


## LEISURE AND MENTAL HEALTH IN TIMES OF COVID-19

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*Suzy Kamylla de Oliveira Menezes*<sup>1</sup>  
Universidade Federal de Alagoas (UFAL)  
Federal Institute of Alagoas (IFAL).  
Maceió – AL – Brazil

**ABSTRACT:** The COVID-19 pandemic brought great repercussions on the lives of the world population, due to the need for quarantine, isolation and social distancing. These measures changed leisure options and had repercussions on people's mental health. This work aims to analyze how mental health and leisure were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this, a literature review was carried out on articles produced during the year 2020. The results show that the changes due to the pandemic have affected the mental health of the population in Brazil and the world. Negative impacts can be manifested by increased stress, anxiety, and depression, for example. To adapt to the pandemic, virtual leisure options were the most used in the analyzed studies. It is concluded that the search for strategies that mitigate the impacts on mental health and leisure is essential to deal with the current crisis due to the pandemic.

**KEYWORDS:** Leisure Activities. Mental Health. COVID-19.

## LAZER E SAÚDE MENTAL EM TEMPOS DE COVID-19

**RESUMO:** A pandemia por COVID-19 trouxe grandes repercussões no cotidiano da população mundial, devido à necessidade de quarentena, isolamento e distanciamento social. Essas medidas mudaram as opções de lazer e tiveram repercussões sobre a saúde mental das pessoas. O objetivo deste trabalho é analisar como saúde mental e lazer foram impactados durante a pandemia por COVID-19. Para isso foi realizada uma revisão de literatura em artigos produzidos durante o ano de 2020. Os resultados mostram que as mudanças devido à pandemia afetaram a saúde mental da população no Brasil e no mundo. Os impactos negativos podem se manifestar pelo aumento de estresse, ansiedade e depressão, por exemplo. Para se adaptar à pandemia, as opções de lazer virtual foram as mais utilizadas nos estudos analisados. Conclui-se que a busca por estratégias que atenuem os impactos sobre a saúde mental e sobre o lazer são essenciais para lidar com a atual crise devido à pandemia.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Atividades de Lazer. Saúde Mental. COVID-19.

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. student in Education by Education Center (CEDU) of UFAL. Master's Degree in Computer Science by UFAL. Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Computer Science at UFAL. Professor at the Federal Institute of Alagoas (IFAL).

## **LEISURE AND MENTAL HEALTH IN TIMES OF COVID-19**

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### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic had great repercussions on the daily lives of the world population. Among the major changes in people's routine, there were the need for quarantine, social isolation and social distancing. Such control measures to reduce contamination rates had a direct impact on leisure options and the population's mental health. In this regard, there is a change in the search for adaptations to this atypical moment, which also depend on the social, cultural and psychological conditions of each person.

On March 11, 2020, the 2019 coronavirus pandemic, known as COVID-19, was recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO). In Brazil, the first case was confirmed on February 26, 2020 and through Ordinance No. 454, of March 20, 2020, it was declared a state of community transmission of the new coronavirus (MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE, 2020; IMPRENSA NACIONAL, 2020).

To contain the transmission of the disease, security measures are now being disclosed and required for the population. Wilder-Smith and Freedman (2020) define social isolation as the separation of people who are sick with a contagious disease from

those who are not infected. Quarantine is defined as the restriction of people who may have been exposed to a contagious disease and social distancing is used to reduce interactions between people in a community who may be infected but who have not yet been identified with the disease.

Isolation and social distancing required that leisure activities be rethought to fit the new reality imposed on the world. In this regard, there was concern about the repercussions of these measures on the population's life. Although there are recommendations regarding the habits to be acquired for a healthy life, the pandemic highlighted the precariousness and vulnerability of society in terms of physical and psychological care to deal with extreme situations such as a pandemic.

In this context, the pandemic can have psychological repercussions that negatively impact mental health. Situations such as fear, frustration, boredom, loss of routine and a feeling of isolation affect people during the pandemic (BROOKS et al. 2020). In the Johnson study; Saletti-Cuesta; Tumas (2020), during the pandemic, the feeling of fear, anguish, responsibility, loneliness, vulnerability and lack of control was also observed. Ferreira *et al.* (2020) investigated anxiety, depression and stress in order to describe mental health indicators during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. From the results, it is noted that intolerance to uncertainty plays a relevant role in the mental health process during the initial phase of the pandemic.

According to Justo-Henriques (2020, p. 298-306),

[...] the adoption of healthy and preventive behaviors is essential to reduce the spread of pandemic diseases. These must be adequate to the symptomatology and transmission routes of the disease. [...] Together with preventive behavioral measures and clear, precise and timely communication, it is considered essential to foster social support networks in the community and promote a feeling of unity, as well as providing psychological support that is adequate to the needs from an early stage of the epidemic or pandemic.

In situations where there is no vaccine or pharmacological treatment, behavior change is the main strategy in order to avoid contagion and spread of the disease (JUSTO-HENRIQUES, 2020). To alleviate fear and apprehension about the danger of contagion, specific preventive measures such as hand washing and social distancing have demonstrated a protective effect against symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression (ALKHAMEES et al., 2020).

In addition to mental health as a dimension of the human being to be analyzed in relation to the pandemic period, there is also leisure. In this regard, leisure is considered as a human need. There is no single concept of what leisure is, however there is a construction of leisure as an opposition to work. Often associated with “unproductivity”. When reflecting on leisure as a human need, it can be considered that human needs are finite and vary according to culture and historical moment (GOMES, 2014). However,

[...] it is increasingly evident that the understanding of leisure as a sphere opposite to work has not been able to problematize the complexities and dynamics that mark the multiple dimensions of collective life in different spheres and contexts, notably in this 21st century [...] leisure represents the need to enjoy, playfully, the countless culturally constituted social practices. This need is materialized in playfulness and can be satisfied in multiple ways, according to the values and interests of subjects, groups and institutions in each historical, social and cultural context. Therefore, leisure needs to be treated as a social, political, cultural and historically situated phenomenon. [...] Conceived as a human cultural production, leisure constitutes dialogical relationships with education, work, politics, economy, language and art, among other dimensions of social life, being part of integral and constitutive of each collectivity (GOMES, 2014, p. 7 - 12).

From Gomes (2014) it is noted that leisure is part of a historical construction, which can bring changes in its form of manifestation and that is transversal to other dimensions of human life. Thus, it cannot be reduced to a mere contraposition to work.

