Rosa de Oliveira

Psychologist. Specialist in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Master in Psychology. PhD in Biomedical Gerontology. Professor at Instituto Meridional. Guest editor.