

SOCIAL DISTANCE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH PSYCHO- PHARMACEUTICAL CONSUMPTION IN THE PERIOD OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: Objective: To carry out an analysis of the influence of social distancing with the use of psychotropic drugs in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Methods: Questionnaires were applied individually through google forms. Results: The results were described using frequencies and percentages. Results and Discussion: Regarding the use of psychotropic drugs before and during social distancing, it was seen that, of the 411 respondents, 57 individuals (13.9%) used psychotropic drugs before the SD. And, that during isolation 30 individuals (7.3%) started to use psychotropic drugs. An increase in self-medication was also observed in the same period. Conclusion: After analysis, it was concluded that social restriction was able to emotionally affect most of the sample population, and there was a greater use of psychoactive drugs in the SD period.

Keywords: Social Distancing, Medicines, Psychopharmaceuticals, Mental Health, COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

The respiratory infection caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome of Coronavirus 2 (Sars-cov-2), has spread worldwide in a large outbreak, spreading across different continents sustained by person-to-person transmission (Pereira et al., 2020). According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 has been registered in more than 180 countries around the planet, with Brazil being the first country in Latin America to register the first case of coronavirus (WHO, 2020).

Due to the wide spread of the virus, world government authorities began to adopt several strategies with the intention of minimizing the rate of contamination (PEREIRA et al., 2020). Among the methods adopted, Social Distancing (SD) was the most used, which conceptually consists,

involuntarily, of avoiding agglomerations with the suspension of events, school activities and, in some cases, the interruption of all non-essential services, by express order of the government, to avoid the spread of the disease in cases of pandemics (AQUINO et al., 2020).

However, despite the SD being a very effective measure in controlling the spread of the disease, it can generate behaviors that stimulate illness, leading to serious consequences for people's Mental Health (MH) (PEREIRA et al, 2020). According to Lima (2020), reviews of studies of quarantine situations indicated an increase in harmful psychological effects, with emergence of a state of panic and negative feelings, mainly low mood, irritability and fear.

Therefore, to face the negative behavioral variables triggered by SD, many people end up resorting to the use of anxiolytic and/or antidepressant drugs, in order to find a state of well-being to deal with the stress of the period (LIMA, 2020). According to the study commissioned by the Federal Council of Pharmacy (CFF), there was an increase of almost 14% in sales of antidepressants and mood stabilizers, used in cases of affective disorders, during the period of the new coronavirus pandemic, when compared to the same period of the previous year. previous year (CFF, 2020).

In this context, despite social distancing being widely used in cases where there is a need to preserve the physical health of the individual, such as the pandemic, it is essential to reflect on the psychological impact and its relationship with the use of psychotropic drugs. In this sense, the present study aims to analyze the influence of social distancing and its relationship with the use of psychotropic drugs in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional observational study was carried out during the social distance caused by the new coronavirus pandemic, from October 12 to 17, 2020, in the municipality of Manhuaçu - MG. A qualitative-quantitative questionnaire structured through google forms was then applied to the population. To be part of the study, the individual must accept to participate voluntarily, be at least 18 years old and be residents of the territory that makes up the district of the city of Manhuaçu.

The standardized questionnaire applied had practical questions defined in 03 sections. The first referred to general questions about age, sex and education. The second section asked about the emotional effects caused in the period of social distancing and, based on the affirmative answers, the subject was redirected to the third section, which used in the analysis category, the frequency of consumption of prescription drugs and the self-medication. All research procedures were based on previously published methodologies. The results obtained are presented in the form of graphs and with descriptive statistics.

All research participants agreed to the Free and Informed Consent Term, in accordance with Resolution No. 196/96 of the National Health Council, Ministry of Health, which regulates research involving human beings in the country.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A sample of 411 people was obtained, and the estimated population of Manhuaçu-MG in 2020 was 91,169 inhabitants according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). The mean age of the sample was 40.2 years, with 239 people (58.2%) being female and 172 people (41.8%) being male.

