

**Psychoanalysis in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic: traumas, challenges and perspectives****A psicanálise diante da pandemia de COVID-19: traumas, desafios e perspectivas****El psicoanálisis ante la pandemia de COVID-19: traumas, desafíos y perspectivas**

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**Objective:** to know the scientific production of psychoanalysis in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications and challenges arising from this new reality. **Methods:** integrative review carried out in 2021, whose guiding question was: *What is the role of Psychoanalysis in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how does it propose to deal with the challenges and present new perspectives for its praxis?* The following databases were listed: Virtual Health Library, Electronic Psychology Portal and Scientific Electronic Library Online, with interactions in the following descriptors: COVID-19, *psicanálise e isolamento social* and *pulsão de morte*, and the Critical Appraisal Skills Programm criteria and in a timeless way for article selection. **Results:** The search showed 16 publications, from which three categories were constructed: *Trauma, drive and death in the context of the pandemic* (7 articles); *The challenges for a new practice of psychoanalytic care* (6 articles); and *Perspectives for a new model of psychoanalytic care* (3 articles). **Conclusion:** The productions showed that Psychoanalysis has incorporated new technologies to offer a contemporary model of intervention through listening and also looking, diving deeply into the individuality of the human being, in those aspects that escape voluntary and conscious control, of a phenomenon, which is critical, making it possible to overcome, at least on a psychic level, this pandemic.

**Descriptors:** COVID-19; Social isolation; Psychoanalysis.

**Objetivo:** conhecer a produção científica da psicanálise no contexto da pandemia de COVID-19 e implicações e desafios oriundos dessa nova realidade. **Método:** revisão integrativa realizada em 2021, que teve como pergunta norteadora: *Qual o papel da Psicanálise no contexto da pandemia da COVID-19, e como ela se propõe a lidar com os desafios e apresentar novas perspectivas para sua práxis?* Elencou-se como bases de dados: Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde, Portal Eletrônico de Psicologia e *Scientific Electronic Library Online*, com as interações nos seguintes descritores: *COVID-19, psicanálise e isolamento social e pulsão de morte*, e os critérios do *Critical Appraisal Skills Programme* e de modo atemporal para seleção de artigos. **Resultados:** A busca mostrou 16 publicações, das quais se construiu três categorias: *O trauma, a pulsão e a morte no contexto da pandemia* (7 artigos); *Os desafios para uma nova prática de atendimento psicanalítico* (6 artigos); e *Perspectivas para um novo modelo de atendimento psicanalítico* (3 artigos). **Conclusão:** As produções mostraram que a Psicanálise incorporou novas tecnologias para assim oferecer um modelo contemporâneo de intervenção através da escuta e também do olhar, mergulhando com profundidade na individualidade do ser humano, naqueles aspectos que fogem ao controle voluntário e consciente de um fenômeno, que é crítico, possibilitando a superação, a menos em nível psíquico, desta pandemia.

**Descritores:** COVID-19; Isolamento Social; Psicanálise.

**Objective:** to know the scientific production of psychoanalysis in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications and challenges arising from this new reality. **Methods:** integrative review carried out in 2021, whose guiding question was: *What is the role of Psychoanalysis in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how does it propose to deal with the challenges and present new perspectives for its praxis?* The following databases were listed: Virtual Health Library, Electronic Psychology Portal and Scientific Electronic Library Online, with interactions in the following descriptors: COVID-19, psychoanalysis and social isolation and, death drive, and the Critical criteria. Appraisal Skills Program and in a timeless way for article selection. **Results:** The search showed 16 publications, from which three categories were constructed: *Trauma, drive and death in the context of the pandemic* (7 articles); *The challenges for a new practice of psychoanalytic care* (6 articles); and *Perspectives for a new model of psychoanalytic care* (3 articles). **Conclusion:** The productions showed that Psychoanalysis has incorporated new technologies to offer a contemporary model of intervention through listening and also looking, diving deeply into the individuality of the human being, in those aspects that escape voluntary and conscious control, of a phenomenon, which is critical, making it possible to overcome, at least on a psychic level, this pandemic.

**Descriptores:** COVID-19; Aislamiento social; Psicoanálisis.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the first reported cases of a new respiratory syndrome evolving to pneumonia in Wuhan, China in December 2019; discussion began about the origin of the causative virus. After a week, Chinese authorities confirmed that they had identified a new type of coronavirus<sup>1</sup>. The new SARS-CoV-2 causes a strong flu/respiratory syndrome that came to be known as COVID-19<sup>2</sup>. In addition to the deep distress seen in many countries that have experienced an upward curve of cases, spread by person-to-person transmission, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) changed the classification from an epidemic outbreak to a COVID-19<sup>3</sup> pandemic. .