Also, in the Federal Constitution of 1988, in Art. 6th there is the right to leisure as a social right. Thus are “social rights to education, health, food, work, housing, transport, leisure, safety, social security, protection of maternity and childhood,

assistance to the destitute, in the form of this Constitution” (BRASIL, 1988). During the pandemic, the right to health and leisure becomes a challenge to be faced, in order to also guarantee security against COVID-19.

Thus, the research motivation is to understand how the changes generated by the pandemic had an impact on people's lives, particularly in relation to mental health and leisure. The unprecedented and unexpected situation that resulted from the pandemic generated a scenario of uncertainty that affected the population around the world.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how mental health and leisure were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. For such, a literature review was carried out on articles produced during the year 2020. The methodology used was a bibliographical research in academic articles related to leisure and mental health referring to the 2020 pandemic period.

Literature reviews allow us to know the scientific literature on a particular subject. In this regard, visualize what has already been written on a subject, aspects that have been addressed, gaps that may open perspectives for future studies. Thus, verifying the possibilities of studies and also the limitations (FLICK, 2013; PRODANOV, 2013; LIMA; MIOTO, 2007).

Throughout 2020, numerous traditional celebrations in Brazil and around the world were canceled or modified to be transmitted virtually over the Internet, without the presence of an audience. In December 2020, in Brazil, the scenario was of a significant reduction in social distance, where most of the population resumed leisure activities outside the home environment. Christmas and New Year's Eve also needed to be celebrated in order to reduce the number of people nearby, as well as the large traditional festivals.

Due to the increase in cases of COVID-19 in Brazil and in other countries, there were Brazilian states that for the end-of-year festivities intensified sanitary restrictions, such as Alagoas, Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte and São Paulo, among others. In general, they are measures to suspend mass and festive events during Christmas and New Year in order to avoid crowding. In Alagoas, parties with more than 300 people were prohibited, as well as fireworks for New Year's Eve. In São Paulo, on specific days (25, 26 and 27 December 2020; 1, 2 and 3 January 2021), shopping malls, bars, restaurants, gyms and any type of public event were closed (HERCULANO, 2020; RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, 2020; PRADO, 2020; BATISTA, 2020).

In December 2020, vaccination began in different countries around the world. On December 8, the UK was the first country to vaccinate its population against COVID-19. An even more contagious mutation was detected in the country, leading to measures to restrict the entry and exit of people who passed through the region. Other countries, as United States (start on 12/14), Canada (start on 12/14), Saudi Arabia (start on 12/17), China (mid-November), Serbia (start on 12/24), Mexico (start on 12/24), Chile (start on 12/24), among other countries. In Brazil, in December, there was still no forecast for the start of vaccination (CNN BRASIL, 2020).

In this sense, to provide mental health care and increase the feeling of well-being, there are people who seek to practice leisure activities. There are numerous artistic, physical-sports and intellectual activities, such as cinema, movies, series, social networks, reading, games, religious/spiritual practices, physical activities at home or in the gym, sports, parties, painting, gardening, cooking, leisure in nature (CASTILHO; RIBEIRO; UNGHERI, 2020; MONTENEGRO; QUEIROZ; DIAS, 2020; MAYOR; SILVA; LOPES, 2020).

According to a survey conducted by Instituto Península (2020a), with 7,773 professionals in basic education in Brazil, from April 13 to May 14, 2020. Through an online questionnaire, they were asked how they were feeling most of the time. The results showed that the participants were: 67% anxious, 36% bored, 38% tired, 34% stressed, 35% overloaded, 27% frustrated, 17% depressed, 19 % lonely, 23% calm, 9% happy, 8% happy, 7% satisfied, 6% enthusiastic, 3% fulfilled. On the concern with mental health, they stated: 17.0% I'm not worried; 34.2% I'm a little worried; 28.2% I am very worried; 20.6% I am totally worried.

This Peninsula Institute survey (2020b) was continued throughout 2020. From 20 July to 14 August 2020, 2,779 respondents to an online questionnaire participated. On how they were feeling most of the time, there were changes: 64% anxious, 26% bored, 46% tired, 42% stressed, 53% overwhelmed, 34% frustrated, 20% depressed, 18% lonely, 10% calm, 5% happy, 5% happy, 5% satisfied, 4% enthusiastic, 2% realized. Regarding mental health, there were variations regarding the percentages observed in May 2020. According to the data of the participants, it was observed: 12% I'm not worried; 34% I'm a little worried (a); 34% I am very worried (a); 20% I'm totally worried. Based on the data, it is possible to visualize a higher frequency of negative feelings in relation to positive feelings, as well as an increase in these negative feelings and a decrease in positive feelings in the second stage of the research.

It is worth mentioning how work carried out in the home environment creates a reality of fusion between professional, family and intimate life. The limits of working hours also change in this movement, since the worker who has the technological devices at his disposal may be more required to be available to carry out activities that were previously closed with the exit from your physical place of work. In addition to needing

more time to prepare their work material, in cases such as education professionals, especially teachers.

In this perspective, in the survey carried out by Instituto Península (2020a), the perception of these professionals was asked which aspects of life improved or worsened due to the pandemic. The results show that 57% considered that leisure and cultural activities had worsened a lot; 30% thought it got a little worse; 8% thought it was the same; 4% considered it improved a little; 1% felt that it had improved a lot.

About the activities that the teachers said they spend more time on are: 66% domestic activities, 62% working at home in school activities, 43% leisure, 27% supporting their children in school tasks, 25% self-knowledge and self-care activities, 22% physical activities at home. According to the data presented, the majority of teachers stated that they dedicate more time to domestic activities and work (INSTITUTO PENÍNSULA, 2020a).

About the resources that have supported teachers during the pandemic, the following were pointed out: 70% stay with family, 56% watch TV, movies and series, 50% study, 42% read books, 41% talk to friends and colleagues, 39% work, 38% cook, 35% seek support in religion, 32% watch lives, 20% practice physical activity, 16% practice self-knowledge and self-care activities (INSTITUTO PENÍNSULA, 2020b). Based on the data, there are leisure activities present in the daily lives of teachers that support the experience of the period of social distancing.

Below, some studies address the practice of physical exercise, which is one of the leisure activities, among many others that are part of people's daily lives and that are also related to care for mental and physical health. About the practice of physical activities, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is recommended the practice of 150 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activities weekly or 75 minutes of



vigorous aerobic physical activities weekly, or even a combination of both. In addition, there are recommendations for adults 18 and over, physical activity includes leisure time physical activity, transportation (for instance, walking and cycling), occupational (eg work), household activities, play, games, sports or planned exercises, in daily activities, family and community (WHO, 2010).

