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IMPACTS CAUSED BY THE NEW CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF PREGNANT AND PUERPERAL WOMEN: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In December 2019, a new coronavirus known as SARS CoV-2 emerged and caused the covid-19 pandemic, generating a high number of deaths and unprecedented consequences, including worsening stress levels, sleep disturbances and depressionin the population.This is an integrative literature review, in order to assess the impacts caused by the new coronavirus pandemic on the mental health of pregnant and postpartum women,with construction based on six steps. Searches were carried out in the BDENF, LILACS, IBECS, MEDLINE and CINAHL databases, using the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) "Pregnant women", 'Mental disorders' and "Covid-19" combined with the Boolean operator AND, between January and November 2021.In the case of pregnant and postpartum women, who are often emotionally fragile due to their condition, having to live with the enigmas that guide contamination, in addition to preventive measures through vaccines and discordant speeches,*fake news*regarding the use of the vaccine in pregnant women, they can further aggravate the picture of this population niche. It is clear that this issue still needs a more concise and detailed investigation by researchers and scholars on the subject, given that the mechanisms by which mental health is affected in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic are complex, with this approach as a suggestion for further research in the future.


INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, a new coronavirus known as SARS CoV-2 emerged and caused the covid-19 pandemic, generating a high number of deaths and unprecedented consequences, including worsening stress levels, sleep disturbances and depressionin the population[1]. Nevertheless, pregnant and postpartum women were quite affected, since the prenatal period is usually accompanied by maternal mental suffering associated with questions about the pregnancy itself, which also involve fetal well-being and the outcome of childbirth[2]. Furthermore, one of the factors that can affect the mental health of pregnant women is insecurities related to catastrophic events or natural disasters[3]. The diagnosis at this stage is complex, with few studies that elucidate the topic during pregnancy and its repercussions for the mother and fetus, themoreover, nopregnancy, women become more susceptible to infections by respiratory pathogens[4]. This is due to immunological changes and physiological changes to adapt to pregnancy[5,6]. In addition to these changes, the pregnancy-puerperal period is also favorable to mental suffering and the development of disorders that can affect women's health. In this way, with the uncertainties raised about questions about the possibility of transmission of the new coronavirusfrom mother to child, as well as the effect of covid-19 for the fetus, in addition to the probability of increased risk of contracting the disease or presenting serious complications, had negative impacts on the health of pregnant and postpartum women during this period[6,7]. Added to this is the risk of death and uncertainty about the effectiveness of available treatments and vaccine safety[7,8]. The vulnerability caused by changes not only by the COVID-19 pandemic but also by pregnancy predisposes a high number of women to the development of various psychological disorders, with the onset of depression together with episodes of anxiety and mood swings being very common, of thought or symptoms of somatic origin, causing losses related to fetal well-being, interference in pharmacological treatment and impairment of basic activities of the pregnant woman's daily life[8,9].

In this context, given the potential negative consequences of psychological, health and financial uncertainty, together with the social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is urgent to determine the prevalence of psychological illnesses among pregnant and postpartum women during this pandemic and to identify protective factors, so that targeted interventions can be quickly implemented[10,11,12]. Since postpartum depression (PPD) is a relatively common and serious mental health problem, with social support as an important protective factor, however, during the pandemic, new mothers are deprived of their work and social life[13,14]. Furthermore, prolonged direct contact with other children (daily care and education at home) and switching to home office work can intensify daily fatigue and stress[15,16]. However, as it is a recent public health problem, studies related to the mental suffering experienced by pregnant women and postpartum womenduring the COVID-19 pandemic they are still scarce and limited, making it difficult to adopt evidence-based care measures and interventions[17,18]. Thus considering, this study brings howThe main objective of this study was to carry out an integrative synthesis to assess the impacts caused by the new coronavirus pandemic on the mental health of pregnant and postpartum women, based on the analysis of articles that address the subject[19,20]. Given the above, the research questioning urges to assess the main predictors of mental suffering and the situations that may eventually condition the patient or the newborn to complications during pregnancy and in the postpartum period.