After the WHO's declaration that it was a pandemic, feelings of perplexity, fear, anguish, physical, financial and emotional insecurity, diffuse feelings of strangeness and the sudden perception that the previous life had evaporated, became more common<sup>4</sup>.

In the psychoanalytic community, both in the Brazilian context and in the international context, there was an immediate movement, felt by many as violent, of changing the traditional setting, with its face-to-face characteristic, to remote care. Analysts who had never attended through the screen of a computer, tablet or smartphone - or even those who used this medium in specific situations in their clinic - found themselves faced with a new demand, which required (urgent) action and adaptation to a new reality<sup>5</sup>.

Using fundamental texts, it is reported that in times like these, anguish, grief and the fear of death itself dominate the common imagination, creating a continuous demand for analysis. Humans want to put death aside, want to eliminate it from life; no one believes in their own death, that is, is convinced of immortality; and, thus, the human being forces death to stop being a necessity (or a consequence of life) to become an accidental factor, so that in war, in a pandemic, death can no longer be denied<sup>6</sup>. At the moment, Brazil has more than 615 thousand deaths as a result of the new Coronavirus<sup>7</sup>.

In order to draw a parallel with the current health crisis and the Freudian work, it is worth considering the texts written during the First World War. At this time, Freud<sup>8</sup> was experiencing the effervescence of his work with Psychoanalysis, with an intense clinical investigation and theory development, and he brings a text about war and death:

*“Caught in the turmoil of this time of war, unilaterally informed, without detachment from the great changes that have already occurred or are about to occur and without any notion of the future that is being configured, we ourselves are lost as to the meaning of the impressions that shake us and how much to the value of the judgments that we form... But*

*we probably feel the evil of that time with excessive intensity, not having the right to compare it with that of times that we do not experience" (Freud, 1915, p. 210)<sup>8</sup>.*

Freudian feelings can be transposed to the current pandemic, since the uncertainties regarding the future, resumption of life, and how long it will take for the risks of the pandemic to pass, what are the impacts on mental health, among many others, are vertiginously accumulating.

People and families are thus subject to a new organization of life and in social isolation, starting to incorporate realities never experienced before by this generation, with a significant change in routines and habits of life and health, both in external and internal environments. Likewise, the pandemic context requested psychoanalysis, possibilities to maintain its practice.

Thus, this investigation aims to know the scientific production of psychoanalysis in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications and challenges arising from this new reality.

## METHODS

This is an integrative review, which allows the inclusion of experimental and non-experimental studies, whose purposes include: definition of concepts, review of theories and evidence and analysis of methodological problems about the analyzed topic, and that promotes Evidence-Based Practice (EBP), enabling the incorporation of new perspectives and methodologies in the clinic<sup>9</sup>.

The present study included: selection of terms used, establishment of criteria for sample composition, screening of articles, reading and data collection, analysis and interpretation of results and presentation of the review<sup>9</sup>.

This study has as its guiding question: *What is the role of Psychoanalysis in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how does it propose to deal with the challenges and present new perspectives for its praxis?*

The search was carried out in the following data sources: Virtual Health Library - VHL, Pepsic and Scielo, from the crossing of the following descriptors: COVID-19 x *psychoanalysis* and *social isolation* x *death drive*. The descriptors were released in the databases in Portuguese and the articles selected in any language. The refinement limits considered: original articles with full texts and available for open and free access online. Because it is an epidemic context, given the 'scientific novelty' related to infections by the new coronavirus, a restricted period for publications was not considered. Data collection took place between April and August 2021. Duplicate articles, editorials, reviews and book reviews/chapters were excluded.

The second stage aimed to assess the methodological quality of the studies, adopting the criteria of the Critical Appraisal Skills Program – CASP, which has 10 scored items, including: 1) objective; 2) suitability of method; 3) presentation of theoretical-methodological procedures; 4) sample selection criteria, 5) sample detail; 6) relationship between researchers and researched; 7) respect for ethical aspects; 8) rigor in data analysis; 9) property to discuss the results and 10) contributions and limitations of the research. By the instrument, the studies were classified at level A (6 to 10 points), meaning they have good methodological quality and reduced bias; or level B (up to 5 points), indicating satisfactory methodological quality, but with a tendency to bias<sup>10</sup>.

In the present study, we chose to use articles classified at level A. Therefore, the selected works were identified and organized in a table with the information extracted, the organization was as follows: Reference, Type of Study and Proposal (synthesis of objective and method).