According to Piza *et al.* (2020) the practice of leisure-time physical activity by people with and without chronic non-communicable diseases was analyzed. Data from 719 people over 18 years of age in São Paulo were analyzed. Data were collected from April 2017 to April 2018 through interviews in consultations carried out in health units, of which 70.1% had non-communicable chronic diseases. The data showed the prevalence of inactivity. Among people without chronic non-communicable disease, 76.5% (114 women) were inactive and 65.2% (43 men) were inactive. Among people with non-communicable chronic disease, 70.5% (266 women) and 61.7% (67 men) were inactive.

Dias *et al.* (2020) investigated the practice of physical exercise and leisure sports by adults in São Paulo from 2006 to 2016. Data from 21,357 people from the Surveillance System for Risk and Protection Factors for Chronic Diseases by Telephone Survey (VIGITEL) were analyzed. Over the years, an increase in the practice of physical exercise among men was observed, from 49.3% in 2006 to 56.0% in 2016. Among women, there was a change from 31.7% in 2006 to 40.8% in 2016. The most active age group is between 18 to 24 years old (65%) and 25 to 34 years old (56.8%), in 2016. The least active age group is aged 65 or over (37.2%). The authors observed that over the years there was a decrease in the practice of sports such as walking and soccer and an increase in gymnastics from 2006 to 2016.

Gomes *et al.* (2019) compared barriers to physical activity between participating and non-participating women in a physical exercise program of Primary Health Care in São Paulo. It participated 222 in each group and most were over 60 years old. The barriers most frequently mentioned by non-participating women were lack of company, lack of energy, feeling tired or unmotivated, an appropriate place to exercise at home, and lack of money.

Freire *et al.* (2014) sought to determine the factors associated with regular physical activity. The study included 763 adolescents, 841 adults and 740 elderly people from Minas Gerais. Data were collected through a questionnaire on home visits. A lower level of physical activity was identified with increasing age and a higher level of activity among men, regardless of age, and with higher levels of education. Among adolescents, the prevalence of active young people among those who did not smoke was identified.

Farias Júnior *et al.* (2012) sought to identify factors associated with exercise practice among adolescents. The sample consisted of 2,874 students, from 14 to 19 years old, in João Pessoa, Paraíba. Data were obtained through a questionnaire. The results showed that just over half of the adolescents were physically active (50.2%), male youths were more active than females (66.3%). Factors also contributing to the practice of exercise were greater parental education and participation in physical education classes.

In the work of García-Puello *et al.* (2018) the levels of physical activity in university students were evaluated. It participated 601 students from the city of Barranquilla, who answered a questionnaire on sociodemographic variables and self-perceived health. The calculation of the body mass index was also performed and the Pérez-Rojas-García Sedentarism Classification Test was applied. The results showed a

high prevalence of physical inactivity (61.6%). Physical activity levels according to gender are also evident, where women are less active than men.

Cevada *et al.* (2012) compared the resilience, quality of life and anxiety of 17 former high-performance athletes from artistic gymnastics, 15 former athletes from other sports and 30 non-athletes, aged between 18 and 45 years, in the city of Rio de Janeiro. of January. The following instruments were used: Beck Depression Inventory, Trait and State Anxiety Inventory (STAI T and E), Resilience Scale and Quality of Life Questionnaire SF-36. The results showed that ex-athletes showed greater resilience, regardless of the sport practiced and age. They also showed less anxiety in relation to the indices presented by non-athletes. Therefore, the practice of exercise contributes to the mental health of sports practitioners.

Thus, the studies showed results that indicate the population's inactivity or low frequency of physical activity in different contexts and in some, a gender difference is evidenced regarding the frequency of physical activity, being more frequent among men. This work will also present works that address leisure and physical activities, focusing on the pandemic period.

Thus, this article addresses academic work related to leisure and mental health during the pandemic. Below, the article is structured, presenting the methodology, in order to address how the choice of articles that make up this research was carried out. The selected works are listed in the results and discussions, and they were organized into two categories to address mental health and leisure and COVID-19. Finally, the final considerations are presented.

## **Methodology**

For the construction of this literature review, a bibliographic research was used as a methodological procedure. A survey of articles was carried out to understand how mental health and leisure were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic period (FLICK, 2013; PRODANOV, 2013; LIMA, MIOTO, 2007). The databases consulted were SciELO and Scopus. The inclusion criteria applied were: articles that address mental health or leisure during the pandemic; surveys carried out in 2020; articles in Portuguese, English or Spanish. Preprints and papers that were not specifically about mental health or leisure were not selected.

In the databases, the following descriptors were used: COVID-19, coronavirus, pandemic, leisure, mental health, physical exercise, physical activity. In the searches for articles on mental health, the SciELO and Scopus databases were consulted. In SciELO for the search: (COVID-19 OR pandemic OR coronavirus) AND mental health 48 results were obtained. In the Scopus base for the search: (COVID-19 OR pandemic OR coronavirus) AND mental health 272 results were obtained, using Psychology as a subfield. Searches were carried out in the first week of December 2020.

In the search for articles on leisure and physical activity, the SciELO database and Licere magazine were consulted, in volume 23, number 3, published in September 2020. At the Scielo base for the search: (COVID-19 OR pandemic OR coronavirus) AND (physical exercise OR physical activity OR leisure) 15 results were obtained.

From the reading of the abstracts and later reading of the articles in full, 21 articles were selected to be analyzed. About mental health and COVID-19, twelve articles were analyzed: five articles were obtained by SciELO and seven articles obtained by Scopus. On leisure, physical activity and COVID-19, nine studies were analyzed: five were obtained by SciELO and four articles from the Licere magazine.

## Results and Discussions

Table 1 shows the articles selected for analysis. The articles were divided into two categories: mental health and COVID-19 and leisure and COVID-19.

