

Brazil: The impact of the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic among medical doctors

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Health-care workers (HCWs) on the frontlines of the 2019 Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) have a high risk of acquiring and dying from the disease. Brazil is a country with high morbimortality and ranks highest in general mortality from COVID-19. A large proportion of medical doctors (MDs) is dying, impacting in the workforce. As part of the research by Fiocruz on working conditions among HCWs, we have conducted this study of death among MDs. We analyzed data from Federal Council of Medicine, the only national platform with details about deaths in MDs. A broad search of other sources, including the Ministry of Health, was done, but unfortunately, the data does not exist. A total of 622 MDs died from March 2020 to March 2021: 87.6% male and 75% over age 60. The Southeast had the highest percentage (34.7%), followed by the Northeast (27.2%), and rankings by state showed Rio de Janeiro (15.8%), followed by São Paulo, Pará, Paraná and Paraíba, totalizing 50.1%. The specialties with highest mortality were gynecology (12.2%), pediatrics (10.0%), internal medicine (9.3%), general surgery (7.8%) and cardiology (7.6%). May 2020 was the month of worst mortality (16.9%) followed by July and June. A slow decline was observed until October, when Brazil began to experience the “second wave”. The vaccination of MDs began at the end of January 2021 and has not been sufficient time to evaluate the impact on morbimortality. The results of a study of 50

professional categories are under analysis and will be published soon as well as a study of “invisible” HCWs, who do not have specific training but are essential to supporting health care system, from primary care units to high-complexity hospitals. We hope that the results of these studies will improve links among managers, those who define public policies, and union leaders, achieving better workplace and living conditions, minimizing health and socioeconomic disparities.

Key messages:

- This study is about death by COVID-19 among medical doctors in Brazil, as part of a large one on professional categories, essentials to supporting health care system, conducted by FIOCRUZ.
- This study is part of a large one on professional categories, essentials to supporting health care system, conducted by FIOCRUZ.