## RESULTS

Of the 153 articles found, 67 were selected for reading, of which 16 were considered and then categorized by thematic approach. All selected texts had full text available in their allocation databases, most of them originally published in Portuguese, followed by texts in English, in addition to an article originally in French.

Ten of the 16 articles were found in the Psychology Base Index and Electronic Journals in Psychology (PEPSIC) and the others were available in LILACS/Scielo. As for the origin of publication of the selected texts, two journals stood out: *Revista Asephallus* (5 articles), from the Institute of Psychology of the Universidade de São Paulo and *Cadernos de Psicanalise* (3 articles) from the *Círculo Psicanalítico do Rio de Janeiro*.

All selected publications took place in 2020, highlighting the emergence and novelty of the theme. There was also an expressive predominance of studies with the descriptive and reflective methodology, very characteristic of publications in this area of knowledge. There is also a Case Study, an Experience Report and a cross-sectional survey.

Three categories were constructed: *Trauma, drive and death in the context of the pandemic* (7 articles); *The challenges for a new practice of psychoanalytic care* (6 articles); and *Perspectives for a new model of psychoanalytic care* (3 articles), arranged respectively in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

**Chart 1.** Articles included in the category: "Trauma, drive and death in the context of the Pandemic". Uberaba, 2021.

Publication	Proposal	Synopsis
A.mor.te: Psychoanalytic reflections on love and death in the pandemic. aSEPHallus;15(30): 56-79, May 2020 - Oct 2020.	Reflective study in which the authors ask: What does a pandemic reveal about the articulations between love and death? Why do we fear the death of those we love?	Love, death and fear have always been present in the clinic and in psychoanalytic musings, but they have become even more routine words in hospitals and psychoanalytic offices in a pandemic context.
Pandemic and pandemonies in Brazil: the value of psychoanalysis. Ide (São Paulo);42(69): 77-83, Jan - June 2020	This article discusses issues related to the pandemic and social isolation from a psychoanalytic perspective, in the daily life of the city of São Paulo, of people and the impact on analysts' offices through a reflective analysis.	In spite of all the adversities, lucid psychoanalysis resists, the consultations remain, the clinical and specific experiences multiply. Brazilian society seems curious about what psychoanalysis has to say. Psychoanalytic institutions are able to overcome crises and learn from experience.
Covid-19: Mourning, Death and Sustaining the Social Bond. Psicol. ciênc. prof;40: e244103, Jan - May 2020	Through a reflective analysis, this article situates the conditions of helplessness in which the subject finds himself to face the pandemic. There, he recognizes the conditions for us to be facing a traumatic situation that refers to the resources of psychoanalysis to guide a way of dealing with the situation.	Recognizing and being closer to our own limits is precisely the narrow way we have to, who knows, find here and there a new solution to our impasses. It is about taking an ethical position to face a situation that forces us not to hide the horror, but neither to succumb to panic and even less to cowardly indifference.
Freud one century later: subjective emergencies related to trauma and pandemics. aSEPHallus;15(29): 71-91, Nov 2019 - Apr 2020.	This article aims to present some theoretical contributions of psychoanalysis to reflect on this moment when trauma takes on a global and cultural character: the pandemic of the new coronavirus..	Psychoanalysis, faithful to the tradition dictated by Freud, has never shied away from positioning itself in the face of the ills that humanity has gone through and is going through, denouncing the helpless character of the human being. And through his clinic, he bets on the possibility that the subject appropriates himself, gets involved in his suffering, weaving a unique response to this helplessness that affects everyone.
Are you going back to the office? Psychoanalysis and online care. aSEPHallus;15(29): 129-139, Nov 2019 - Apr 2020.	This article questions the possible consequences extracted from the realization of psychoanalytic consultations in the online modality as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic that devastated us in 2020.	The changes that we are experiencing in the analytical work will be collected in a second time, without many expectations that we will return to the previous time. The effects of this experience are seen in analysts and analysands. In this tunnel that we are going through, still without seeing the end, we are collecting what has been left of this listening path.
Catastrophe, mourning and hope: psychoanalytic work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rev. latinoam. psicopatol. fundam.; 23(2). São Paulo Apr/June 2020	This article sought to discuss the impasses and possibilities of psychoanalytic work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.	The moment of the COVID-19 pandemic is a moment of catastrophe, both in terms of its traumatic potential and its violent cry for transformation. No one will come out of this catastrophe the same. For analysts, it is important to help patients to undergo this mandatory change without denying it, in addition to adapting to a new mode of care, since the destructuring trauma of denial can take place there.
Mental health in pandemic: a rereading of affections and the death instinct of Freud. Pluralidades em Saúde Mental, Curitiba,	The aim of this article is to reflect on possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, seeking to understand how people react	In such a critical moment, the resource of the word, the works of analysis, of therapies, are shown as an essential alternative to assist in the construction of narratives. This allows the subject a journey towards some possible

9(1); p. 18-34, June/July. 2020	affectively in the face of a traumatic situation, based on Freud's concepts of affection and death drive.	symbolic elaboration, the depressurization of anguish, the creative elaboration of the death drive, the maintenance of social bonds and the construction of dreams that put the future in perspective.
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**Chart 2.** Articles included in the category: "The Challenges for a new practice of psychoanalytic care". Uberaba, 2021.