**Table 1. Articles Selected for Analysis**

Mental health and COVID-19		
Article title	Authors:	Magazine
The psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the general population of Saudi Arabia	ALKHAMEES <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Comprehensive Psychiatry
Report of sadness/depression, nervousness/anxiety and sleep problems in the adult Brazilian population during the COVID-19 pandemic.	BARROS <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Epidemiology and Health Services
Psychosocial impact of isolation during the covid-19 pandemic in the Brazilian population: preliminary cross-sectional analysis	BEZERRA <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Health & Society
COVID-19 and impacts on mental health: a sample from Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil	DUARTE <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Science & Public Health
Students under lockdown: Comparisons of students' social networks and mental health before and during the COVID-19 crisis in Switzerland	ELMER; MEPHAM; STADTFELD, 2020	PLoS ONE
Intolerance of uncertainty and mental health in Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic	FERREIRA <i>et al.</i> 2020	Psychological summary
Emociones, preocupaciones y reflexiones frente a la pandemia del COVID-19 en Argentina	JOHNSON; SALETTI-CUESTA; TUMAS, 2020	Science & Public Health
Validation of depression, anxiety and stress scales (DASS-21): Immediate psychological responses of students in the e-learning environment	LAN; LONG; HANH, 2020	International Journal of Higher Education
Anxiety, depression and stress in college students: the impact of COVID-19	MAIA,; DAYS, 2020	Psychology Studies (Campinas)
Mental Health Problems during the COVID-19 Pandemics and the Mitigation Effects of Exercise: A Longitudinal Study of College Students in China	ZHANG <i>et al.</i> , 2020	International Journal Environmental Research Public Health
Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and quality of life among local residents in Liaoning province, China: a cross-sectional	ZHANG; MA, 2020	International Journal Environmental Research Public Health

study

Prevalence and socio-demographic correlates of psychological health problems in Chinese adolescents during the outbreak of COVID-19  
 ZHOU *et al.*, 2020  
 European Children Adolescent & Psychiatry

Leisure and COVID-19

Article title	Authors:	Magazine
Perspectives in sport psychology and mental health under the COVID-19 pandemic	BARRIER; TELLES; FILGUEIRAS, 2020	Psychology: Science & Profession
Social Distancing and Free Time: Paradoxes Experienced by Students at the State University of Minas Gerais in the Scope of Leisure	CASTILLE; RIBEIRO; UNGHERI, 2020	LICERE - Journal of the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Program in Leisure Studies
COVID-19 Home Leisure in Times of Pandemic	CLEMENT; STOPPA, 2020	LICERE - Journal of the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Program in Leisure Studies
Physical activity in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic: a population-based study in a city in southern Brazil	CROCHEMORE-SILVA <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Science & Public Health
The COVID-19 pandemic and changes in the lifestyle of Brazilian adults: a cross-sectional study, 2020	MALTA <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Epidemiology and Health Services
Physical activity in periods of social distancing due to COVID-19: a cross-sectional survey	MARTINEZ <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Science & Public Health

Perspectives on Women's Leisure with the New Coronavirus Pandemic: Reflections from the Research Data "Leisure in Brazil - Representations and Implementation of Daily Experiences"	MAJOR; SILVA; LOPES, 2020	LICERE - Journal of the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Program in Leisure Studies
Art as Coping Strategy in Times of Pandemic	MEDEIROS <i>et al.</i> , 2020	Brazilian Journal of Medical Education
Leisure in Times of Social Distancing: Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Leisure Activities of University Students in the City of Macapá (AP)	MONTENEGRO; QUEIROZ; DAYS, 2020	LICERE - Journal of the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Program in Leisure Studies

In the following subsections, the studies were analyzed into two categories:

Mental health and COVID-19 and Leisure and COVID-19.

## **Mental Health and COVID-19**

Twelve studies related to mental health and COVID-19 were analyzed in this section (BEZERRA *et al.*, 2020; ZHANG;MA, 2020; MAIA; DIAS, 2020; BARROS *et al.*, 2020; DUARTE *et al.*, 2020; JOHNSON; SALETTI-CUESTA, TUMAS, 2020; FERREIRA *et al.* 2020; ALKHAMEES *et al.*, 2020; ZHANG *et al.*, 2020; LAN; LONG; HANH, 2020; ZHOU *et al.*, 2020; ELMER; MEPHAM; STADTFELD, 2020).

Bezerra *et al.* (2020) carried out a study with the aim of characterizing the profile of the Brazilian population in social isolation and identifying predictors of psychosocial stress. The research was quantitative, descriptive and analytical, carried out from April 10 to 12, 2020, with data collected through an online questionnaire. 3,836 people from the five regions of Brazil participated. The results show that 63.4% considered that their sleep was modified; 42.3% felt physical symptoms for no apparent reason during social isolation; 58.6% stated that these symptoms made it difficult to perform daily activities. Among the participants who were sad and worried about the pandemic, 65.5% were doing activities such as physical exercise, religious practices and other recreational activities.

In the study by Zhang and Ma (2020), the aim was to investigate the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and quality of life of Chinese aged 18 years and over. Through an online questionnaire, data were collected from January to February 2020 and there were 263 participants. The results showed that 52.1% of the participants felt horrified and apprehensive during the pandemic. Regarding mental health, 67.7% of the participants reported that they were paying more attention to mental health after the pandemic. Also, 62% of participants reported that they were spending more time to rest, 64.2% said they were spending more time to relax and 59.7% said they were spending more time to exercise.

Maia and Dias (2020) analyzed the levels of depression, anxiety and stress in Portuguese university students in relation to the pandemic period in 2020 and compared to periods prior to the pandemic. Two samples were obtained: sample 1 in February/March 2018, and in February/March 2019, totaling 460 participants; and sample 2 in March 2020, with 159 participants. The Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS-21) was used. The results confirmed that the pandemic period had a negative impact and generated a significant increase in psychological disturbance (anxiety, depression and stress) compared to normal periods.

Recent studies carried out during the pandemic show that the population's mental health has been significantly affected and also corroborate that women have shown higher rates of anxiety, stress and depression than men (BARROS et al., 2020; DUARTE et al. ., 2020; JOHNSON; SALETTI-CUESTA; TUMAS, 2020; FERREIRA et al. 2020; ALKHAMEES et al., 2020; ZHANG et al., 2020; LAN; LONG; HANH, 2020; ZHOU et al., 2020; ELMER; MEPHAM; STADTFELD, 2020).

Barros *et al.* (2020) analyzed the frequency of sadness, nervousness and sleep disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Brazilian population. Data were collected from April 24th to May 24th, 2020. An online questionnaire was used and obtained 45,161 respondents, aged between 18 and 60 years of age or older. The study had participants from the five regions of Brazil. The results showed that 40.4% of people said they felt sad or depressed many times or always; 52.6% said they felt anxious or nervous many times or always; 43.5% reported having sleep problems that started during the pandemic. It was observed that such negative feelings were more frequent in people who already had depression. Furthermore, the survey data revealed a greater psychological impact of the pandemic on women compared to men.