When asked if the DS affected their emotional state in any way, 57% of respondents

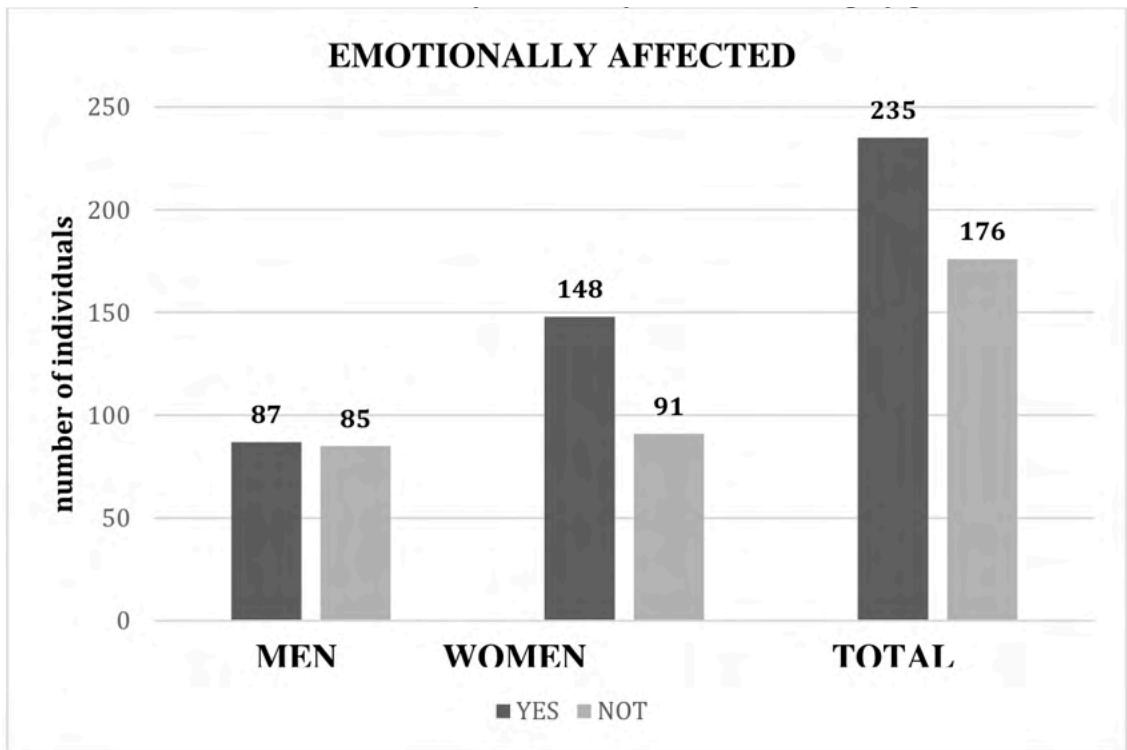
felt emotionally affected, while 43% said they did not feel affected. When compared in relation to sex, 148 women (61.9%) and 87 men (50.6%) felt emotionally affected by SD, as shown in graph 01.

Regarding the use of psychotropic drugs before and during social distancing, it was seen that, of the 411 interviewees, 57 individuals (13.9%) used psychotropic drugs before the SD, 39 women (9.5%) and 18 men (4.4%). During social isolation, 30 individuals (7.3%) started to use psychotropic drugs, 20 women (4.8%) and 10 men (2.5%), as seen in graph 02.

Regarding the indication of psychotropic drugs before the SD, it was found that of the 57 people who used the drugs, 56 (98.2%) used them prescribed by doctors, and, during the SD, 30 new people started using psychotropic drugs, of these, 18 people (60%) used drugs recommended by doctors, while 05 people (16.6%) by family members, 05 people (16.6%) by friends and 02 people (6.8%) by others.

