

Epidemiology and Health Services (Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saúde) journal, its role and contributions in the pandemic context

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Epidemiology has historically played a relevant role in the production of information for the decision-making process in the field of public health. Based on its principles and through the application of its methods, it has contributed to a better understanding of community health phenomena and provided information that can help health service managers and professionals in the decision-making process, and also enable the definition of policies, interventions and practices aimed at the prevention, monitoring and reduction of the impact of health events on the population.¹

In Brazil, epidemiology has experienced significant development since the 1980s, and it was given a strong impulse in its scientific and practical fields, following the re-democratization in the country and the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988.² Since then, this discipline, forged in the commitment to reducing health inequities and improving the living conditions of the Brazilian population,² has provided relevant contributions to the knowledge of health-disease processes, diagnosis of health conditions of the population, definition of health policies and practices aimed at coping with health problems. We could mention as a recent example, the role and dynamism of scientists and professionals for coping with the global emergency of the Zika virus epidemic in Brazil, which, with the cooperation of national and international research centers and governmental institutions, were able to provide, in a short term, epidemiological evidence on the association between the microcephaly epidemic and Zika virus infection,³ develop and design surveillance systems and models of attention aimed at the event.^{4,5}

Epidemiology and Health Services journal (RESS), as well as other Brazilian journals in the public health field, has been following and participating in this development for almost three decades. Initially, it was the SUS Epidemiological Report (Informe Epidemiológico do SUS), with the objective of organizing and disseminating, in a wider manner, epidemiological information from the Ministry of Health;⁶ As of 2003, it was renamed RESS, aiming to improve the services offered by the Brazilian National Health System (SUS), by disseminating epidemiological knowledge applicable to the surveillance, prevention and disease control relevant to public health.⁷

The global health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has imposed new and complex challenges on societies and, in this context, the scientific response has been rapid and robust.⁸ In Brazil, by October 7, 2021, 13,781 approved projects whose titles referred to 'COVID-19', were registered on Plataforma Brasil. This accelerated research production, associated with the demand for further information on the new disease, has been reflected in the expressive number of scientific productions on this health issue in Brazilian scientific journals in the public health field, highlighting the publication of original research papers. By September 2021, those national journals had published about 400 articles in various modalities (Table 1).

In this scenario, RESS launched a call for manuscripts on COVID-19, and introduced a fast-track publishing process, which contributed to the timely dissemination of evidence. In addition to 22 original articles, articles in the following modalities: research note, review and opinion, and so on, were published in RESS, which, according to altimetric data search on the SciELO and Plum Analytics platforms, recorded more than 250,000 views and more than 700 citations by September 2021, showing the high visibility and impact of those publications.

The articles on COVID-19 have stood out once again, in this latest issue of RESS in 2021. There are seven original articles addressing different themes related to the disease, such as its epidemiological profile, repercussions on the provision and organization of health services; however, other modalities also allude to the health crisis.

The persistence of a large number of submissions and manuscripts during the editorial process on COVID-19 in recent months, suggests that we are still far from thematic saturation. Through new evidence, different attributes have been incorporated into the discussion and, with its reach, RESS has strengthened its mission of disseminating

epidemiological knowledge and contributed to the strengthening of the health services provided by the SUS and improvement of health conditions in Brazil.

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Table 1 – Number of articles on COVID-19 published^a in Brazilian journals in public health field^b, by September 30, 2021

| Journal | Published articles | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | 2020 ^a | 2021 ^a |
| | n | n |
| Ciência & Saúde Coletiva | 118 | 62 |
| Cadernos de Saúde Pública | 66 | 42 |
| Revista de Saúde Pública | 13 | 11 |
| Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saúde | 27 | 11 |
| Saúde em Debate | 48 | 2 |
| Total | 272 | 128 |

a) Information obtained from SciELO, erratas were excluded, on October 7, 2021; b) top five journals, according to the ranking of Google Scholar Journal Metrics.