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**AN OVERVIEW OF THE
STUDIES PUBLISHED IN
PEPSIC ON ANXIETY IN
THE LAST 25 YEARS**

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Abstract: Anxiety has currently compromised the quality of life of many people in the most varied situations and age groups. This study aimed to understand the evolution of research produced in the last 25 years on the subject, as well as which situations generate more anxiety, and which approaches are most researched, this way, publications published on the PePSIC website were used. The research was carried out with a search using the term anxiety, where 232 published works appeared and all were considered as the object of the research. With this study, it was possible to recognize that the most researched psychotherapeutic approach was the cognitive-behavioral one, and the age group that comprises children, young people and adolescents, presented the highest number of works carried out, however, a very small number of works with focus on anxiety in the elderly, which can and must be further explored in order to help people at this stage of life to improve their quality of life. Although the results of this study provide an overview of the publications, it was possible to conclude that there are some limitations, as papers published in PePSIC were used, so it is necessary to repeat the work on sites with indexed searches so that the overview can be more complete.

Keywords: Anxiety. Cognitive-behavioral. Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Oliveira and Sisto (2004) traced the history of studies on anxiety, where they claim that before Freud, anxiety was discussed in the philosophical field, when concerns about crises and existential conflicts inherent in human beings were debated. Freud elevated anxiety to an object of research, highlighting evidence so that the understanding of emotional and psychological disorders could gain relevance in the society of his time. In 1936 Freud defined anxiety as an unpleasant

emotional state or condition, which had physiological components represented by motor discharges, found in situations of imminent danger, as well as behaviors found in individuals who feared for their physical integrity. Behavioral theories understand anxiety as a conditioned response that arises as a result of specific environmental stimuli, and for Skinner (1938) both fear and anxiety would be a form of defense of the body, therefore anxiety arises when the person needs to protect himself against a threat or imminent danger, however the author points out that fear manifests itself in the presence of a real, concrete threat, however anxiety is related to an emotional state elicited by an anticipated threatening stimulus.

Anxiety is currently becoming a problem that has gained more and more space in debates that emphasize the need for services that prioritize mental health, in fact the Pan American Health Organization brings a publication in the year 2022 together with the World Health Organization, stating that cases of depression and anxiety have increased by 25% since the beginning of the pandemic caused by COVID-19. Settani and Simões (2021) claim that Brazil has almost 19 million people who suffer from some anxiety disorder, so it is considered the most anxious country in Latin America.

In order to understand the reality of the anxiety generated by the hospitalization of a person in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Fonseca (2019) recalls that not only the ICU patient, when discharged, may develop psychological problems as a result of the near-death experience, however it is perceived that the whole family becomes mentally ill, as many changes arise imposed by insertion in this new environment, combined with the imprecision about the restoration of the health of the person who becomes ill. Furthermore, the anguish caused by the

possibility of losing a loved one, as well as the physical and emotional separation, added to the moments where difficult decisions have to be made, can overwhelm the family members emotionally.

However, for a subject to feel anxiety, it is not necessary exclusively to fear death, Leahy (2021) suggests that many emotions arise out of nowhere, that is, some originate from thoughts, for example: a subject can be at home alone and sitting in his sofa and be taken by a wave of anxiety leaving his body tense, accelerating his heartbeat and he starts to question himself about what is going on, on the other hand he is thinking about what caused these sensations, maybe he drank too much coffee, or haven't eaten in a long time.

This happened to Dan, who was sitting at home alone one Thursday night when he started thinking, "I don't have anything planned for the weekend. None of my friends said they would be available to make plans. Maybe I did something to offend them." Your anxiety was triggered by thoughts of feeling rejected. (LEAHY, 2021).

Viana (2010), uses the evolutionary ideas of Charles Darwin to explain anxiety as an adaptive process, since it is understood precisely as a biological and organic function that the individual presents when faced with a situation of danger, remembering that the life-threatening situation that the world community faced with the COVID-19 pandemic brought this adaptive response to a much higher level than what was previously known. Furthermore, Darwin defines anxiety as "the expectation of suffering, maintaining a close connection with hopelessness and/or despair" (Viana, 2010). According to Rangé (2018) anxiety causes the subject to present physiological reactions of diseases that are not present in medical examinations, bringing feelings of fear and anguish, and the author also asks the following question:

Have you ever stopped to imagine what it means to suddenly experience strong and extreme feelings of anxiety throughout your body and actually believe that what is happening is dangerous to the point of losing control, dying or going crazy at that very moment? With that in mind, have you ever wondered what it means for a health professional to say that this person who felt "everything" has "nothing" and send him home because of the normal results of clinical exams? (RANGE, 2018)

In this sense, Netto (2009) correlates anxiety to fear, thus understanding anxiety as an unpleasant phenomenon related to fear of a future event. In order to exemplify the aforementioned relationship, Jugend (2012), in his case study reports that an anxious patient stated before surgery: "We are afraid, because we do not know how it is... We are afraid of not coming back". Concomitantly with the feeling of fear, loneliness also arises as a result of the hospitalization that kept him away from family and friends, bringing to the fore many emotions that reinforce anxiety.