METHODOLOGY

This is an integrative literature review,in order to assess the impacts caused by the new coronavirus pandemic on the mental health of pregnant and postpartum women,with construction based on six steps. It was defined as a guiding question, through the PICO strategy, "what brings the scientific evidence about the impacts caused by the Covid-19 pandemiccausing mental distress in pregnant women during

the Covid-19 pandemic?". The literature search was carried out between January and November 2021 in the Nursing Database (BDENF), Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS), Bibliographic Index Español en Ciencias de la Salud (IBECS), Medical Literature on Line (MEDLINE) and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), using the Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS) and their correspondents in the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and CINAHL list: "Pregnant women' ', "Mental disorders" and "Covid-19" combined with the Boolean operator AND. The inclusion criteria were: primary studies in Portuguese, English and Spanish, published in 2021, such chronological delimitation is related to the period with the highest number ofpublications arising from the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus. Theses, dissertations, reviews, editorials and opinion articles were excluded. The selection was developed by two reviewers, independently, in two steps. In the first step, the title and summary of the productions was read in order to identify whether they were directly related to the proposed objective and, in the second step, the full text was read in order to extract and analyze important information for the construction of the synthesis of results and discussion. In cases where there was disagreement, the opinion of a third reviewer was requested. For the extraction of this information, considered essential, a data collection instrument was created by the authors in a spreadsheet in the Microsoft Office Word® program, containing the following variables: title, authorship, methodological approach, objectives and main results found in the research and level of evidence. For a better understanding, the eligibility path of each study that made up the final sample of this review is shown in the flowchart based on Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA), represented in Figure 1:
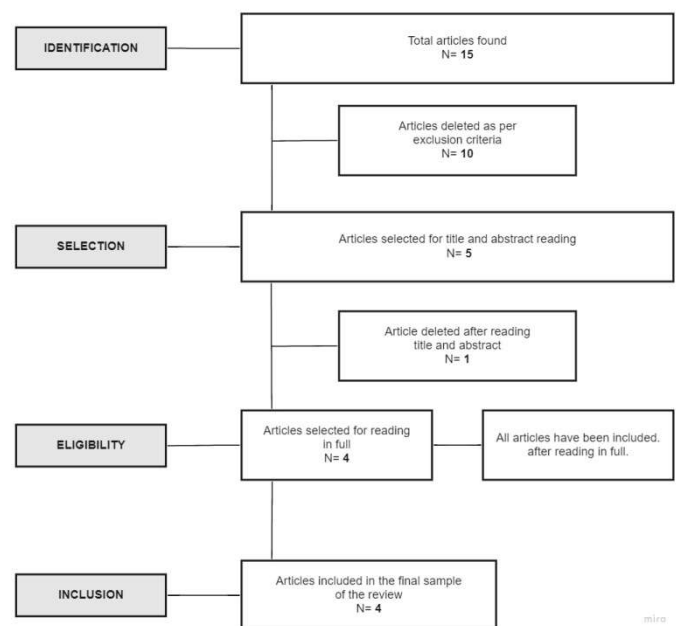
Source: Elaborated by the author from the PRISMA Flowchart (2021).

Figure 1. Flowchart detailing each step of the process of selecting articles for review

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 15 selected articles were analyzed using the eligibility criteria from the titles obtained, excluding repetitive articles, and later an analysis was performed, being read in full. After analyzing and selecting the articles, they were placed in a table for better verification and coverage of the subjects they addressed. Thus, showing the main points of each author, based on their results. In this way, they were organized with thetitle, authors, year, methodological approach, objectives and main results foundof each study (Table 1). According to the work by Estrela et al. (2020), discussed the uncertainties regarding COVID-19 and how this has contributed to make pregnant women anxious.

Table 1.

