

Psychological well-being and everyday activities in rural and urban teachers in North of Santander during the COVID-19 pandemic

Bienestar psicológico y actividades cotidianas en docentes rurales y urbanos del Norte de Santander durante la pandemia por COVID-19

Angélica María Ramos Montejó¹, Nancy Yolima Fonseca², Sara Rosa Pérez De La Cruz³, Edgar Díaz-Camargo⁴

SUMMARY

This research review shows how isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic has affected daily activities such as quality of sleep, physical activity, and work life. This review exercise is developed to provide information that will help different professionals to point out the psychological impact and possible changes presented in the daily activities of people during confinement. Sleep hygiene and quality of sleep were affected due to factors such as age - young, sex - female, history of mental illness, insomnia, anxiety, depression, psychological distress, low back pain, and stress. With regard to physical activity during preventive isolation, it was found that there was a lack of physical exercise,

weight gain, increased sedentary life, decreased outdoor activities, increased consumption of cigarettes, alcohol, and the use of electronic devices, as well as increased intake of ultra-processed foods. As for the work activity during COVID-19, there were difficulties in the adaptation and qualification to the management of Tics, and work overload, in addition, it is observed that the predominant gender is female, and there is psychological and mental affectation and emotional exhaustion.

Keywords: Daily activities, COVID-19, pandemic, sleep, physical activity, work activity.

RESUMEN

Esta revisión de investigación muestra cómo el aislamiento debido a la pandemia de COVID-19 ha afectado a las actividades diarias como la calidad del sueño, la actividad física y la vida laboral. Este ejercicio de revisión se desarrolla con el fin de proporcionar información que ayude a los diferentes

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ORCID: 0000-0002-8911-2767¹
ORCID: 0000-0002-3772-4147²
ORCID: 0000-0001-9987-5381³
ORCID: 0000-0002-7349-3059⁴

¹Universidad Simón Bolívar, Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales, Cúcuta, Colombia. E-mail: a_ramos@unisimon.edu.co

²Universidad Simón Bolívar, Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales, Cúcuta, Colombia. E-mail: n_fonseca@unisimon.edu.co

³Universidad Simón Bolívar, Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales, Cúcuta, Colombia. E-mail: s_perez9@unisimon.edu.co

⁴Universidad Simón Bolívar, Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales, Cúcuta, Colombia. E-mail: e.diaz@unisimonbolivar.edu.co

*Author responsible for correspondence: Edgar Díaz-Camargo, Universidad Simón Bolívar. E-mail: e.diaz@unisimonbolivar.edu.co

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profesionales a señalar el impacto psicológico y los posibles cambios presentados en las actividades diarias de las personas durante el confinamiento. La higiene del sueño y la calidad de este se vieron afectadas debido a factores como, la edad -joven, el sexo -femenino, los antecedentes de enfermedades mentales, el insomnio, la ansiedad, la depresión, el malestar psicológico, el dolor lumbar y el estrés. En cuanto a la actividad física durante el aislamiento preventivo, se constató la falta de ejercicio físico, el aumento de peso, el incremento del sedentarismo, la disminución de las actividades al aire libre, el aumento del consumo de cigarrillos, alcohol y el uso de dispositivos electrónicos, así como el aumento de la ingesta de alimentos ultra procesados. En cuanto a la actividad laboral durante el COVID-19, hubo dificultades en la adaptación y calificación al manejo de las Tics, sobrecarga de trabajo, además se observa que el género predominante es el femenino, hay afectación psicológica y mental y agotamiento emocional.

Palabras clave: *Actividades diarias, COVID-19, pandemia, sueño, actividad física y actividad laboral.*

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the health emergency situation in the world has had a great impact, and the consequences are incalculable, not only because of the loss of thousands of human lives (1), The consequences are incalculable not only because of the loss of thousands of human lives, by the end of August 2021, the Ministry of Health estimated in Colombia that the maximum peak of deaths due to COVID-19 was around 44 471 individuals, but also because of the effects caused by the disease (2). The effects on the mental health and well-being of people during the health emergency were not only due to the deterioration of the health of individuals but also to the deterioration of their mental health and wellbeing (3), with deterioration at the individual and group levels due to episodes of stress, anxiety, panic disorders, depression due to the loss of family members and fear of the imminent risk of contagion (4).

Along the same lines, other authors mention that confinement due to the pandemic generates psychological impact reflected in worry, hopelessness, nervousness, restlessness, intolerance to uncertainty, sleep problems, such as difficulty in falling asleep, waking up earlier than usual, and interrupted dreams (5).