Barlow (2016) also reports that only one of the social anxiety disorders generates suffering in people throughout their lives, however, the data refer to only one of the disorders linked to anxiety and as it will be possible to see in the course of this study According to the DSM-V, there are 11 anxiety-related disorders.

The National Comorbidity Survey Replication Study, (NCS-R), evaluated more than 9,000 non-institutionalized people in the United States, concluded that 12.1% of them have social anxiety disorder at some point in their lives (Kessler et al., 2005). In this survey, social anxiety disorder (also known as social phobia, Liebowitz, Heimberg, Fresco, Travers & Stein, 2000) was the fourth most common psychiatric disorder, with only major depressive disorder, alcohol abuse and alcohol abuse being more prevalent. the specific phobia. More conservative estimates of lifetime

prevalence suggest that clinically significant social anxiety affects a relevant albeit modest slice of the population, around 4% (Narrow, Era Bobins & Ragier, 2002). (Barlow, 2016)

Bunge (2016) states that when the subject finds himself in a certain situation that can cause him some suffering, the process of “mind reading” arises, and this concept is used by Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), where, according to the author, mind reading “consists in that when we are anxious in the face of these situations for a moment we think we can guess what others are thinking”. In view of this, the thoughts that arise from this reading are always negative, that is, catastrophic, therefore, the typical behavior of the person would be to avoid or flee from said situations. Bunge (2016) also mentions feelings arising from anxiety, such as headache, trembling voice, racing heart, chills, desire to go to the bathroom, trembling legs, stomachache, sweaty hands, lump in the throat, stuttering, trembling mouth and red cheeks, furthermore, the author states that these sensations differ from those of panic that present with tachycardia, palpitations, agitation, dizziness, feeling of weakness, seeing things as if they were a movie, blurred vision, tingling, malaise or chest pain, feeling short of breath or difficulty breathing, excessive sweating, nausea or upset stomach, chills or suffocation, scared to death, maddening fear, and delusional fear. Therefore, these sensations frighten the subject, intensifying the anxiety process, generating panic. This way, Leahy (2019), states that people often evaluate behavior, as if it were their being in its completeness, “So if I fail a behavior then I am a complete failure”, where the CBT presupposes the change of behaviors and not of people, because still according to the author “Distinguishing behaviors from people, the patient can identify behaviors that must be changed. It’s

hard to imagine changing people.” Due to the distinction between person and behavior, it is possible to understand that the person is not the anxiety, but is going through a moment in which he is anxious, therefore, it is necessary to know not only the symptoms, but the thoughts and situation that interfere in this process.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM V), differentiates anxiety disorders by the type of object or situation that elicits fear, or anxiety or avoidance behavior, thus it cites 11 anxiety disorders: separation, selective mutism, specific phobia, social anxiety disorder, panic disorder, agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorder, substance/medication-induced anxiety disorder, Anxiety disorder due to another medical condition, specific anxiety disorder, and anxiety disorder unspecified anxiety.

During the research carried out, it was possible to find publications that report anxiety at all stages of a person’s development, as it was possible to find articles that researched anxiety in childhood, adolescence, adulthood and also in the elderly, also being present during the process of formation of the subject, as there are researches related to the school environment revealing anxiety in elementary school, high school and even in higher education, after their academic training or even before it, individuals start their work activities, this way, it was possible to perceive publications that report the presence of anxiety at work, as well as how it can arise at the time of retirement, giving rise to new doubts and uncertainties about the future far from what the person has dedicated a good part of his life to, doing or building.

Therefore, in order to contribute to the study of clinical practice, this research focused on carrying out a systematic review of the

literature on all anxiety disorders, seeking to understand how anxiety has been studied and how research is progressing, as well as advances. of the published articles, which can help the subject to work with the symptoms of anxiety and can reduce the anguish and suffering of many people.

METHOD

The study is characterized by a systematic literature search, therefore, searches were carried out for publications indexed in the database of Electronic Journals in Psychology (PePSIC), using only the term anxiety as a descriptor, scientific articles in Portuguese were considered., English and Spanish published in full. In order to understand how the research on anxiety is and the importance that the scientific community has been giving to the subject, the articles were distributed a priori in five-year periods, for analysis of the number of publications, and to know how the number of publications has evolved over the years, however, another factor studied was the annual distribution of publications, as this way it is possible to see what has been happening with the theme year after year. However, it is understood the importance of relating the individual's developmental phase with anxiety-related disorders that have been most researched so far, and for this purpose the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Law No. the person with up to 12 years of age, therefore, when reaching 12 years of age, this person is considered a teenager, since, he is understood as a teenager until he turns 18 years old. When a person turns 18, he or she is identified as a young person, which, according to the Youth Statute (Law No. Brazilian laws do not conceptualize the age group where the individual is considered an adult, therefore, by exclusion, the subject aged between 30 and 59 years can be considered an adult, since when reaching 60 years of age

he is supported by the Statute of the Elderly (law n° 10.714/03), which considers elderly any person who completes 60 years of age. In addition to temporal data, we also sought to understand which are the situations that have been causing the most anxiety in society over the years. On the other hand, we have therapeutic accompaniments that are used to control anxiety, and for this reason, we sought to discover which psychotherapeutic approaches have been most used and researched in recent years.

