

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Portuguese adults' psychopathological symptoms: a cross-sectional study

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: The impact of the pandemic on mental health has been demonstrated in several reports. The aim of the present study was to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on multiple dimensions of psychopathology in Portuguese adults. We compare a pandemic sample assessed during the second lockdown in Portugal with a prepandemic sample.

METHODS: Participants provided socio-demographic and clinical information and responded to the Brief Symptom Inventory.

RESULTS: The pandemic group relative to the prepandemic group demonstrated significantly higher levels for BSI scales of depression, anxiety, and phobic anxiety, and lower scores for paranoid ideation. At the level of the 53 BSI items, significant difference between pandemic and prepandemic groups occurred for 20 of the items.

CONCLUSIONS: Results describe the multidimensional influence of the pandemic on psychological functioning and are relevant to guiding the implementation of intervention strategies.

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KEY WORDS: COVID-19; Pandemics; Psychopathology; Portugal.

Portugal is the most western point in Europe and has approximately 10 million, 250 thousand people. On January 15, 2021, a second lockdown was declared throughout the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of cases and deaths had been increasing dramatically. Notably, Portugal was one of the countries in the world with the largest per capita number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. The population was requested to stay at home, going outside only: for exercise; to walk pets; to buy food; or to work,

when working at home and/or by videoconferencing was not possible. With few exceptions, travel between cities was not permitted on weekends. Territorial borders with Spain were closed and flights to other countries were very limited. On the first day of the lockdown in Portugal, January 15, 2021, there were 125,861 confirmed COVID-19 active cases and 8,543 total deaths. On the first day of this report's data collection, January 22, there were 157,660 confirmed COVID-19 active cases and 9,920 total deaths. On