However, there are also positive effects related to daily activities within the home, because the population under investigation reports devoting more time to family and even to the discovery of skills that they did not practice before the pandemic, as well as using activities that they did not practice before the pandemic (6), as well as using a variety of leisure activities, creating a weekly plan (7). However, perceptions and systematized experiences vary according to sociodemographic factors and sleep patterns (8).

Thus, the World Health Organization (9), states that the pandemic is negatively impacting the whole society in general in the psychological field, including the educational communities, who have had to look for alternative strategies to resume the teaching-learning process by taking on new situations, alternative strategies to resume the teaching-learning process, assuming limiting situations such as the lack of internet and technological resources, especially in those institutions that are far from the urban centers, being affected mainly due to the closure of the schools (10) due to the mandatory confinement and by the social distancing implemented by most national governments (11).

The transition from face-to-face to telepresence or work at home has affected the psychological well-being of teachers, since not being prepared for the virtual or remote education currently experienced and the work overload, are factors that have increased the states of stress, anxiety, and physical discomfort (12). In relation to the modality of working at home for teachers in the public sector, especially in rural areas, the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (13) orients that the academic process is carried out through learning guides that are delivered to parents, taking into account the difficulties of access to connectivity, signal and technological equipment to carry out synchronous pedagogical meetings.

Continuing along the same lines, Ramos-Hueteo et al. (14), in their study about the modification of face-to-face work to telework caused by COVID-19, refer that it leads to adaptations of the pedagogical system, emotional attention to students, and the implementation of the management of virtual platforms, giving greater use to ICTs. This situation generates especially in teachers' states of fear, a feeling of

uncertain future, and affectation in the work and domestic activity. Thirty-six percent of the sample reported general and psychological discomfort; 42 % mentioned irritability and moodiness; 45 % reported sleep problems; 53 % expressed the need for psychological help to address stress and anxiety problems; 12 % showed depression and 65 % stated that they had food problems (15).

Thus, the various situations caused by the pandemic have led to depression, stress, anxiety, anguish, and even panic worldwide (16), which has been widely documented in scientific literature, stating that the consequences of the pandemic are not only economic, social and medical but also of a psychological nature due to its serious consequences on mental health (17).

Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic has compromised the development of academic processes, labor activity, the productivity of the countries, work creation, and produced a collapse of the health systems of low-income countries, since there was a deterioration in the mental health of health personnel, lack of protective equipment, insufficient number of personnel for the demand of infected individuals, lack of drugs and an increase in pre-existing psychiatric problems (18).

The purpose of this review is to analyze the effects generated by the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities of daily life, addressing different positions on social activity, sleep, physical activity, and work; likewise, a theoretical review of daily activities in teachers and/or educational sectors is made, considering the work at home or telework generated as a result of SARS-CoV-2.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic search was carried out based on the review of scientific articles in databases such as Science Direct, Scopus, APA PsycNET, ProQuest, Scielo, and Redalyc. The words used for the search were sleep disorders, COVID-19, pandemic, physical activity, daily activities, work activity, work at home, and social activity. The review of the articles was carried out until December 2021, without discriminating from profession, place, or age, taking into account that the population under study is only human beings.

These bases were selected for their worldwide scientific contribution.

Initially, 30 studies were found; however, filtering was performed excluding those studies that did not emphasize daily activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as articles that did not refer to psychological effects. Among the studies reviewed, references related to the effects generated by the COVID-19 pandemic on activities of daily living were taken into account.

Changes in sleep routines and their effects on psychological status

According to studies, COVID-19 has caused individuals to suffer from insomnia, waking up earlier than expected, interrupted dreams, and having the sensation of not having rested even though they have slept enough, a condition that can affect their health and increase alterations in their immune system (5). With respect to healthy people during isolation, they presented changes in their habits and daily activities and fear of contracting the disease. It is also found that factors such as young age, female sex, history of mental illness, and the ability to cope with stress can be considered a cause of insomnia. This situation leads to thinking about the development and implementation of sleep hygiene as a tool for the management of the consequences generated in sleep by this pandemic (19).

Other studies (20) conducted in Chile with front-line health personnel, in which they found that 65 % reported sleep disturbances related to the symptoms of anxiety and depression reported amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The most common symptoms are associated with difficulty falling and staying asleep, as well as dissatisfaction with current sleep (21).

Likewise, the coronavirus has generated difficulties in sleep hygiene and sleep quality in the general population but especially in health care workers, some factors associated with these difficulties in sleep-wake cycles are decreased social activity, alterations in the hours of falling asleep, and time spent in bed; however, it should not be overlooked that other factors such as anxiety symptoms, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychological distress and

stress, are also highly related to sleep dysfunction during the pandemic (22).