RESULTS

In this study, 232 scientific publications were found in the PePSIC database, performing the search using the term anxiety as a keyword for the most varied articles. In order to facilitate the understanding of the number of publications, the articles were distributed every five years so that the evolution of the number of publications could be observed, as shown in Figure 01 - Five-Year Publications of Articles on Anxiety Total Numbers. It was possible to observe that before the year 2001, 2 indexed articles on anxiety were found, however in the five-year period that corresponds to the period from 2002 to 2006 the number of published works increased from 2 to 25 publications. As for the period that makes up the five-year period from 2007 to 2011, 51 publications were found, and, compared to the previous five-year period, the number of publications more than doubled. In the interval that represents the five-year period from 2012 to 2016, the number of works was limited to 61 publications, however in the period composed between 2017 and 2021, the number of researches carried out on anxiety had a new leap going to a total of 93 publications, that is that is, it rose by more than 50% compared to the previous period.

When analyzing the percentage of publications on anxiety, it is possible to see a gradual increase in articles published over the five-year period, and for this, the 232 articles found were correlated with 100% of the sample (Table 01). Thus, it was observed that before 2001, less than 1% of the articles made up the total data collected, and this percentage increased to more than 10% in a period of 5 years, thus the growth in the number of publications gradually increased., where in the period composed of the interval from 2007 to 2011, 21.98% of publications were found, values that had a small increase in the interval from 2012 to 2016 with 26.29%, however in the last five years represented by the period from 2017 to 2021, it presented the highest representativeness with a percentage of more than 40% of the publications on anxiety.

Year	Percentage
Prior to 2001	0.862069
2002 - 2006	10.77586
2007 - 2011	21.98276
2012 - 2016	26.2931
2017 - 2021	40.08621

Table 01 - Percentage of Five-Year Publications of Articles on Anxiety.

When analyzing the distribution of publications on anxiety found in the PePSIC database, it can be seen that before 2000 only 2 articles had been published, and shortly thereafter in the years 2000 and 2001 there is a gap with the absence of publications that address the topic researched, a fact that did not occur from 2002 to 2021, since, in all years, publications addressing anxiety appeared. It is possible to observe in Figure 02 that from the year 2014 onwards, 10 or more publications have always appeared in all years. In addition, in 2017, 27 articles were published, thus being the year with the highest number of works published in the PePSIC database. Another factor that

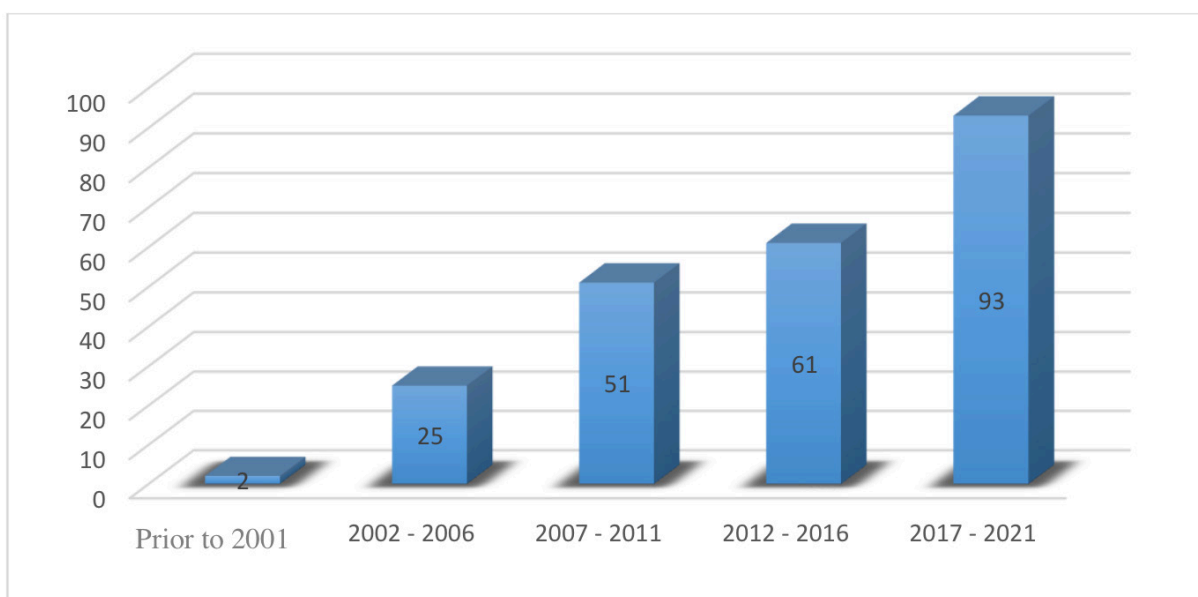


Figure 01 - Five Year Publications of Articles on Anxiety Total Numbers.

was possible to observe is a constancy in the number of publications from 2018 to 2021, where since 2019 the number of publications has not been less than 16 per year.