Publication	Proposal	Synopsis
Care challenges and possibilities when in a live and die boundary: a seam between the COVID-19 pandemic frontline experience and psychoanalytical concepts. Cad. Psicanal. (Rio J., 1980);42(43): 75-90, July - Dec 2020	Reflective study that aims to disclose an experience of acting on the front line of the hospital of the Military Fire Brigade of the State of Rio de Janeiro in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, using as a reading key some concepts of psychoanalysis.	There were many challenges presented and still experienced in the shared experience: helping to promote the ability to feel, think and create, lending my look and my speech, equipping professionals for an exhausting endeavor with no end in sight, shifting the paradigm from saving to caring, accompanying difficult recovery processes and suffering deaths, communicating bad news, supporting the family in the process of mourning, which is made more difficult by the inexorability of death and the lack of traditional farewell rites, among others.
Emotional reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic: assistance to employees in situations of subjective urgency. aSEPHallus;15(30): 18-25, May 2020 - Oct 2020.	It is a case study in a group, based on experiences with psychoanalysis applied to the care of employees of a hospital institution; highlighting the psychological impasses of employees and the consequent clinical-institutional phenomena found.	Psychoanalytic listening is intended to identify the subjective obstacle that that clinical case reveals. What he does not address, what is not said fully or what is said with ambiguity. It was possible to locate the points of anguish for each one, the subjective impasses at stake, intervene in the non-symbolized points, as well as observe the way the subject presents himself and faces the impossible to symbolize: death. Psychic elaboration was provided in the face of the threat of loss to produce a new bond with work, based on psychic integrity and valuing life.
Psychoanalysis on line and elasticity of technique. Cad. psicanal. (Rio J., 1980);42(42): 37-45, Jan - June 2020.	This work proposes reflections on the transformations of the psychoanalytic clinic from the entrance of new technologies in the setting.	The recommendation of the elasticity of technique, proposed by Ferenczi, is articulated to the thinking of two philosophers who work on our relationship with technique and technology: Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida.
Rhythm and tiredness in face to face and remote sessions. J. psicanal;53(98): 41-50, Jan - June 2020.	A reflection on the differences between the face-to-face and non-presential sessions is proposed, using concepts from Tensive Semiotics, by the French linguist Claude Zilberberg, as well as the notion of framing as worked by José Bleger and other authors, thus building an interdisciplinary work at the interface from semiotics to psychoanalysis.	The progress in the analytical session is not only in the frame, nor is it the only component that differentiates the face-to-face sessions from the non-face-to-face sessions, which is pointed out to be one of the parameters that offer a reading key for new fatigue and strangeness and instrumentalize the analyst to look for the necessary adjustments, the "just measures" of the participants of the session with the objective of making them always possible, even in the most difficult times and conditions.
Emergency Remote Training in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy: An Initial Assessment from Columbia. J Am	After an abrupt shift from face-to-face study to remote classes, supervision, clinical work, and training analysis,	Most interns preferred face-to-face classes, clinical work and training reviews to those offered remotely, but in light of the health risks, they said they were less likely to



<p>Psychoanal Assoc;68(6): 1065-1086, 2020 12.</p>	<p>Columbia University's Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research interviewed its psychotherapy and psychoanalysis interns to assess their initial remote training experience.</p>	<p>continue training in the fall of 2020 if face-to-face work resumed. The interns suggested several modifications to the teaching techniques to improve their participation and concentration in class.</p>
<p>Pandemic effects on the institution and the psychoanalytic clinic - working on-line. Estud. psicanal. 54(1); Belo Horizonte July/Dec 2020</p>	<p>This work presents a reflection on the effects of the pandemic in the clinic and in the psychoanalytic institution, as well as the analyst's experience during the online work.</p>	<p>From the challenges that contemporaneity presents to analysts, the present reflection raises the questions: What is the place of psychoanalysis? What is analyst-specific? How to respond more creatively to this period of rapid transformations and changes? How are we analysts being affected by these changes? How to survive the shock? How to deal with scare? How to be prepared for the unexpected?</p>