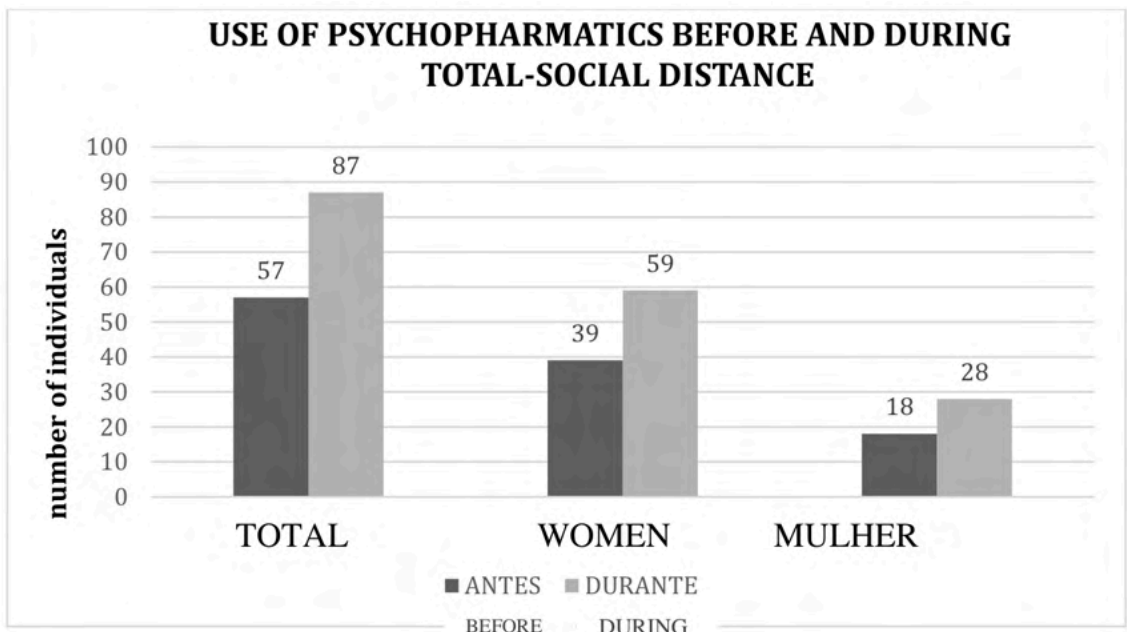
The results of the present study indicated that 53% of the sample population felt emotionally affected by SD during the pandemic period. According to Lima (2020), populations in situations of social distancing and isolation are affected by feelings of powerlessness, in addition to feelings of boredom, irritability, sadness and various fears, such as falling ill or losing their livelihood.

Within this context, it can be said that isolation affects people's mental health, due to abrupt changes in their routine and daily activities, such as social and occupational losses. In addition, the phobia to exposure to situations that increase the probability of contracting the virus, triggers the individual's psychic instability, and can manifest itself in a physiological, cognitive and behavioral way, which stimulates various emotional responses (HARTMANN, 2020).



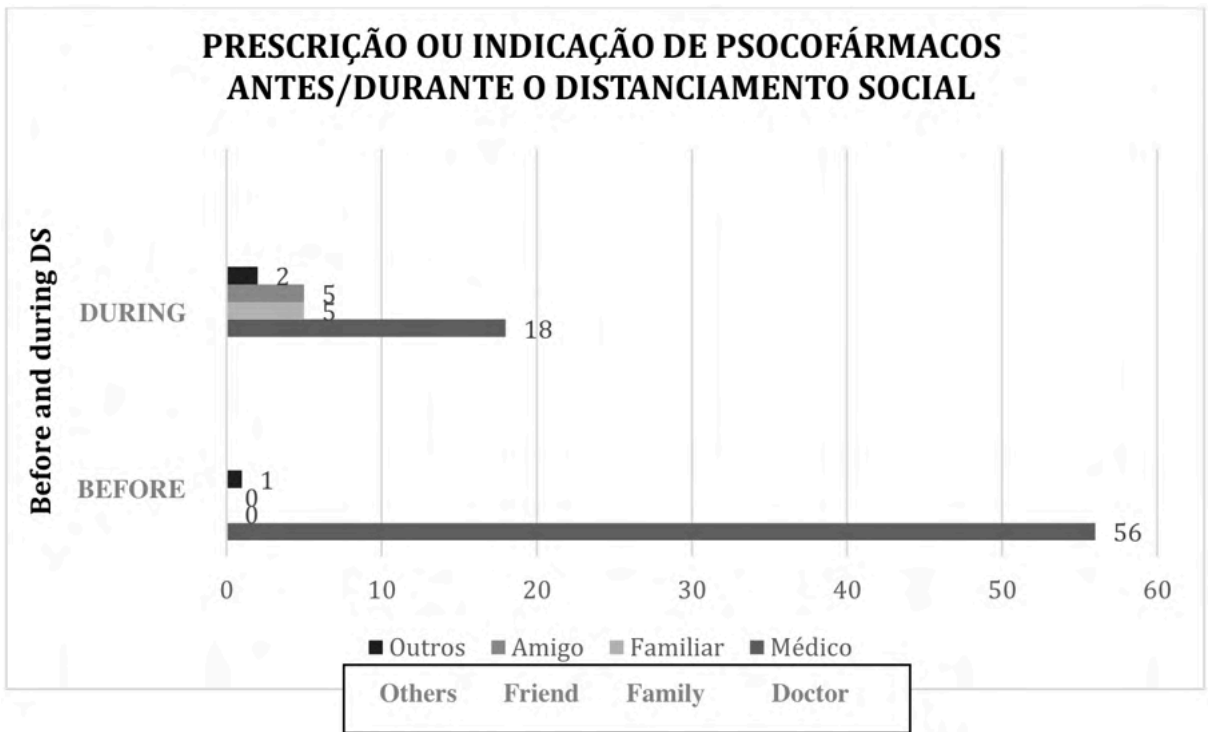
Graph 01- Number of individuals emotionally affected by social distancing by gender and total.