It was possible to verify that of the 232 published articles, 86 researches were carried out seeking the implications in specific age groups, this way, the definition of child, adolescent, youth, adult and elderly was used as a criterion, according to Brazilian legislation at the present time. For Brazilian legislation, a child is a person up to the age of 12 (Law No. 8,069 of 1990), whereas adolescence is understood when a person turns 12 years old, extending until they reach 18 years of age (Law No. 8,069 of 1990), in addition, youth is determined when one turns 18, and this period goes up to 29 years of age. Legally in Brazil, there is no characterization of the adult stage, we will use the period from 30 to 59 years old, since when reaching 60 years old, the person is supported by the Statute of the Elderly (law nº 10.714/03), which considers elderly everyone over 60 years of age. Thus, the 89 published articles, with allusions to anxiety in specific age groups, were computed as 100% of the sample, therefore, 23 articles focused on children, for the adolescence phase, 24 publications were found, however young people were the object of research for 23 jobs. The lowest number of publications were distributed among adults with 13 articles and people over 60 years of age who are characterized as elderly were the target audience of research for 3 publications. In order to better understand the aforementioned dispersion, Figure 3 was used, where the dispersion was carried out by the percentage of published articles,

During the data collection, another factor that drew a lot of attention was the number of publications exclusively referring to anxiety in women, as shown in Figure 4- Situations of female anxiety, therefore, of the 232 articles, 25 were researches referring to female anxiety,

where one can observe that 16 of them reported that the theme emphasizes issues related to motherhood, with 72% of the surveys carried out mentioning the relationship between motherhood and anxiety. Although the number of publications on female anxiety is apparently small, it is much greater than research related to exclusively male issues, where only 2 publications were found.

In order to understand the progress of the most varied publications on anxiety, we sought to know about the works published on the researched topic and sport, as well as its relationship with physical illnesses and how the instruments for assessing anxiety are.

As a result, the result recorded in Figure 05 was obtained - anxiety, pathologies, sports and measurement instruments, where the total number of published articles 232 was used, as 100% of the sample. It must be noted that 9 publications were found that mentioned anxiety in athletes, where team sports were mentioned in three works and the relationship between anxiety and young athletes were found in four publications, thus obtaining 4% of publications referring to this subject. theme, and to identify these publications in figure 05, the term sports was used.

It was possible to observe that the process of measuring anxiety was portrayed in 26 articles, therefore 11%, where it is represented with the term instruments, in addition, the publications emphasized studies on the validation of instruments such as questionnaires, inventories, scales and tests where the latter are for exclusive use by professionals with academic training in the area of psychology.

Research on anxiety and health, where pathologies had a number of 43 publications comprising 19% of the researched articles, as shown in Figure 05, where they are presented using the term pathology. Among the pathologies mentioned in the articles, we

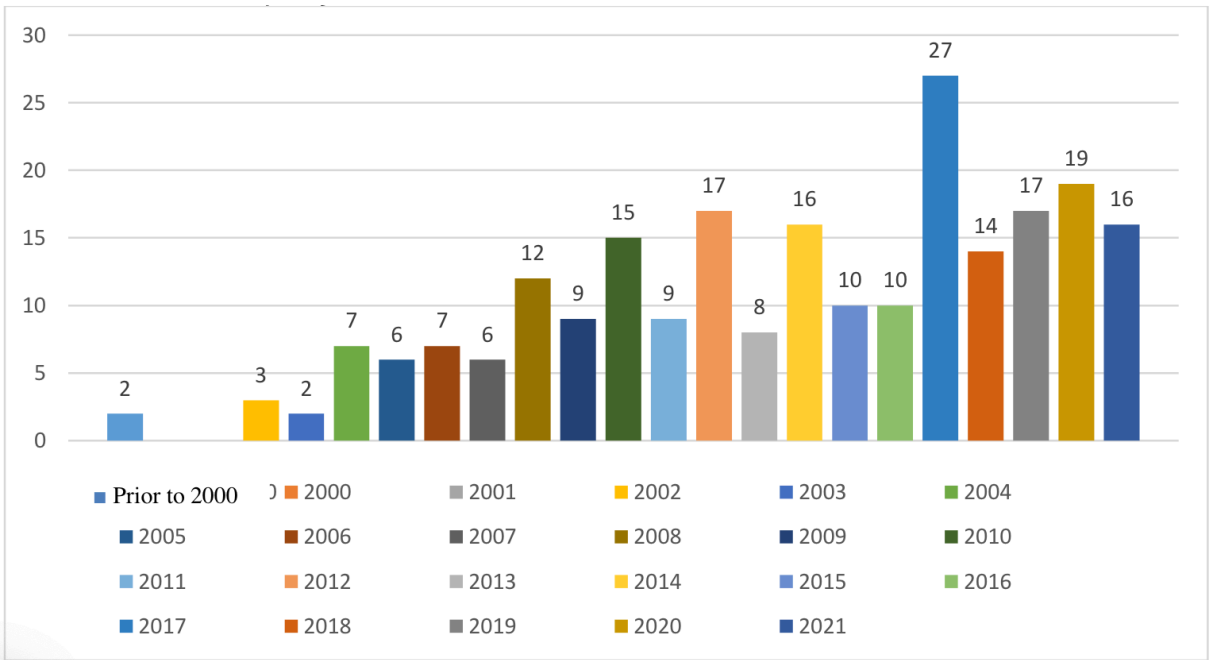


Figure - 02 Annual Distribution of Articles About Anxiety.