Duarte *et al.* (2020) verified the factors associated with symptoms of mental disorders in residents of Rio Grande do Sul. Data collection was carried out from April 8 to 23, 2020. It participated 799 people, aged between 18 and 75 years. A socioeconomic and social distancing questionnaire and the Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ-20) were used as instruments. The results showed sex as a risk variable indicated by logistic regression. Evidence suggests a 2.73 times greater chance among women of having a minor disorder compared to men. Also the previous diagnosis of mental disorder increases the risk of damage to mental health, as well as greater exposure to information about death and infected.

Johnson; Saletti-Cuesta and Tumas (2020) conducted a survey to explore the feelings and expectations generated by COVID-19 in Argentina during the pandemic. The research was carried out in two periods: March 23 to 25, 2020, with 992 people; and March 30 to April 3, 2020, with 418 people. Open-ended questions were asked and a content analysis performed. Among the results observed, women expressed to a greater extent feelings of fear, anguish, feelings of responsibility, care and appreciation of interdependence, affection and the possibility of introspection and reflection on the pandemic. According to the authors, the greater expression of fear and anguish in women may indicate that the pandemic affects them more.

Ferreira *et al.* (2020) carried out a study to investigate the relationship between uncertainty intolerance and common mental health disorders. From April 3 to April 6, 2020, an online questionnaire with sociodemographic questions, the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) and the Reduced Intolerance Uncertainty Scale (IUS-12) were used. It participated 924 people from Sergipe, Brazil. The results showed greater probability of stress, anxiety and depression scores above the median in women.

Alkhamees *et al.* (2020) evaluated the degree of psychological impact during the pandemic in Saudi Arabia. Data were collected from April 2-5, 2020 and had 1,160 participants. The instruments used were the Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R) and DASS-21 and sociodemographic data. The results showed that approximately a quarter of the participants experienced moderate to severe psychological impact, respectively: psychological impact (23.6%); depressive symptoms (28.3%); anxiety symptoms (24%) and stress symptoms (22.3%). Women and students had higher levels related to the DASS-21 scale. Such results regarding the DASS-21 scale converge with the study by Ferreira *et al.* (2020).

Zhang *et al.* (2020) evaluated the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of Chinese university students. From February to March 2020 66 university students participated. Data collected were about demographic information, physical activity, negative emotions, sleep quality and level of aggression. Deaths from COVID-19 had a direct negative impact on overall sleep quality; and indirect impact on negative emotions such as stress and anxiety. It was observed that physical activity is directly related to alleviating general negative emotions. Regarding gender, women suffered a greater psychological impact with the outbreak of COVID-19. Still, the authors point out that the need to sleep well and exercise is recommended.

As provided in the study of Lan; Long and Hanh (2020) validated the DASS-21 to observe mental health in Vietnamese university students and psychological reaction in an online teaching environment. It took place from March 6th to 20th, 2020, with around 2000 students. In the results, in female students, sociodemographic factors and psychological impact are significantly associated with a higher level of anxiety.

Zhou *et al.* (2020) evaluated depressive and anxiety symptoms in Chinese adolescents affected by COVID-19. In the period from March 8 to 25, 2020, 8,079

elementary and high school students, aged between 12 and 18 years old participated. The following instruments were used: Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7). The results showed significant indices of depressive symptoms (43.7%), anxiety symptoms (37.4%) and combination of depressive and anxiety symptoms (31.3%) among high school students. As for gender, women had a higher risk factor for depressive and anxiety symptoms.

According to the study of Elmer; Mepham and Stadtfeld (2020) analyzed the social networks and mental health of Swiss university students before the pandemic (data obtained since 2018, with 212 students) and during the pandemic (April 2020, with 54 students). In social networks, interaction, friendship, social support, joint study and mental health indicators (depression, anxiety, stress, loneliness) were analyzed. During the pandemic period, levels of stress, anxiety, loneliness and depressive symptoms increased. It is pointed out that the lack of interaction and emotional support and physical isolation were related to negative trajectories of mental health. Based on gender, the results showed that female students had worse mental health trajectories in relation to social integration and stressors related to COVID-19.

Thus, based on recent studies, the impacts of the pandemic in its initial phase and the repercussions on the population's mental health are observed. Studies in different countries show that regardless of where the pandemic took hold, there were significant changes in the population's mental health, especially in relation to stress, anxiety and depression. For this, there is also the presence of psychological tests used to identify such frequencies of symptoms related to mental health.

Still, other feelings and manifestations of mental suffering can be observed. To a large extent, however, negative feelings are reported regarding the experience of uncertainty and fear about the disease, as well as changes in daily life. Another aspect to

be highlighted in relation to the studies is about gender and how the mental health of the female public has been negatively affected during this period.

Thus, it is necessary to consider the impacts of public policies on social isolation and on the affective dimension of people. In this regard, strategies are important to improve the health of the population, considering social and gender inequalities (JOHNSON; SALETTI-CUESTA; TUMAS, 2020).

Regarding possible gaps in the studies, the short period of time in which they were carried out, in the initial period of the pandemic, and the population representation that also limits the generalization of the results are pointed out.

### **Leisure and COVID-19**

This section analyzed four studies referring to leisure and COVID-19 in general (MEDEIROS *et al.*, 2020; CLEMENTE; STOPPA, 2020; MONTENEGRO; QUEIROZ; DIAS, 2020; CASTILHO; RIBEIRO; UNGHERI, 2020) e cinco diretamente relacionados a atividades físicas e COVID-19 (CROCHEMORE-SILVA *et al.*, 2020; BARREIRA; TELLES; FILGUEIRAS, 2020; MALTA *et al.*, 2020; MAYOR; SILVA; LOPES, 2020; MARTINEZ *et al.*, 2020).

During the pandemic, some leisure alternatives strongly emerged as a way to try to attenuate the abrupt social distance imposed on society. Medeiros *et al.* (2020) presented an experience report on artistic activities carried out with medical students during the pandemic period participating in the Study of Literature and Art in Medicine (Elam) group. The authors point out that students' mental health needs strategies to deal with situations of extreme anxiety. Textual production activities (chronicles, poetry), watercolor painting, plastic arts were developed. The themes covered in the texts were: love, aging, sin and religiosity, life cycle, cancer, chaos, wisdom, mortality, time,

looking, seeing, regionalism. The initiative to create the group is related to the need for care in relation to the mental health of medical students. As shown by studies, there is a significant prevalence of manifestations of psychological distress in students in this area, and the pandemic is a situation that can increase stress and anxiety.