**Chart 3.** Articles included in the category: "Perspectives for a new model of psychoanalytic care". Uberaba, 2021

Publication	Proposal	Synopsis
<p>Help line: experience report on a welcoming device for health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic. aSEPHallus;15(30): 26-40, May 2020 - Oct 2020</p>	<p>Through a reception instrument via telephone calls, we sought to assess the emotional and work overload of the multidisciplinary team of a hospital.</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic brings out the position of each one in the face of the threat of helplessness. At that moment, the internal resources available to face the unpredictable are evident. The work of attention to the worker's health reveals the relevance of the bond that each subject establishes with their professional choice. The symbolic place that the work activity occupies for each one reveals the quality of the relationship with the Other that an adult subject can develop</p>
<p>Fear, perplexity, negationism, consternation – and grief: affects of the subject during the pandemic. Rev. latinoam. psicopatol. fundam;23(3): 583-596, July - Sep 2020.</p>	<p>Reflective Study that focused on the speeches of subjects undergoing psychoanalytic treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and, for that, chose some signifiers that imposed themselves on the listening of psychoanalysts over the time of hospitalization.</p>	<p>Perhaps the damage caused by the pandemic, despite its extension, is not enough to promote urgent work and effective transvaluation in contemporary society in order to make it fairer, and the planet more sustainable. However, psychoanalysis will always work tirelessly to undermine the belief in totalizing truths, in universal solutions, in blind discipline, opening gaps, always maintaining a hole, a vitalizing void through which air circulates and breathing takes place. No wonder she gains a lot of prominence in this period of confinement, not to mention the grieving overload of so many losses that are yet to be made.</p>
<p>Fear and boredom in confinement. Cad. psicanal. (Rio J., 1980);42(42): 117-134, Jan - June 2020.</p>	<p>This investigation sought to analyze how the reality of confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic came, with the fear of contagion, to juxtapose itself with an insidious protest against life similar to depression and whose origin in the subject is</p>	<p>It is argued that what gave pleasure in the free exchange between friends and colleagues, the "light spirit" as Freud called it, the laughter provoked by wit and, at times, by the slightly corrosive mockery, could perfectly endure thanks to electronic exchanges. The confinement provided an opportunity for deep reflections on oneself and on the Others,</p>

	the impossibility of leaving the magic circle. , invisible and uninhabitable that encloses him and keeps him away from the life he would have dreamed of	on the importance of staying in contact with them and, sometimes, also on the inner children who, living in everyday life with us, had to learn to bend in the presence of their loved ones. parents and the educational limits they were forced to impose in order to survive.
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## DISCUSSION

### Trauma, drive and death in the context of the pandemic

In a general context, about the Freudian conceptions of life and death drives, one can infer the need for an effort by the former to maintain life, because otherwise the individual would soon succumb to death. The death drive somehow acts in the sense of making a circuit with the life drive, with a complement between one and the other or as Freud<sup>11</sup> highlights, a mixture, an amalgam, a mixture of variable proportions occurs between the two drives.

In the contemporary world, humanity seeks to distance itself from the encounter with death; creating a whole marketing apparatus for the prolongation of life, excluding from it even the reflections inherent to the processes of death and dying. In the pandemic, as death begins to be erased from ordinary life, there is a trivialization of death and dying unprecedented in previous societies, even if the history of all these societies is like the history written with their bloody wars. If you live in a time when death is ignored, since it is rarely talked about, other than in scientific, biological and medical terms<sup>12</sup>.

The drives are also ways of talking about affects in Psychoanalysis. The death drive, a controversial and at the same time revolutionary concept in Freudian theory shows that the subject is not only a being of goodness, but at the same time, someone with the potential for destruction. This poses difficulties in sustaining a solidary position, in sustaining social isolation, or even in managing the intense coexistence between people within their own homes. The outbreak of affections at a high quantitative level and the presence of the death drive, which will make unique arrangements for each subject, result in different and always unique perceptions and reactions to the same situation<sup>13</sup>.

The update of helplessness and the outbreak of anguish can result in a high level of suffering for the subject, generating impacts on mental health. Approaching the psychoanalytic concepts inherent to the impacts on subjectivity, it can be inferred that the pandemic imposes a complex experience, awakening suffering, bringing to the surface affections that frighten and make the subject confront their own issues in a more direct way, and even knowing that everything will pass, this passage has a temporality and it is not known what it would be<sup>13</sup>.



In a documentary analysis about the expressions of mourning published in communication vehicles about COVID-19; it was evidenced that in the media, mourning is still a taboo, receiving little attention and appearing as a relevant theme only in situations of tragedies (lost lives). The expressions 'deaths' and 'losses' appeared connected to the end of life, although during the pandemic there are also deaths of dreams, jobs, quality of life, and countless other things that may not be able to be redone or replaced<sup>14</sup>.