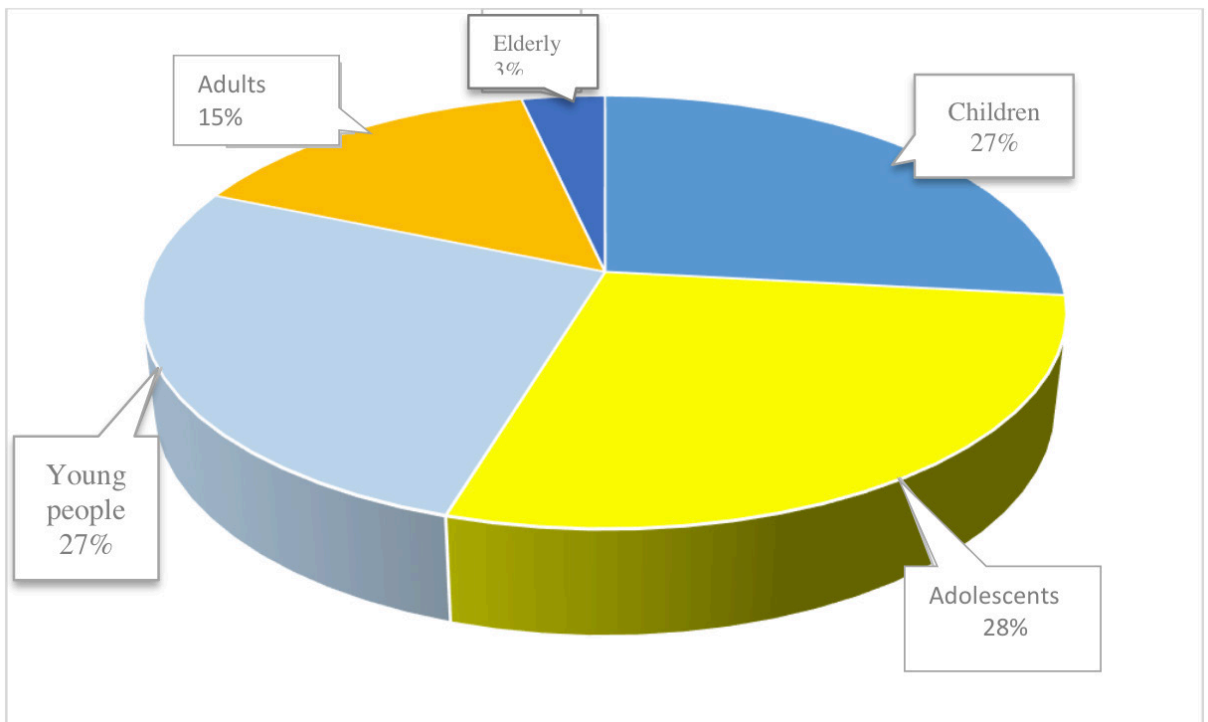


Figure – 03 Percentage of articles with a defined age range.