Clemente and Stoppa (2020) presented a study on leisure experiences present during the pandemic. Bibliographic and documentary research was carried out between July 10th and August 10th. According to Clemente and Stoppa (2020, p. 462),

[...] some leisure activities at home were reinvented and recreated and restricted travel, festivities, concerts, cinemas, theaters, use of urban and natural parks, outdoor or indoor sports, clubs, museums and centers cultural, associativism, among others. On the other hand, there was a large-scale increase in the use of digital platforms, such as YouTube, Netflix, Globoplay, social networks, news channels, television, as well as the advent of programs for holding online meetings or meetings, such as Zoom, Meets, among others.

The virtual world and its possibilities have become the safest way for many people to stay in touch. The great offer of the famous “lives” was one of the ways for artists and creators of virtual content to expand their communication channels. Social networks have gained even more visibility as a means of disseminating content, as well as streaming platforms for offering movies, series, documentaries and other content.

Clement and Stoppa (2020, p. 475) stress that

[...] not only the restriction on the use of leisure spaces and equipment translates into a sociocultural barrier identified in leisure in Covid-19 times, which is primarily reflected in the closing of parks, museums, clubs, theaters, cinemas, beaches, and other places, which are gradually returning to function with proper sanitary protocols, but also the limited structures of homes for leisure experience for most people translate into a barrier.

Still, Clemente and Stoppa (2020) point to the fact that work during the pandemic has, in certain cases, adhered to the Home Office. This modality of work already existed, but it spread during the pandemic.

Montenegro; Queiroz and Dias (2020) sought to identify impacts on students' forms of leisure. An online questionnaire was applied and 456 university students from Macapá-AP participated. The results showed an increase in the “residencialization” and “virtualization” of leisure, for this increased use of the Internet, online games, watching lives and movies. Before social distancing, the leisure activities mentioned were: 63.4% leisure in nature; 44.5% squares, malls, museums; 42.5% family and friends; 39% cinema; 37.1% parties; 31.8% sports; 27.4% physical exercise; 24.1% restaurants and bars; 14.9% read. During social distancing: 89.9% internet; 67.3% movies; 64.9% music; 49.8% watch lives; 47.6% online games; 46.9% watch television; 41.9% reading; 26.1% physical exercise.

The authors also questioned whether new activities were developed during social distancing: 78.1% said no; 21.9% said yes. The activities carried out were: cooking, participating in language classes, studying, reading, woodworking courses, physical exercise, Internet games, music, building vegetable gardens, gardening, Internet shopping and economic education (MONTENEGRO; QUEIROZ; DIAS, 2020 ).

Montenegro, Queiroz and Dias (2020, p. 14-15) discuss that in the experience of social distancing, the

[...] virtuality as a mediator of leisure experiences, which, on the one hand, can generate aesthetic, critical and creative experiences in this context, but also reinforce the inequality of access, given the different conditions of availability of virtual media for the practice of leisure. [...] Virtuality impacts leisure to the extent that we can have different references as entertainment practices, even without physical contact with them. Virtuality has expanded our access to sports practices; musical styles; films; series, revealing a new pattern for the contemporary experience of leisure.

Castilho; Ribeiro and Ungheri (2020) carried out a survey with university students. Data were collected from April 14 to 21, 2020 and 936 responses were obtained from students at UEMG, Ibirité, through an online questionnaire. Regarding the types of leisure or well-being activities carried out during the pandemic, watching

movies and series, using social networks, reading, games and lectures predominated. According to the data collected, how many participants chose leisure activities are described below: 750 (Artistic interests - watching movies/series); 693 (Virtual interests - browsing social networks); 624 (Intellectual interests - readings; card games; board games; listening to lectures); 463 (Meeting with family members in the same house, or virtually via social networks); 407 (Religious/Spiritual Practices); 379 (Physical activities at home - dancing, gymnastics, spotting, meditation exercises); 308 (Virtual interests - virtual games); 289 (Hand interests - painting, gardening, cooking, knitting).

Castilho; Ribeiro and Ungheri (2020) point out that the significant increase in Internet consumption does not refer only to leisure activities, but also to use for work, study and online shopping. In the case of university students, remote classes also stand out. The authors point out that among the participants, around 10% said they did not have sufficient access to the Internet. Thus, also pointing out the need to take into account the aspects of inequality of access to digital media.

Second Castilho; Ribeiro and Ungheri (2020, p. 116),

[...] another direct consequence of social withdrawal concerns time management. Suddenly, household chores and formal work – for those who continued to work remotely – merged, creating a substantial burden. In addition, we can also cite the care of older family members, as well as the extra responsibility for children (and babies) who, like all citizens, had their routines altered. Data from the study show that a significant portion, 30.2% of respondents, consider that they are overloaded with domestic activities and child care due to the social distance caused by the pandemic.

About physical activities during the pandemic, considering them also as a form of leisure, the studies by Crochemore-Silva *et al.* (2020), Barrier; Telles and Filgueiras (2020), Malta *et al.* (2020), Martinez *et al.* (2020) and Mayor; Lopes and Silva (2020) bring considerations about its importance in situations of isolation and social distancing.

Crochemore-Silva *et al.* (2020) described the practice of leisure-time physical activity in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in the city of Bagé, in Rio Grande do Sul, evaluating differences related to the level of social distance and inequalities in

terms of sex and education. Data were collected from the 7th to the 9th of May 2020 and 377 adults participated through an online questionnaire. The results showed that 24.4% of the participants were practicing physical activity during the pandemic.

Significant differences in physical activity between genders were observed, 37.1% of men said they practiced leisure time physical activity during the pandemic, while among women the rate was 16.9%. Regarding the level of education in the general sample, the prevalence of leisure-time physical activity was observed in 9.8% of the participants with less education and 50.9% with a university degree. About the place of physical activity, 53.5% practiced at home; 38.9% outdoors and 7.8% elsewhere. About professional monitoring, 64.8% practiced activity without professional monitoring. The individuals who most reported leisure-time physical activity were in intermediate social distance (CROCHEMORE-SILVA *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, Crochemore-Silva *et al.* (2020, p. 4254) point out that

[...] about a quarter of the participants reported the practice of physical activities such as gymnastics, sports, walking or jogging at their leisure during the pandemic, being mostly performed at home and without guidance from Physical Education professionals. [...] Since the beginning of the pandemic and social distancing, the importance of physical activity was emphasized in opinion texts, positions and little based on scientific evidence. The argumentative basis indicated concern with the reduction of physical activity in the period.