The notion of trauma in Psychoanalysis generally refers to the ways in which the subject is affected by something he cannot face. Regardless of the different theoretical positions on the subject, it is about a lack or an excess, a short or a beyond, the impossible and the inconceivable that befalls each one, reducing the individual's capacity in the usual psychic functioning to meet the new requirement. As Verztman and Romão-Dias<sup>5</sup> (2020) put it:

*"It is evident that not everything in us is a reaction to trauma – perhaps it is not even the most important thing we carry – but catastrophic situations bring trauma to the center of our existence."*

Sudden fragility, perplexity in the face of unpredictability, a feeling of risk of annihilation and surprise at the abrupt transformation of the world are some of the phrases heard in the context of the pandemic. It is impossible to remain indifferent to the catastrophe, unless one pays a high price for it, a price that most people are not willing to pay<sup>5</sup>. Also, the recognition of the death of the other cannot be indifferent, since indifference leads to the danger of getting lost in a deadly enjoyment, which can become the damnation of life in society<sup>12</sup>.

In addition to working with patients, the analyst must be aware of the subjectively presented environment, since two processes are faced: the mourning for the passage to the online setting and the mourning inherent to the catastrophe. Indeed, mourning related to the pandemic seems to be a more complicated process, perhaps because it somehow refers to the second narcissistic wound postulated in the Freudian view, the biological wound<sup>8</sup>. In this instance, Freud refers to Darwin, even though his postulation is antagonized by the attachment to a belief that could only be sustained by denial: that the human being is greater than nature or relatively independent of it. As Verztman and Romao-Dias (2020)<sup>5</sup> put it, the virus that causes COVID-19, *"has today the potential to revolutionize the planetary way of life and to operate a cut, a discontinuity capable of crushing our omnipotence"*.

This finding can have a positive effect in facing the pandemic. Recognizing and being closer to one's own limits is precisely the most effective narrow path for the elaboration of new behaviors and attitudes in the direction and of a new equation for the impasses now imposed. Thus, in an eventual post-pandemic world, it will most likely not be just about restoring a

previous way of life that, at this point, tends to be situated as the best of all worlds. This hope, like all hope, does not hold. Nor can you live on the love of remembrance, of what is gone. It is, therefore, a matter of courage to face only the certainty of the moment when what has to be done is done; only later will the news of what happened during the time of the pandemic<sup>12</sup>.

Reflecting on these questions, even the modification of the analysis environment can represent a trauma and requires a keen observation on the part of the analyst. By suggesting the use of the couch in the meeting with the analyst, Freud conceives how important it is to remove the body from the visual scene, whether that of the analyst or the analysed, allowing the latter to speak more freely. Freud emphasizes that the presence of the body, or its absence, in the analytic encounter, has consequences for the process itself. Freed from the analyst's expressions, the analysed loses the visual field, which would serve as a reference for their speech; as a consequence of this loss, the voice object gains another status. The couch in the context of online service is replaced by the act of turning off the camera; and this action can promote different reactions in analysed and analysts<sup>15</sup>.

Despite having an impact on collective life, trauma can arouse different feelings and actions in the psychic apparatus. In an investigation with health professionals who work on the hospital front line to combat the Coronavirus, stimuli of ambivalence were identified both as a motivating impulse and self-care, as well as reclusion/fear in the face of COVID-19, in addition to reports of fear, anxiety, obligation, worry about death and sadness, discrimination, isolation, uncertainties and doubts about the future<sup>16</sup>. In this way, if it is true that malaise is experienced collectively, in the sense of weakening the possibilities of symbolizing malaise, Psychoanalysis, through its clinic, bets on the possibility that the subject appropriates themselves, is involved in their suffering, to weave a unique response to the helplessness that affects everyone<sup>17</sup>.

In another work, it is discussed how the themes of love, death and fear have always been present in the clinic and in psychoanalytic musings, but have become even more routine words in hospitals and psychoanalytic offices in a pandemic context. The study of these themes reflects their interdependence and how they are intertwined, orbiting around lack and related to helplessness, whose design is essential to guide psychoanalysts in their practice in this new pandemic context<sup>18</sup>.