Diz-Ferreira et al. (23), stated in their study with 451 subjects during the pandemic that alterations in the quality of sleep have been registered, specifically a slight decrease and dissatisfaction in the quality of sleep, presence of insomnia, and a minimal increase in the number of hours spent in bed; in addition, the lack of physical exercise would be related to some of the established difficulties in sleep.

Malta et al. (24), agree with the aforementioned authors in that during the COVID-19 pandemic, sleep problems have occurred. These authors conducted a study in Brazil in which they found that the sample presented affectation in the quality of sleep, especially young people, women, and people who before isolation were diagnosed with depression. The factors that could explain the prevalence of sleep difficulties would have to do with the different stressors generated by the pandemic, among which we can mention the fear of contagion, uncertainty about the future, economic conditions, and work at home, among others.

In another study, Nakai et al. (25), state that after the application of a survey to 597 elderly participants, over 77 years of age, people who presented lumbar or knee pain. Of them, 23.9 % showed difficulty in the quality of sleep, which allows concluding that, during this time of isolation, the increase of low back pain was associated with the sleep problems presented in the elderly participants.

On the other hand, in a study presented by Siddique et al. (26), conducted through an online survey, with a sample of 521 participants, ages 18 - 80 years, it was found that the quality of sleep can be altered due to stress, since the higher the level of stress the lower the quality of sleep, during the pandemic, it was found that women have experienced greater difficulty in sleeping; likewise, it was found that the fear of people to catch the virus during this pandemic generates an increase in brain stimulation. This may be related to the difficulties in sleep, as well as the anxiety and stress developed in people during COVID-19 (27) as well as other pandemics, natural disasters, and social crises may also experience such symptomatology (28).

Other authors state that the impact generated by COVID-19 goes beyond physical illness, some symptoms associated with anxiety, fear, and traumatic stress have influenced mental health causing nightmares. People with frequent nightmares are at risk for suicide, especially if related to depression. The impact of increased nightmares during the pandemic may be associated with an increase in suicide cases (29).

Changes in physical activity and their impact on the psychological state

In Colombia, one of the effects of preventive isolation for SARS-CoV-2 has been the affectation in the daily physical activity of people and weight gain. Preventive isolation is a strategy to prevent the spread of the virus, people are forced to restrict their habit of physical activity, preventing contact with nature and the inability to play games or physical activity outdoors directly impacting the physical activity and mental health of people (30).

Therefore, the aforementioned authors mention that the lack of physical activity and preventive social isolation has led to an increase in sedentary activities such as spending more than 60 minutes in front of the television, computer, cell phone, or video games, increasing unproductive leisure time and decreasing the ability to be in direct contact with nature and the environment.

In studies before COVID-19, the World Health Organization emphasizes the importance of physical activity, since it contributes to the improvement of a healthy lifestyle, improves the quality of life, strengthens mental health, and manages to prevent clinically significant pathologies; therefore, when there is a reduction in physical activity and an increase in sedentary activities, there is an affectation of their quality of life, increase of pathological diseases, and affectation in the psychosocial sphere (31).

On the other hand, Malta et al. (24), prove in their research that during the COVID-19 preventive isolation, people were forced to decrease the practice of physical activity, and to be at home without social contact; in addition, it was shown that during social isolation and home confinement, there was an increase in the consumption of smoked cigarettes, consumption of alcoholic beverages and a greater increase

in the time spent using computers, tablets, and television. Finally, the aforementioned authors state that during confinement there was also an increase in the consumption and intake of ultra-processed foods, concluding that all these components influence people's lifestyles and increase health affectation.

Thus, as Clemente-Suarez et al. (32), stated physical activity improves the conditions of the immune system and mental health and during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a decrease in motor activity and the practice of physical exercise. These facts could cause difficulties in the general health of people with comorbidities and those affected by the virus, increasing the possibility of death of hospitalized patients and the decrease in motivation to engage in physical activity and other outdoor activities.

In the aforementioned study, the authors state that in studies carried out in various parts of the world during the pandemic, it was found that patients affected by the virus were less physically active than those not affected. There was a greater decrease in physical activity, especially in men, increased use of different electronic devices, and increased exposure to screens. These activities caused an increase in food consumption and weight gain in people.

In the same way, Oliveira et al. (33), state that, the confinement and social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic have generated a decrease in the performance of activities that involve physical activity, especially in the elderly, a fact that when associated with the decrease in the same and sedentary lifestyle can cause falls, motor loss, difficulty in the quality and lifestyles and daily activity of people. Similarly, they refer to the importance of physical activity in improving the quality of sleep, stress, anxiety, depression, and other aspects related to mental health, especially in the elderly, i.e., when physical activity is affected, the mental health of the elderly is compromised. Taking into account that people in the world were in social isolation and as argued above, not being able to perform physical activity brought with it effects that alter not only the quality of life and their daily activities but also psychological aspects.