Based on this, the authors question which aspects can interfere with the practice of physical activities, in addition to emphasizing the discourse on the need for these activities. Thus, they affirm the need for “a social and humanized look at the topic” (CROCHEMORE-SILVA *et al.*, 2020, p. 4256). In this regard, they also highlight the survey data that show that men during the pandemic had a higher rate of physical activity than women. The reflection presented also points out the aspect of women socially occupied with more activities, including domestic activities, caring for other people and work. These social barriers also affect women's leisure time. Another social



aspect emphasized by the researchers is the difference in education shown in terms of access to leisure-time physical activities, which is related to socioeconomic aspects that allow access to these activities.

Barrier; Telles and Filgueiras (2020) sought to understand the relationship between mental health and the practice of sports, exercise and/or physical activity during the COVID-19 pandemic period. The authors reflect that the practice of physical activity in confinement provides the practitioner with the reestablishment of time and space parameters in their routine. Based on the observation of empirical studies, the authors point out that the frequency of the exercise routine has an impact on the mood regulation process, however, they emphasize that excessive activity can also be detrimental to well-being. From survey data conducted at the beginning of the pandemic, moderate exercise (up to 3 times a week) is better associated with well-being.

Still, the adaptation of the intensity of physical exercise practice must be adequate to the routine of each subject according to their possibilities. Another aspect raised by the authors, based on the evidence of the benefits of exercising for well-being and mental health, is about the partnership between psychologists and Physical Education professionals. Thus, this multidisciplinary approach can provide the correct training prescription to contribute to well-being and mental health, in addition to the suggestion of walking or going to a gym (BARREIRA; TELLES; FILGUEIRAS, 2020).

In the study by Malta *et al.* (2020) described the changes in lifestyles, regarding the consumption of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, diet and physical activity, in the period of social restriction resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected through an online questionnaire, from April 24 to May 24, 2020. The research was carried out by the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) in partnership with the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) and the Universidade Estadual de

Campinas (Unicamp). It participated 45,161 people aged 18 or over from Brazil. About the practice of physical activity, during the pandemic, a percentage of 12.0% was observed. Before the pandemic, among men (33%) the prevalence was higher than among women (27.6%). During the pandemic, there was a reduction in both sexes and men (14%) maintained the prevalence of physical activity compared to women (10.3%). Among young adults (18 to 29 years old), the percentage rose from 32.6% before the pandemic to 10.9% during the pandemic. Among adults (30 to 39 years), before the pandemic they were 31.0% and during the pandemic 10.6%. The elderly (60 years old or more) increased from 30.4% to 14.2% regarding the practice of physical activity.

Other survey results refer to the increase in time watching television, the use of computers or tablets and food. The average increase in time watching television was 1 hour and 45 minutes, compared to the period before the pandemic. Regarding the use of a computer or tablet, there was an average increase of 1 hour and 30 minutes. Being the longest usage time observed among young adults (18 to 29 years old), with about 7 hours and 15 minutes. Also, increased consumption of processed foods. Based on these findings, the authors point to an increase in health risk behaviors during the pandemic (MALTA et al., 2020).

In addition, data from Malta et al. (2020), show that women had lower percentages of physical activity compared to men. Bearing in mind that the authors present descriptive data on the Brazilian population, it is reinforced that they can support reflections on which aspects are related to these indexes, as well as the fact that women in their activity journey also include activities previously mentioned. and care that reduce their leisure activities.

Martinez *et al.* (2020) verified the changes in habits of Brazilian participants who practice physical activities in the period of social distancing during the COVID-19

pandemic. The levels of anxiety and depression were also analyzed. A sociodemographic questionnaire and the 14-item Hospital Anxiety Depression Scale were used. The questionnaire was applied from May 11 to 15, 2020. It participated 1,613 people over 18 years old. The results showed that 79.4% of the participants confirmed that the pandemic had a large or very large impact on their physical activities. Many people had to interrupt or reduce the frequency of activities. To continue the activities, participants had online classes, access to content through video or Internet lives, remote monitoring by a personal trainer. Among the participants, 48.8% had symptoms of depression and 82.6% had symptoms of anxiety. Anxiety was more frequent among women, young adults and people with higher education. Still, the participants who felt the greatest impact of social distancing in physical activities tended to have a higher prevalence of symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Mayor; Silva and Lopes (2020) aimed to reflect on leisure and pandemic practices and analyzed the differences perceived between men and women. The authors discuss based on research data published in 2017, entitled "Leisure in Brazil: representations and realizations of everyday experiences", which had 2400 participants, aged over seven years old from the 26 states of the Federation and the District Federal. A structured questionnaire with open and closed questions was used. Physical-sporting, touristic, social, artistic, manual and intellectual interests were analyzed. Data referring to physical and sporting interest will be hereby addressed. Based on the questions, what do you do during the week and on the weekend, according to gender, it was observed that the physical and sporting interest of men during the week was 15.6% and 31.5% on the weekend; and 7.9% of the women showed physical and sporting interest during the week and 10.3% at the weekend. The authors point out that this difference in interest

between men and women reflects the unequal treatment regarding the right to practice sports.

Mayor; Silva and Lopes (2020) when analyzing the filter “working” as a way to understand the sexual division of work and its relationship with leisure, it was observed that during the week 11.7% of men showed physical and sporting interest and 24.4% on the weekend. In relation to women, during the week, 5.0% were interested in physical sports and 5.0% at the weekend. Note that the difference between working men and women is significant. Still, when analyzing the differences between men and women, when using the filters “working”, “civilly married” and “stable union”, the difference can be seen even more clearly. During the week, 9.5% of married men showed interest in physical sports and 20.5% at the weekend. During the week, 4.9% of married women showed interest in physical sports and 4.3% at the weekend. About men and women in a stable relationship, during the week, 11.0% of men indicated physical and sporting interest and 28% at the weekend. In relation to women, during the week, 4.5% showed physical and sporting interest and 3.5% at the weekend.

Thus, the authors point out considerable differences regarding the leisure experiences of men and women, especially in relation to work and marital life. In this regard, it reflects on the conditions imposed on women that prevent or reduce the possibilities for them to experience leisure activities, which are related to work overload and household chores. According to the data presented, for men, employment and marital status had no impact on leisure experiences (MAYOR; SILVA; LOPES, 2020).

In short, from the analyzed studies, the data in Clemente and Stoppa (2020), Montenegro; Queiroz e Dias (2020) and Castilho; Ribeiro and Ungheri (2020) agree on the increase in activities related to the virtualization of leisure (watching TV, movies,

series, lives) which are also more present than other activities such as reading, physical activities and self-care practices.

