

The phenomenon of violence in Brazil and Latin America: several theoretical-methodological approaches

The publication of a special issue on the theme of violence in the *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* journal reflects the scale of the phenomenon of violence in our Latin American reality as a cause of suffering and pain among children, adolescents, the elderly, women and men. Violence is one of the leading groups of causes of death and injury in the population and has an impact on decelerating the increase in life expectancy in our countries. In addition, the articles show that the researchers are aware of this reality and contribute with a wealth of knowledge about the magnitude, determinants, inequalities and impacts of violence on the health and quality of life of our population, as well as in the evaluation of the interventions to combat violence.

This thematic volume has 30 articles that address different quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches and systematic reviews of the scientific literature, as well as different sources of information. The articles can be organized into three thematic groups: (i) *interpersonal violence* that covers the different cycles of life. In infancy and adolescence, the authors address neglect, bullying and sexual violence. In violence against women, the articles analyze physical violence and femicide, identifying trends in these deaths in Brazil. In violence against the elderly, the articles analyze intimate partner violence and suicide in patients with terminal illness; (ii) *institutional violence* in which the authors analyze violence involving female prisoners and the relationship between health professionals and users within the scope of the health services of the Unified Health System (SUS); (iii) *studies that analyze strategies for coping with violence*, whether through psycho-therapeutic interventions or the preservation of popular culture in specific population groups.

Among the articles, the ones that use the Violence and Accident Surveillance System (VIVA) of SUS as a data source stand out. They reveal the potential of this source of information to estimate the magnitude of violence and to evaluate the determinants of the various forms of violence in Brazil. The analyses present the profile of interpersonal violence according to the type of violence, gender, race, color, schooling and cycles of life, as well as identify the main aggressors and which instruments are used to perpetrate violence on each group of victims. Two articles that use VIVA emphasize the innovative use of the linkage procedure between the VIVA and the Information System on Live Births (Sinasc) databases. Their results show the impacts and consequences of sexual violence against female adolescents, as well as the quality of health care offered to these victims.

Overall, despite the specificities of each contribution, the 30 articles encapsulate scientific investigations of diverse theoretical and methodological conceptions. Their conclusions should be seen as an invitation to conduct new studies, which can increase knowledge, especially when it is a phenomenon of intense complexity, revealing a web of relationships conformed by historical, social, political, economic, cultural, psychological and biological aspects. They represent further contributions to Brazilian and international studies and research that have sought to gain in-depth knowledge and to make progress in countermeasures, thereby participating in the process of building a humanitarian pact against barbarism. Finally, we wish pleasant reading to our readers, researchers and professionals in the area, that can inspire them to reflect on the issue of violence.

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