Source: Own authorship.



Graph 02 – Relation of the number of individuals who used psychotropic drugs before and during social distancing.

Source: Own authorship.



Graph 03: Prescription or Indication of psychotropic drugs before/during social distancing.

Source: Own authorship.

In Brazil, cases of depression have increased significantly since the beginning of the quarantine. According to information collected by the Institute of Psychology of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (IP-UFRJ), there was a jump from 4.2% to 8.0% in the percentage of people with depression, while for anxiety cases the index was from 8.7% to 14.9%. Also, according to a survey carried out by the Brazilian Association of Psychiatry (ABP), with about 400 specialist doctors from all over the country, there was a worsening of psychiatric conditions in their patients due to the new coronavirus (ICQT, 2020).

According to the president of the ABP, this new scenario ended up causing a situation of extreme stress, destabilizing the individual's psychological state and triggering some psychic symptom or recurrence of

symptoms in patients who had already been discharged (ABP, 2020). The situation in question encouraged the search for measures that would bring security, and one of these actions was the search for medicalization in an attempt to remedy conditions inherent to the social moment. A data survey carried out by the CFF showed that there has been a considerable increase in the consumption of medicines since the beginning of the pandemic, when compared to the same period in previous years (CFF, 2020).

In this sense, it was observed that the population of Manhuaçu who used psychotropic drugs went from 14.4% before the DS to 21.4% during isolation, a 7% increase in the consumption of psychotropic drugs, indicating a reflection of the sudden change in the population's lifestyle. In addition, verifications carried out by the Institute of

Science, Technology and Quality (ICQT), showed that the consumption of drugs against insomnia increased by 40% in Espírito Santo and that the sale of anxiolytics that act on the central nervous system increased by about 15%. in drugstores in Rio de Janeiro, only in the first half of May 2020, when compared to the same period in 2019. (ICQT, 2020).

In relation to self-medication, the study showed gradation, the data showed that the rate of psychotropics prescribed by the doctor dropped by approximately 13.1%, when compared to the previous prescription and during the DS, giving rise to the indications of family and friends. A current survey carried out during the pandemic period by the CFF indicated that 77% of Brazilians reported having used medicines on their own (CFF, 2020). According to Moraes (2016), self-medication is called the use of drugs without a medical prescription, when people or their guardians decide on the drug they will use, based on popular information or old prescriptions. Often, the misuse of medication triggers reverse effects intensifying negative feelings, making them more serious and serious. Within this context, according to the CFF, this increased percentage is a clear demonstration of the influence that fear and anxiety have on the indiscriminate use of drugs, thus offering risk to the individual with the possibility of side effects or worsening of pathologies (CFF, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Therefore, the analysis of data on the influence of social distancing and its relationship with the use of psychotropic drugs showed that social restriction was able to emotionally affect most of the sample population. In short, it was understood that mental health is directly related to SD and together they are seen as a way of contributing to the search for immediate solutions to the psychological problems arising from this scenario such as anxiety, depression, irritability, among others, through the consumption of alcohol. psychotropics.

Another important conclusion is the relationship between SD and the increase in self-medication, since a concomitant increase in the use of psychoactive drugs without medical prescription was observed. Thus, there is a great need for new studies to be carried out to relate social isolation with the psychosocial impact of the new coronavirus pandemic, so that professionals are able to assimilate the depth of their relationship with possible pathologies and obtain a better perception. when treating their patients, seeing, beyond the physical-pathological involvement, understanding their emotional issues related to this new social organization framed in this new scenario.

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