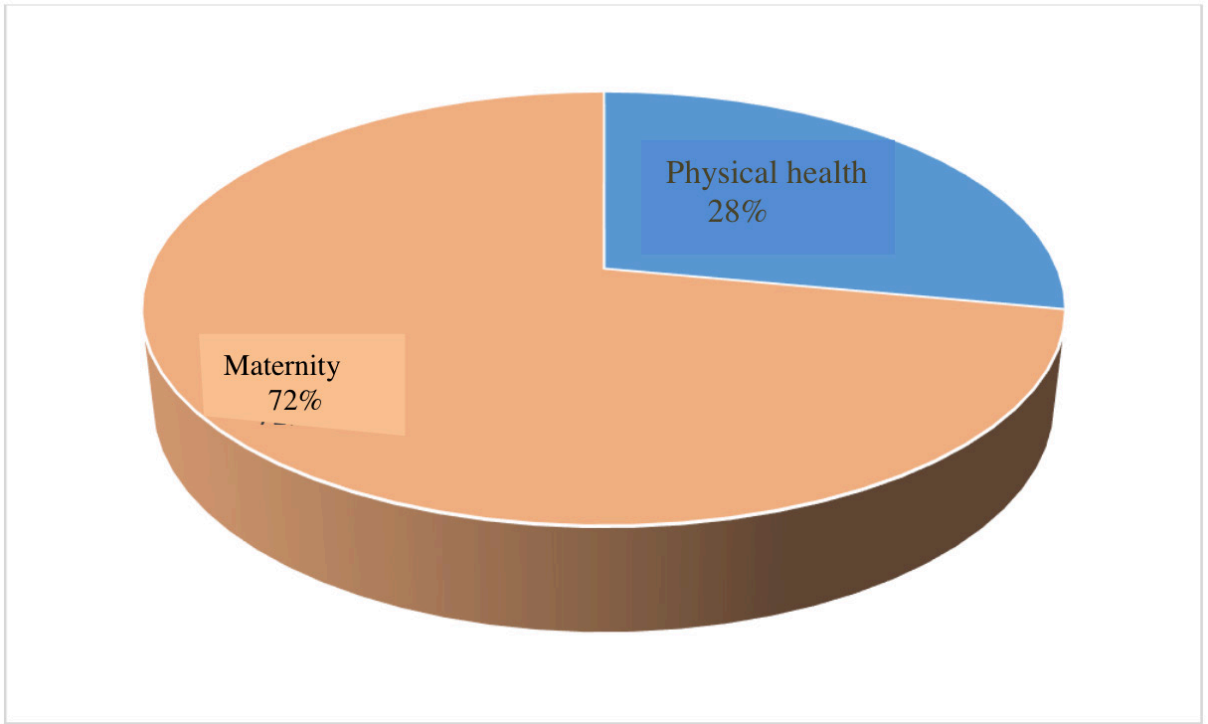


Figure – 04 Situations of Female Anxiety.

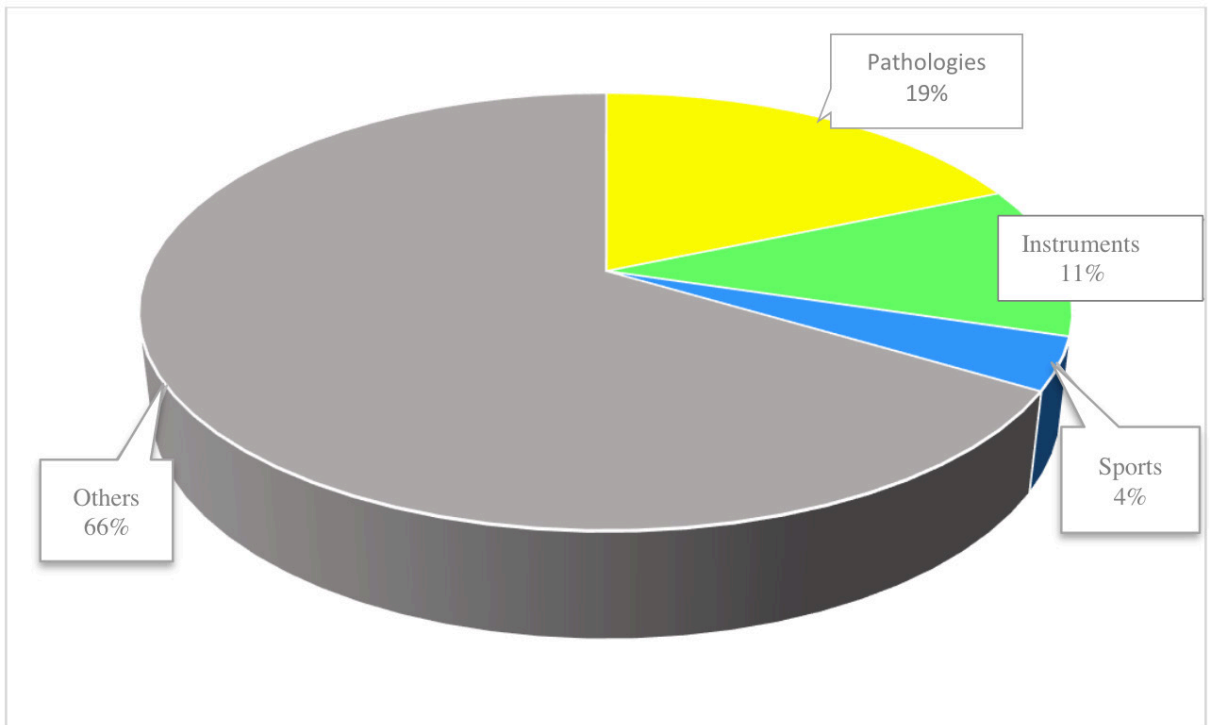


Figure – 05 Anxiety, pathologies, sports and measuring instruments.

have studies on anxiety and type 2 diabetes, diabetes mellitus, chronic lung problems, fibromyalgia, constipation, alopecia areata, picomalacia, hospitalizations, children with brain cancer, patients with metabolic syndrome, but 4 others tables presented a number of published works that deserve to be mentioned the cases of cancer that appeared in 3 works, the bariatric surgery that appeared in 4 articles, the cases of cardiac surgeries with 5 publications and finally the hospitalizations due to COVID-19, which totaled 6 articles in the last two years.

Finally, a comparison was made on the forms of treatments used to help people who suffer from anxiety.