The results of the research by Malta *et al.* (2020) corroborate the studies by Montenegro; Queiroz and Dias (2020) and Crochemore-Silva *et al.* (2020) that show a decrease in physical activities as a result of measures of distancing and social isolation. The phenomenon of virtualization can also be understood in the increase of hours watching television and connected to digital equipment, since leisure was limited to the home environment and the TDIC available in homes. This phenomenon, however, has both positive and negative aspects.

The term Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is related to electronic and technological devices, as computer, Internet, smartphone, tablet. Currently, this term also refers to technologies such as television and newspapers, for example. The term New Technologies or Digital Technologies of Information and Communication (TDIC) is used to refer to more recent technologies (COSTA; DUQUEVIZ; PEDROZA, 2015).

The high exposure to TDIC due to distance has the function of reducing distances and allowing dialogue even with the pandemic, but calls into question aspects regarding access to technologies and how a large portion of the population still does not have the economic conditions to be connected to the Internet properly.

Regarding access to ICT in Brazil, according to the 2018 Continuous National Household Sample Survey, carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in Brazil, in 2018, 79.1% of Brazilian households had access to the Internet. Specially, the difference between access in the urban area (83.8%) and the rural area (49.2%). Regarding the reasons for not using the Internet, the following stood out: lack of interest (34.7%); Internet access was expensive (25.4%), none of the

residents knew how to use the Internet (24.3%). In rural households, one of the main reasons for not using it was the unavailability of the Internet service (20.8%). The main purpose for using the Internet in Brazil was to send and receive text, voice or image messages (95.7%), chat via video or voice calls (88.1%), watch videos, including programs, series and films (86.1%), sending and receiving e-mail (63.2%). Regarding the possession of a microcomputer, tablet, landline, cell phone and television, the percentages of households where the existence of such devices was contacted are described below: microcomputer (41.7%), tablet (12.5%); landline (28.4%), cell phone (93.2%), and television (96.4%) (IBGE, 2020a; 2020b).

Based on IBGE data, there is a significant portion of the population with access to ICT, however such data reveal that not everyone has access to the Internet and equipment such as microcomputer, tablet and cell phone. In the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, this proved to be one of the great aspects that reveal the social and economic inequalities regarding access to essential services that became available virtually, as well as to leisure and remote learning. According to Menezes and Francisco (2020), in relation to access to education during the pandemic, differences in access to TDIC are visible, both for teachers and students. This experience also became a source of stress for this audience, as well as difficulties in adapting.

With regard to gender, it is noted that the already expressive impact on women's leisure time before the pandemic tends to become more intense during the pandemic, as work and the home environment take on a new reality for many women who started working at home. In this regard, the pandemic has blurred the lines that separate the dimensions of professional and personal life, and it has also increased the workload for certain social groups such as women.

In this line, the studies analyzed related to leisure during the pandemic point to considerable repercussions on people's way of life. The scenario marked by quarantine, measures of social isolation and social distancing influenced the forms of socialization and leisure modalities to adapt to a longer time in the home environment. Therefore, the need for leisure also expresses ways of dealing with the repercussions of these measures on people's mental health.

When analyzing data prior to the pandemic regarding the practice of physical exercise, it is observed that during the pandemic the trend was an increase in physical inactivity, so that virtual activities prevailed. In this scenario, it is noteworthy that social, economic and access aspects also directly impacted these experiences, and there is a portion of the population where the social rights to health and leisure need greater effectiveness of public policies during and after the pandemic.

Still, the demands for care and also the reality of remote education led many women to have to devote more time to their children to keep their studies throughout 2020. On how the pandemic affected daily life, especially for women, Guizzo; Marcello and Müller (2020) present scenes of the new daily life imposed by the pandemic on families. In scene 5, a mother presents an account of how home schooling presents itself as a stressful situation, which is difficult to cope with due to remote teaching and the home office. Among other scenes that present the changes in daily life due to the pandemic.

Regarding possible gaps in the studies, as seen in studies related to mental health, the short period of time in which they were carried out, in the initial period of the pandemic, and the population representation that also limits the generalization of the results are pointed out. For this reason, studies involving other phases of the pandemic

are needed to establish comparisons regarding aspects of mental health and leisure that were observed in the studies presented above.

### **Final Considerations**

This study aimed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and leisure. It is considered that these two dimensions referring to the human being are intertwined and that they are influenced by social, cultural, economic and psychological determinants. Based on the scenario of uncertainty and fear generated by the pandemic, there is a need for strategic measures that contribute to the promotion and care related to the mental health of the world population. Studies in Brazil and worldwide show how people's mental health was negatively affected, in addition to having unexpectedly restricted leisure activities.

In this way, the studies covered throughout this work also emphasize how the digital environment has become a great bet to supply a certain part of society with the need for leisure and work, as well as pointing out that this exposed the face of digital exclusion in Brazil and in the world. Also, vulnerable groups, such as women, have their mental health and leisure more affected by the pandemic. For this reason, it is necessary to highlight strategies that promote quality of life and care to reduce social inequalities, which are even more intense in periods of generalized crisis.

The research analyzed in this article on the pandemic is largely based on data produced in the first half of 2020, also reflecting a short period of time where research has sought to analyze the initial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In future studies, we intend to analyze the long-term effects of the pandemic and its impacts on leisure and mental health.



Thus, it is considered that the experience of the pandemic period presented itself to society as a challenge that affected experiences related to mental health and leisure. In this process, there are barriers and possibilities regarding the use of virtual environments, as well as the search for activities that minimize the negative aspects that the pandemic brought. In this regard, government initiatives that encourage public leisure spaces, for physical activities, for example, in the post-pandemic scenario can contribute to improving the population's quality of life.

Finally, during the pandemic period, the practice of leisure activities in the home environment is recommended, taking into account the possibilities of each person to continue taking care of their physical and mental health, whether physical, manual, intellectual or virtual activities, for example. Internet access due to the pandemic showed that connectivity is still one of the problems that our society still faces and social differences produce a scenario of abysmal inequalities, where the right to health and leisure is still not fully exercised by the population, especially the most vulnerable. Crisis scenarios only show and expose this reality, also pointing to the need for public policies to allow connectivity and access to technologies for the population.

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**Author's Address:**

Suzy Kamylla de Oliveira Menezes  
Avenida Menino Marcelo, nº 1391, Cidade Universitária  
Maceió – AL – 57.073-460  
Electronic Mail: [suzy.kamylla@gmail.com](mailto:suzy.kamylla@gmail.com)