

Brazilian oral medicine and oral pathology: We are here during the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Editor,

Coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020 (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>). As of June 4, 2020, approximately 6,416,828 cases of contamination and 382,867 deaths from COVID-19 were recorded (<https://who.sprinkl.com>).

Social confinement due to COVID-19 pandemic has been changed dental education activities (Iyer, Aziz, & Ojcius, 2020) and with the various specialties and their respective challenges, such as endodontic treatment (Prati, Pelliccioni, Sambri, Chersoni, & Gandolfi, 2020), tele(oral)medicine (Machado, de Souza, Oliveira, Martelli-Júnior, & Bonan, 2020; Villa, Sankar, & Shiboski, 2020), head and neck maxillofacial surgery (Brody et al., 2020), pediatric dentistry (Casamassimo, Townsend, & Litch, 2020), and oral and head and neck cancer (Leonel, Martelli-Junior, Bonan, Kowalski, & da Cruz Perez, 2020).

Brazil has a population of approximately 211 million people and an extensive territorial area of 8,515,767,049 km². The country is formed by 26 States and a Federal District, which is its capital (Brasília). Moreover, a total of 5,570 municipalities distributed in five regions. It also has 11.6 million unemployed people (<https://www.ibge.gov.br/>). The first official COVID-19 case occurred on February 25, 2020. Currently, Brazil has most cases and deaths in Latin America (614,941 cases and 30,925 deaths as of June 4) (<https://covid.saude.gov.br/>), and these data are probably substantially underestimated (The Lancet, 2020).

On May 9, 2020, the Brazilian National Congress has decreed three days of national mourning, due to the number of official deaths of COVID-19 having passed the mark of 10,000. National and Southern Common Market (MERCOSUL) flags, as well as the flags of the 26 States and the Federal District, will remain raised at a funeral, at half-mast (<https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2020/05/09/congresso-decreta-luto-oficial-pelas-10-mil-mortes-por-covid-19-no-brasil>) (Figure 1). Some Brazilian states in the North and Northeast, such as Maranhão, Pará, and Ceará, began to enact the lockdown, due to the advance of the pandemic and the non-compliance with the quarantine (<https://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/o-brasil-em-lockdown-as-regras-para-as-cidades-que-vivem-bloqueio-total/>).

All classroom lessons were paralyzed, including Universities. Moreover, most public and private dental services were encouraged

to attend only urgencies, like oral pain, dental, and bone fracture. We have demonstrated that Brazilian researchers have significantly contributed with publications in the main specific periodicals with focus on oral medicine and oral pathology (de Andrade, Martelli, Swerts, Oliveira, & Martelli, 2018; de Andrade et al., 2018). Despite all this scenario of challenges and limitations, we are here developing oral medicine and oral pathology activities, such as telemedicine, face-to-face hospital clinical care, clinical and research meetings, histopathological diagnoses, and conventional remote classes. Crises allow us to learn and among them, assistance and permanent help to those most in need. Despite the enormous problems and the accumulation of oral diseases in this period, albeit in a very limited way and in a country with continental dimensions, we are trying to reduce the suffering of the neediest (Figure 2).

In conclusion, this group has organized weekly meetings with the graduate students, residents, and oral medicine and oral pathology students. Specific issues in oral medicine and oral pathology, such as clinic-pathological cases, oral manifestation of chronic diseases, and oral side effects of oncological treatment, are discussed. In our opinion, such activity has been important for both professors and



FIGURE 1 The National and MERCOSUL flag hoisted at half-mast. <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2020/05/09/congresso-decreta-luto-oficial-pelas-10-mil-mortes-por-covid-19-no-brasil>



FIGURE 2 Image of Google Meet screen from our meeting

students, and even after the end of the pandemic, our meetings will be maintained.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Hercílio Martelli Júnior: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, project administration, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualization, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing. **Renato Assis Machado:** Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, project administration, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualization, writing – review & editing. **Paulo Rogério Ferreti Bonan:** Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, project administration, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualization, writing – review & editing. **Danyel Elias da Cruz Perez:** Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, project administration, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualization, writing – review & editing. **Fábio Ramôa Pires:** Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, project administration, resources, software, supervision,

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