Of the 232 published articles, 99 were related to treatments for people with anxiety, as can be seen in Figure 06, where psychotherapies and alternative treatments appeared. Taking 100% of the 99 articles that address the treatment of people

with anxiety, 58% emphasized the use of cognitive behavioral therapy techniques and 12% addressed psychotherapy with the use of behavior analysis. Still with a psychotherapeutic focus, the psychoanalytic approach had 11% of the published works, and the percentage of the use of the humanistic approach also reached 11%, and positive psychology appeared in 2% of the published works. Among the non-psychotherapeutic accompaniments, it was possible to find 1% of articles focusing on pilates to control anxiety, and 1% of the articles brought yoga as a form of anxiety control, as well as acupuncture, which also had 1% of works. published with the aim of alleviating anxiety, another form of anxiety control that appeared in the search was that of eye movements with 1% of the published articles. It is noteworthy that among the forms of anxiety control it was possible to find 2% of the articles that emphasized the role of

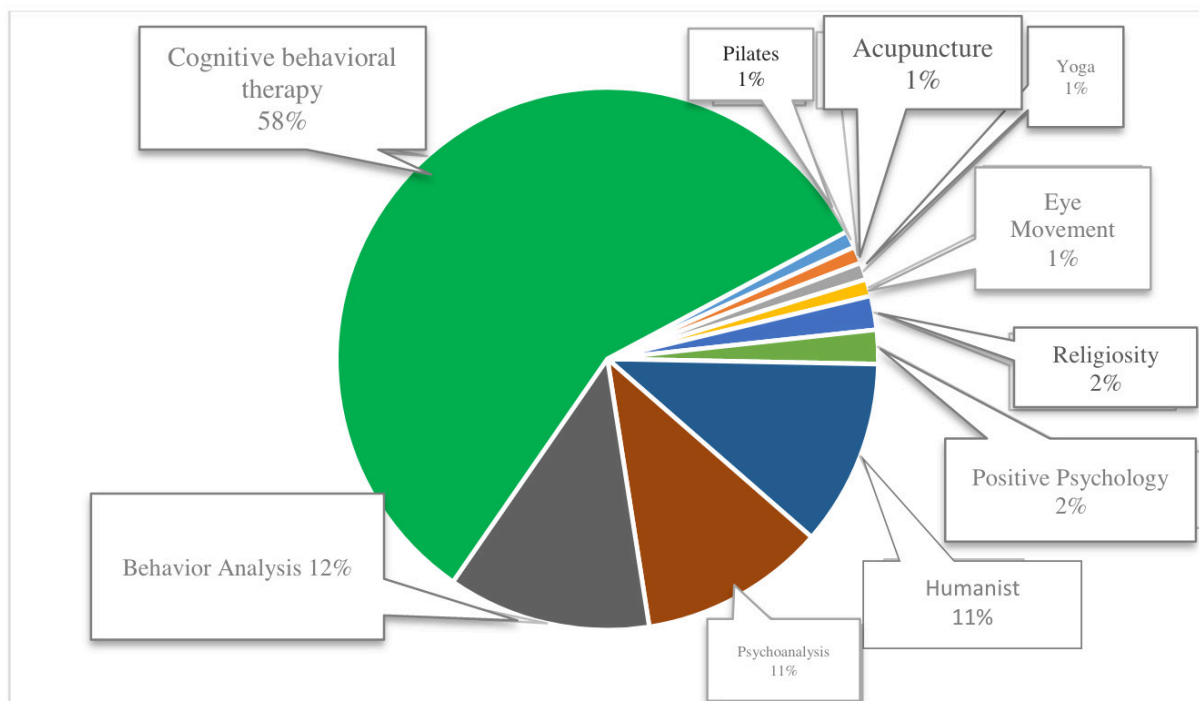


Figure – 06 Ways of accompanying people with anxiety.

religiosity. Therefore, 6% of treatments for people with anxiety are carried out in a non-psychotherapeutic way and 83% use one of the exclusive psychotherapeutic approaches of professionals in the field of psychology, remembering that psychoanalysis is not exclusive to psychology professionals, so your sample of 11%, was not represented in the previous groups.

The data obtained reveal an x-ray of the evolution of scientific publications on anxiety, where it is possible to understand the most researched approaches, and the evolution of research over the years, as well as the genres that are most studied and the factors that generate anxiety. for each one.

DISCUSSION

Anxiety has been studied by a wide variety of approaches, in the most varied age groups, where it is observed that its causes are diversified, therefore, in addition to recognizing the fields that are still necessary for research, or even those that may be more explored in order to understand how they are and how the most varied publications on anxiety have progressed, the present research was carried out. it was possible to observe that when the research focused on five-year periods, the growth in the number of publications in the last 5 years is noticeable, with a total of 93 of the 232 published works, thus figure 1 shows this growth because research has been growing gradually, this way This way it is verified that more than 40% of the articles were produced in the last five years researched, and before 2001, there were less than 1% of the publications, and it is possible to ask: Have cases of anxiety been increasing in recent years? Is research on anxiety increasing? Have cases of anxiety and research on the subject been increasing over time? Settani (2021) quotes that, "According to the World Health Organization, Brazil is

the most anxious country in Latin America. This means that almost 19 million people suffer from an anxiety disorder in Brazil". It is possible to understand the reason for the increase in scientific production in recent years.