Effects of forced isolation on work activity during the COVID-19 pandemic

Scasserra and Partenio (34), state that with the advent of COVID-19, confinement and social distancing, the various work sectors worldwide have had to integrate more actively and continuously alternative strategies making use of ICT; in such a way that, workers had to be quickly prepared to acquire the necessary skills and tools to assume teleworking, or in other sectors, the so-called work at home. Therefore, the authors developed a study related to the difficulties of work and strategies that women workers have implemented by digital means from home and found that, in virtual platforms of the care economy, 100 % of the collaborators are female, existing in the greater demands with the housework, which generates inequalities with respect to the male gender.

Gaxiola-Villa (35) conducted a study on housewives including her research on college teachers. Through the research it is possible to identify that before the pandemic there were already great challenges for them, since, at the time, they reported feelings of emotional exhaustion and professional burnout, affecting their well-being. However, with the advent of COVID-19, the outlook for teachers has become more complex due to technostress and teacher-student depersonalization (36).

On the other hand (12), a study on anxiety as one of the effects generated in teachers in the district of Yanahuanca in Pasco as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, using a quantitative approach and a cross-sectional descriptive design as part of the methodology. The number of the sample is 353 teachers, applying the Coronavirus Anxiety Scale (CAS) with which they obtained relevant results that 10.8 % presented anxiety, 38 teachers in total.

In addition, the aforementioned authors refer that, not being prepared for the virtual or remote education currently experienced and the work overload, are factors that have influenced the stress, anxiety, and physical discomfort of teachers, represented by 65.2 % of teachers with dizziness, 68.8 % with sleep disorders, 83.9 %

with tonic immobility, 85 % with a loss of appetite and 86.7 % with abdominal discomfort.

In the same way, (10) mention that having faced COVID-19 in the educational sector, which had been gradually implementing the use of ICT without any apparent eagerness and, with the confinement, having had to accelerate the process, generated affectations at the psychological level and mental health in general, represented with anxiety and even frustration for not immediately achieving what the ministries of education were suggesting to give continuity to the teaching-learning process at the digital level with the technologies and resources available on the web for education during the closure of the Educational Institutions.

Consequently, Chacon (37), states that the barriers in teacher-student communication are due to difficulties of network connectivity, and lack of technological devices, arguing that in the Colombian rural sector there is a very low percentage of students who have the basic conditions to connect remotely with their teachers, This is because only 17 % of them allegedly have WiFi network and electronic devices, in addition to the scarce or null signal in some places where students live, among other barriers that generate anguish and frustration in teachers when they are unable to guide the teaching-learning process effectively, according to the interests and needs of the students.

In relation to the modality of work at home for teachers in the rural sector, the MEN (38) orients that the academic process is carried out through learning guides that are delivered to parents, considering the difficulties of access to connectivity, signal and technological equipment to carry out asynchronous pedagogical meetings.

Also, other research shows that teachers in rural areas report that factors such as emotional exhaustion, fatigue from work activities, physical fatigue, failure to achieve established goals, increased irritability, and lack of motivation associated with the lack of social contact, are linked to frustration and stress manifested in isolation time, which is apparently related to low performance and work performance (39-42).

CONCLUSIONS

From the present review it can be concluded that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, stress due to the fear of contagion caused alterations in the quality of sleep. The greater the stress, the greater the difficulty in sleeping, especially for women, young people, and health care workers. Likewise, the diagnosis of depression and anxiety before voluntary isolation was related to sleep disturbances and the presence of insomnia. During this time, not only sleep was affected but also the physical activity of the individuals, an aspect that was reflected in weight gain, sedentary activities, increased consumption of cigarettes, alcohol, ultra-processed products, and decreased motivation, which are all associated with people's quality of life and lifestyle. Another aspect to take into account is how the adaptation to the new work activity affected mental health, the long working hours, the lack of adaptation to the management of technological tools, and the difficulty in separating work and home activities, are raised by the participants in the different studies as generators of emotional exhaustion, stress, frustration, aspects that are associated with demotivation and low work performance.

The contributions found allow establishing the importance of working on the mentioned aspects and developing intervention strategies aimed at reducing the affectations in the development of daily activities and mental health in future pandemics, thus contributing to different sectors of society, such as education, to the extent that greater relevance is given to the psychological well-being of the teacher, who, like the students, is also an active part of the teaching-learning process. Psychology professionals, as gaps in knowledge are filled with respect to the impact generated in individuals and communities from the necessary changes in daily activities, can help implement new mental health protocols, considering that their contributions can resignify the experiences from future pandemics and health, which also fills gaps in knowledge, favoring the possibilities of generating new public policies, according to the previous experience with the COVID-19.

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