In turn, Birman<sup>19</sup> reflects on how the current pandemic reactivates the original helplessness of the subject, evoking the concept enunciated by Freud in "Civilization's Discontents", in a way that real anguish has an incisive traumatic impact. Alongside this, the psychic mark of masochism is also reactivated, in the form of the fantasy of making oneself suffer, which imperatively imposes itself on the subject. Thus, there is no doubt that in the

Brazilian context, the discourse of critical science was associated with the primacy of the imperative of life, while the discourse of technoscience was combined with the imperative of the economy. The latter rose to the political stage, implying a perverse and cruel act, accumulating increasing numbers of dead and infected, with important physical and psychological consequences for a large number of families; ceasing to care about what is really worthy of value: the life of each one, in its unparalleled and incomparable singularity.

In Brazil, with the temporal evolution of the pandemic, there is a theater of absurdities and contradictions, worsened by the lack of leadership and social cohesion - which deepens the inequalities, alienation and suffering of its people. Lucid psychoanalysis resists, consultations remain, clinical and specific experiences multiply. It is thus denoted that psychoanalytic institutions are able to circumvent crises and learn from experience, even though the country does not take psychoanalysis as a model for coping with these crises<sup>20</sup>.

### *The challenges for a new practice of psychoanalytic care*

The COVID-19 pandemic meant a new configuration of life, full of challenges for all humanity. The need to deal with an unexpected event with imponderable consequences, in the face of an unpredictable virus that exposes the human body to the imminent risk of death, and therefore, with very profound consequences for the psychic apparatus.

In research at the beginning of COVID-19; health professionals, cleaning and essential services, until then inexperienced, exhausted and without sufficient and safe personal protective equipment; a state of anguish was triggered, whose manifestation could vary from mild to disabling, which caused an encounter with the unpredictable and a subjective disorder in response to the threatening contingency that referred to the experience of original helplessness<sup>21</sup>.

Another study, about psychoanalytic care of frontline professionals in the face of COVID-19, the challenges presented and still experienced in the shared experience were: helping to promote the ability to feel, think and create, lending looks and speech, instrumentalizing the professionals for an exhausting task with no end in sight, shifting the paradigm from saving to caring, accompanying difficult recovery processes and suffering deaths, communicating bad news, supporting the family in the process of mourning, which becomes more difficult the inescapability of death and the lack of traditional mourning rites, among others<sup>22</sup>.

In another hospital institution, in response to fear of helplessness and threat of death, psychoanalytic care was able to recognize intense emotional reactions and disruptive behaviors in the work environment. As a consequence, the psychology service was organized to deal with subjective urgencies triggered in the institutional context<sup>23</sup>.

In this context, the Internet appears as an alternative to shorten distances and enable meetings that were resolved by the advent of the pandemic. A study conducted with students from Columbia University identified that most interns preferred face-to-face classes, clinical work and training analyzes to those offered remotely, however, in view of the health risks, they obtained high rates of adaptation and approval in the activities online and later suggested several changes in teaching techniques to improve their participation and concentration in class<sup>24</sup>.

Humanity is considered to be in fast times, surpassed by the internet; with speed in receiving information and messages and with a fast response requirement. Freud corresponded and exchanged information through his letters, with time for waiting, for elaboration, for calm; factor that is put to analysts, as individuals endowed with a more elaborate reasoning and with patience, a context put to the test<sup>6</sup>.

Talking via Skype or Whatsapp establishes other boundaries between public and private, another rhythm, another form of engagement, of hierarchy, other forms of personal and political relationships. Perhaps this requires psychoanalysts to transform their way of empathizing; hear and perceive<sup>25</sup>. In addition, a large number of psychoanalysts have reported a much greater feeling of tiredness in sessions performed in this modality. One of the factors that may be related to this is the difference in pace between the face-to-face and non-face-to-face sessions - the latter tend to be more accelerated and to tolerate less silence, under penalty of the analytic encounter becoming extinct<sup>26</sup>.

In a survey with analysts in online service, the following challenges were verified: the presence of fatigue in the responses, related to the need to sustain the look on the screen, in addition to the difficulty of being present in the listening, and that the analyst's body is "required" in a different way, with the need for more precise interventions (scores and silences) so that the service does not become a "chat" and the clinical effects appear<sup>15</sup>. Also, there was an increase in dreams and the need to talk about them, a certain lack of attention from the analysts - fluctuating attention and from the patients themselves, and the interference of other sounds (intercom, family voice, telephones ringing) in the patients' speech.

### *Perspectives for a new model of psychoanalytic care*

Even before the appearance of the new coronavirus, some discussions were already taking place within the scope of psychoanalysis, regarding the possibilities of treatment by other means, not only in person at the clinic. Every crisis implies the possibility of reinvention and invites us to explore concepts and principles from the clinic, literature and culture in their various manifestations and representations that come to light.