When the articles produced annually were studied, it is possible to verify that before 2000, only two articles, and a gap in publications in the years 2000 and 2001, and, it can be observed that anxiety was not much studied at the end of the decade 90s, and at the beginning of this century. The year with the highest number of researches carried out on anxiety was in 2017 with 27 articles, however there was a reduction in the number of publications in subsequent years, however it is worth mentioning that in 2020, with the pandemic caused by COVID-19, it took the population to a quarantine that lasted for a period much longer than forty days, schools were closed in Brazil in March 2020 and only returned to serve students on a rotating basis in mid-2021. of publications, it would be very important to continue this research over the next 5 years to understand the effects of anxiety in the post-pandemic years caused by COVID-19, as people saw their loved ones leave and followed the number of deaths in their city, state, country in the world, bringing to light what Wright (2012) defines as the cognitive pathology of anxiety disorders, such as: "Excessive fears of harm or danger. High sensitivity to information about potential threats." It must be noted that for the cognitive behavioral approach, thoughts are crucial for the development of anxiety and, in view of this aspect, Whigh (2012) states that "Automatic thoughts associated with danger, risk, lack of control, incapacity. Decreased estimate of ability to cope with feared object or feared situation. They work to intensify the anxiety-generating process, as well as heightened recall of threatening memories and situations.

When analyzing the age group of the people surveyed, it was possible to perceive that anxiety in elderly people has been little researched, opening up a possibility to carry out more research on anxiety in this phase of life, in this sense, Freitas (2016), states that “the greater vulnerability to cognitive and physical decline are often underdiagnosed in elderly patients”. A fact that must not occur, since, according to the same author, it is at this stage of life that many stressful events arise, such as “social isolation, retirement, marital conflict, and with adult children, loss of loved ones and chronic or watery illnesses”. Research with adults is also apparently little explored, with the most researched phases being childhood, adolescence and youth. Stallard (2010) reports that 70% of children have moments of concern, which are related to school performance, health, fear of dying and concerns with their social contacts. Adolescence was the most researched, and it proved to be the phase of life that generates the most anxiety, so it would be important to understand the aspects that generate the most anxiety in adolescents today.

There is no doubt that motherhood is the factor that most generates anxiety in women, and of the 232 surveys found, only 25 emphasized anxiety in the female gender and 72% of them emphasized situations involving the gestation period and the children’s illness and other aspects related to motherhood, in view of this Chemello (2021) states that “maternal anxiety is a complex and multifactorial phenomenon, which affects not only maternal mental health but also the mother-baby relationship and development of the child”. The other 28% are correlated with physical illnesses, among which breast cancer appeared with the highest incidence.

Bearing in mind the number of cases of anxiety caused by situations where people developed anxiety as a result of problems

linked to illnesses, it was possible to notice that 19% of the articles bring fear or risk of death as one of the main generators of anxiety.

In this study, not only tools with psychotherapeutic approaches for the treatment of anxiety were found, but also instruments such as pilates (OLIVEIRA, 2020), religiosity (SILVA, 2015), acupuncture (SILVA, 2010), yoga (VORKAPIC, 2011) and eye movement (LOPES, 2014), however the vast majority of the articles emphasized the psychotherapeutic approaches where the humanistic and psychoanalytic approach is mentioned with 11% of the published articles, however the behavioral approaches are the most researched where 12% of the publications focus on the analysis of the behavior, in addition, the cognitive-behavioral approach was the most researched since it presented 58% of the articles, a fact that corroborates Kanapp (2008) when the author states that “CBT has become the most researched and validated modality of psychosocial treatment throughout the world. world”, on the other hand the approach of positive psychology, did not have many articles published with the use of its techniques for the treatment of anxiety, showing a vast field for scientific production.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study may help those surveyed who seek knowledge to better understand anxiety and the disorders linked to it, giving parameters on the research and the various articles published to date, since the investigation carried out on anxiety revealed how the evolution was. of publications on the subject during the last 25 years on the PePSIC platform. With the research carried out, it was possible to know the most researched approaches, where the cognitive-behavioral approach stood out, as

well as the research that has been carried out with anxiety by age group in children, young people and adolescents, who presented the highest number of carried out, however, a very small number of studies focusing on anxiety in the elderly can be observed, which can and must be further explored in order to help people in this phase of life to improve their quality of life. When researching the distribution of research by gender, it was recognized that research on female mental health has a much larger number of works compared to those that had the male gender as a target audience, on the other hand, research reports that suffering with female anxiety in most cases brought motherhood as a process that generates anxiety, although relationships with physical health appear as the focus of several works. Still on the male gender, only two published works were found where one focuses on issues related to sexual dysfunction, (BRITTO 2010) correlating sexual dysfunction with depression and anxiety. The results also showed that the pandemic caused by COVID-19 influenced the generation of anxiety in the population, as it affects sick people and also family members. Sport is seen by many as a source of leisure and fun, however for athletes who seek professionalization, the search for results has also been a cause of anxiety. In addition, works aimed at studies on assessment instruments emerged in a very expressive number.

Although the results presented in this study provide an overview of publications on anxiety and its disorders, some limitations must be considered since only works published on the PePSIC website were used, therefore it is necessary to repeat the work by searching other sites with indexed searches. so that the overview of anxiety research can be more complete and accurate.

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