

Epidemics/pandemics echo similar global crises throughout human history

Epidemias/pandemias ecoam crises globais similares por toda a história humana

Epidemias/pandemias hacen eco en una crisis global similar a lo largo de la historia de la humanidad

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Keywords: Pandemics; Health communication; Global crises; Health facilities; Social inequality.

Palavras-chave: Pandemias; Comunicação em saúde; Crises globais; Instalações de saúde; Desigualdade social.

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Covid-19 is a major challenge to health communication around the world¹. It has redefined how we understand pandemics, structure health systems, and deliver health facilities to the population. Unfortunately, Covid-19 is non-discriminatory and affects both urban and rural residents². When the population is distributed everywhere, it is important to understand and address the health needs, health priorities and health-seeking behavior of the public in terms of Covid-19.

We do not have enough information about the virus. Given this, there is a greater need to study and understand the various historical perspectives on the pandemic and learn strategies for tackling it. More than a century has elapsed since the Spanish Flu, and a couple of decades since HIV & AIDS and many other epidemics/pandemics. Despite advances in medicine, we are still grappling with measures to contain the virus. There is also greater urgency to address the important issue of how health services can be provided with as little bias as possible. Health communication also needs to be restructured, keeping in view the varied sections of the population that await a cure. As the world awaits a vaccine, debates are also raging around the affordability of future vaccines and their distribution among different nations. We foresee a future full

of challenges for governments on various fronts, such as the negative economic effects of lockdowns on socioeconomically disadvantaged communities³. These problems include a variety of pandemic responses such as food rations, financial support, and hospital capacity. Governments will also have to assess and deal with the long-term health impact of lockdowns, limited access to health facilities and education.

The four articles that make up the first volume of the Communication, Health and Global Crises Dossier show us that, although spaced throughout time, the advent of epidemics/pandemics has echoed similar social tensions, such as social inequality, health moralizing processes and ineffective communication strategies. In this light, by recounting her father's narratives of the death and horror during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, Barbosa gifts us with a text that articulates chained flows of memory and aspects of the journalistic coverage in Rio de Janeiro's newspapers. Interpreting her own experience as history through self-ethnography, the author indicates the survival of multiple permanences: "In the past, as in the present, poor lives are not important."

Still from a historical perspective, Gomes and Silva analyze HIV & AIDS discourses in science, in literature, in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual (LGBTI) activism and on YouTube channels. As they go through four decades of disputes for the construction of meaning associated with the virus and the disease, the researchers find that the initial representations imbued with moralization and blaming of stigmatized groups have not been completely overcome.

Turning toward the contemporary, Paiva, Castro and Oliveira discuss how the worsening of the Covid-19 pandemic exposed the social inequality fostered by the management model employed in urban spaces and by the naturalization of barbarian acts hidden in the shadows by terms such as creative, intelligent and sustainable cities. In a dialogue with Néstor Garcia Cancline, the authors reflect on the ways in which the social-isolation measures decreed by the governments of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo have excluded those who do not have access to or skill using communication devices from the mechanisms of citizenship and sociability, while implementing a surveillance system with an opaque and highly authoritarian design.

Dealing specifically with the risk factors that accelerate complications and expose subjects from certain groups to more serious Covid-19 outcomes, Coqueiro suggests that there is a need to problematize, reflect on and evaluate the information released by the media about diabetes mellitus and the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. For the author, television media presents itself as an intermediary capable of disseminating information with different meanings to viewers. The media addresses discourses focused on the logic of risk that disregard socioeconomic aspects and the life styles of the population, thus hindering poor people from taking care of their health.

Good reading!

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