The advent of the trauma inherent to the pandemic, which brought the suspension of socially constructed reality and the production of another, precarious, instantaneous, uncertain; it makes the traumatic person find different psychic responses and forces the analyst to live up to these events and the effects of the trauma, whether in the clinic, in the social space or in the private sphere of the clinic<sup>27</sup>. It is in this context that psychoanalysis can offer a contemporary model of intervention through listening, applying a deep look at the individuality of the human being, albeit by digital means, in those aspects that are beyond voluntary and conscious control, of a critical phenomenon such as the coronavirus pandemic. COVID-19.

Regarding the perspectives and potentialities highlighted by analysts in virtual (online) care, there is a high receptiveness of patients, as well as the feeling of a certain proximity, impulse to study and constant training to deal with these new challenges, decrease of absences, shorter silences, change in the time of pauses between speeches<sup>15</sup>. In addition to these perspectives, the possibility of a broader understanding in the direction of mental health is reflected, with emphasis on: greater acceptance of finitude; expansion in the ability to deal with affections and adversities, genuine recognition that one depends on each other and, reevaluation of what is fundamental to oneself<sup>11</sup>.

A study showed the experience conducted with the use of a telephone line (help line), through which it was possible to provide psychological care to employees in subjective urgency<sup>21</sup>. Such assistance served as a reception and intervention device in situations of subjective urgency triggered by the situation of illness and threat of loss and, in addition, it showed that the way each subject structured social ties directly influences the response they produce in the face of a situation of crisis; although it is recognized that the device has obvious limitations, however it proved to be effective for the reception and containment of anguish<sup>21</sup>.

Another investigation with patients under analysis, about COVID-19, showed that it is possible that the trauma produced by the pandemic is not enough for an urgent and effective work of transvaluation in contemporary society in order to make it more just, and the planet more sustainable, since the more individualistic and marketing issues continue to be highlighted<sup>28</sup>. In view of this, psychoanalysis will always work tirelessly to undermine the belief in totalizing truths, in universal solutions, in blind discipline, opening gaps, always maintaining a hole, a vitalizing void, in which air circulates and breathing takes place. No wonder it (psychoanalysis) stands out in confinement, not to mention the overload of grief, and the many losses that have taken place and are yet to come.

Another research showed that subjects previously attended in person showed nuances in their analytical process that had not previously appeared, such as: embarking on topics they

were not used to addressing, saying things they had never said before, getting more emotional<sup>25</sup>. The possibility still remains that what gave pleasure in the free exchange between friends and colleagues, the “light spirit”, the laughter provoked by wit and, at times, by the slightly corrosive mockery, could perfectly endure thanks to electronic exchanges in the face of impossibility of a more physical and close affective contact<sup>29</sup>.

In this way, it is possible to infer that Psychoanalysis takes the role of interpreter of the 'spirit of time', of the anguish caused by the original helplessness in the face of an unprecedented crisis, and by social coexistence, whose languages dribble subjective experiences related to isolation, manifest in symptoms of anxiety, irritability, intolerance, apathy, anguish and outbreak, among many other symptoms. Unconditionally touching the origin of suffering makes the psychoanalyst a demiurge – a craftsman who works for the public – in search of healing, salvation and meaning<sup>27</sup>.

Despite the gaps, it is possible that more research will be carried out on: analysts' own mental health; the referendation or not for the virtual service by the area, or even a hybrid proposal; the marked suffering from losses and other types of “deaths”, such as the physical consequences and the need for rehabilitation; or how to deal with the absences of important people (fathers, mothers, grandparents, siblings, friends and others), due to the pandemic, are some examples of studies that did not appear.

As limitations of the study, there is a restriction on the bases and descriptors used, so that perhaps the enlargement on this one would show other studies; however, due to the novelty of the pandemic and the ways of coping, this work showed the unfolding of COVID-19 and the insertion (including social) of psychoanalysis in another possibility, updated by a context of crisis, here in the pandemic case.

## CONCLUSION

The malaise caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is manifested through various symptoms that affect human beings today. Fear, anguish, stress and collapse are some of the symptoms that affect the mental health of the population in the face of the risk of contamination and death. Keeping social distance, hygiene and avoiding agglomerations is the global orientation given by the World Health Organization and the Ministries that decode the local reality of each country.

The question that summons psychoanalysis in the noble exercise of its listening, increasingly current and necessary, is related to the acceptance of pain and uncertainties that find fertile ground in the insecurities of individuals, in their ways of feeling, thinking and acting in the face of the phenomenon that took over the planet.



Psychoanalysis resumes its role and incorporates new technologies in order to offer a contemporary model of intervention through listening and also looking, diving deeply into the individuality of the human being, in those aspects that escape voluntary and conscious control, of a critical phenomenon. and making it possible to overcome, at least on a psychic level, this pandemic.

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