Title	Author/Year	Methodological Approach	Goals	Main results
Anxiety and depression in the context of the pandemic COVID-19 and the relationship with defense mechanisms of pregnant women	bargain, et al., 2021	Cross-sectional with descriptive design, quantitative analytical approach	Check anxiety and depression in the context of the pandemic and the relationship with the mechanisms defense of pregnant women so that coping strategies with professional assistance are developed.	Possible to identify that it is larger in the unit of obstetric emergency and in primigravid
Psychological impact of the pandemic on Brazilian pregnant and postpartum women	Arrais et al., 2021	descriptive, transversal, exploratory	understand the impact psychological in Brazilian pregnant and postpartum women in the face of social isolation and the Covid-19 pandemic.	The main concerns/fears found were: having Covid-19 and being admitted to the ICU; the baby needs the NICU; having Covid-19 and losing the baby, transmitting the coronavirus vertically to the baby; the baby acquires a malformation if the pregnant woman has Covid-19, does not have a companion in the childbirth or immediate postpartum and not being able to breastfeed the child.
Reflections on care for pregnant women in the COVID-19 pandemic: focus on mental health	Gomeset al., 2021	reflective theoretical essay	Reflect the role of health professionals on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of pregnant women.	The challenges for health professionals in monitoring pregnant women are Apprehended, in relation to care for the prevention of COVID-19 and its clinical implications in pregnancy, and the impacts of this pandemic on health mental suffering of these women, in which mental sufferings, such as anxiety and depression, may cause repercussions to the binomial mother and son.
Quality of life in pregnant women in times of covid-19 pandemic	Abreuet al., 2021	Transverse	Assess the quality of life of pregnant women during the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19)	It was found that most pregnant women (93.3%) had a very satisfactory quality of life. However, it is suggested that further studies with larger samples be carried out to ensure a healthy pregnancy for all women during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These data corroborate our study, where it was possible to observe that the doubts surrounding a recent disease show that this pandemic goes beyond the limits of knowing that it is a comorbidity caused by the coronavirus. Still on the study by Estrela et al. (2020), what is still little discussed is the need to pay attention to the psychological problems that this disease entails. In the case of pregnant and postpartum women, who are often emotionally fragile due to their condition, having to live with the enigmas that guide contamination, in addition to preventive measures through vaccines and discordant speeches,*fake news*regarding the use of the vaccine in pregnant women, they can further aggravate the picture of this population niche. In the studies by Silva and Neves (2020), they observed that, in addition to anxiety, they identified that depression has also contributed as the main psychological suffering of pregnant women andpostpartum womenarising from social isolation. With that, it must be agreed that the mental health of these women must be seen as a public health problem. Also in this aspect, Gomes et al. (2021) showed that the disclosure of information in a clear and objective way about COVID-19 needs to be more forceful and disseminated, since pregnant and postpartum women, as well as the general population, were socially isolated for a long time, leading to a situation of anxiety.Thus, all health care for women was affected by the pandemic, both because of the prioritization of care for COVID-19 treatment, and because of the fear of seeking health care due to uncertainties and fear of leaving home, increasing the frequency of signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression. With the context imposed by the new coronavirus, regardless of the social context, the construction of motherhood,can be considered a solitary experience, since the woman is responsible by society as the main, if not the only one, responsible for the care and healthy development of the child, thus, as a way of preventing COVID-19, it ends up worsening this feeling of loneliness, as it removes the woman from her support network, which helped with household chores, guidance and emotional support. Facts that bring even more symptoms of anxiety, resulting in mental suffering for pregnant and postpartum women. Thus, the reduction of interpersonal relationships between pregnant and postpartum women with society due to the pandemic are factors that contribute to the deepening of anxiety and depression, recurrent feelings in pregnancy, during the pregnancy-puerperal period.

Given the data found in our study,the importance of special attention and care to this risk group is highlighted, as in addition to the weakness identified in the pregnancy-puerperal period, there are still all the afflictions and anxieties caused by the current health scenario. In this context, it is necessary to implement interventions that can alleviate the impacts of Covid-19 on the mental health of pregnant and postpartum women, in order to enable quality of life and well-being for women during this phase of life. These results point to some serious issues regarding the way in which public health has been dealing with the problems related to the mental health of pregnant and postpartum women resulting from COVID-19. Therefore, directing public resources to the research area, supports researchers to find more and more arguments that can convince the Government that dealing with the mental health of pregnant and postpartum women during the pandemic is not restricted to vaccinating them, but treat them in a humane way during their periodgravitic-puerperal.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By analyzing the different researches on the impactsresulting from COVID-19, in the mental health ofpregnant and postpartum women, it is clear that this is a serious public health problem. Since the new Coronavirus infects people from all social classes, including those who depend on the public health system. Thus, it is believed that analyzing and publishing what several researchers have been reporting on the topic in question can guide health professionals and even society on the importance of early care for this group, which is so vulnerable and susceptible to the consequences of this pandemic.

In this study, it was possible to observe that anxiety and depression were the most prevalent symptoms in pregnant women due to COVID-19. Thus, it must be agreed that, in addition to drug treatment, psychological support is essential for the well-being of these women. Because of this, the dissemination of public policies to support these groups, combined with communication campaigns that inform about the importance of caring for pregnant and postpartum women during the pandemic, prove to be necessary and essential for the preservation of the mental health of this population. emotionally vulnerable.

It is clear that this issue still needs a more concise and detailed investigation by researchers and scholars on the subject, given that the mechanisms by which mental health is affected in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic are complex, with this approach as a suggestion for further research in the future. However, it cannot be overlooked that there is already strong evidence that shows how much women in their cyclepregnancy and childbirth being mentally impaired due to the pandemic and its consequences, and that, therefore, emergency measures must be taken to reverse this situation and change the statistics in Brazil in relation to the coronavirus and the mental damage caused to pregnant and postpartum women.

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