

# Influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men: a scoping review protocol

## Possíveis fatores de risco de dor aguda relacImpactos da pandemia de Covid-19 nas condições de saúde de homens imigrantes, refugiados e asilados: um protocolo para revisão de escopo

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To outline the scientific evidence on the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health status of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men. **Method:** This is a scoping review protocol developed according to the methodology established by the Joanna Briggs Institute. Publications in Portuguese, English, and Spanish addressing the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health of adult immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men will be included without time limit. Reviews, editorials, letters, and study protocols will be excluded. The following databases and libraries were identified for data collection: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature via the Virtual Health Library, PubMed, Web of Science, Embase, Scopus, Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, Catalog of Theses and Dissertations of the Coordination of Superior Level Staff Improvement (CAPES), Digital Library of the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), and Open Access Scientific Repositories from Portugal. The selection and final evaluation of the studies will be carried out by three independent reviewers, with a fourth reviewer to resolve any disagreements. The data will be compiled in an adapted instrument, including information on the title, year of publication, country of origin, aim, type of study, identified effects, DOI, and access link. Results will be presented in tables, charts, graphs, figures, and narrative.

**Descriptors:** Global Health; Ethnic Minorities Health; Men Health; Emigrants and Immigrants; Refugees; Covid-19.

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Delinear as evidências científicas acerca dos impactos da pandemia de Covid-19 nas condições de saúde de homens imigrantes, refugiados e asilados. **Método:** Trata-se de um protocolo de revisão de escopo alicerçado na metodologia estabelecida pelo Instituto Joanna Briggs. Serão integradas publicações em português, inglês e espanhol, sem recorte temporal, que abordem sobre os impactos da pandemia da Covid-19 nas condições de saúde de homens adultos imigrantes, refugiados e asilados. Serão excluídos resenhas, editoriais, cartas e protocolos de pesquisa. Para coleta dos dados, foram definidas as bases e bibliotecas Literatura Latino-Americana e do Caribe em Ciências da Saúde via Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde, PubMed, *Web of Science*, Embase, Scopus, Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações, Catálogo de Teses e Dissertações Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES), Biblioteca Digital da *Scientific Electronic Library Online* (SciELO) e Repositórios Científicos de Acesso Aberto de Portugal. A escolha e avaliação final dos estudos será realizada por três revisores de forma independente, sendo as discrepâncias determinadas por um quarto revisor. Os dados serão compilados em instrumento adaptado, incluindo informações acerca do título, ano de publicação, país de origem, objetivo, tipo de estudo, impactos identificados, DOI e link de acesso. Os resultados serão apresentados em quadros, tabelas, gráficos, imagens e narrativa.

**Descritores:** Saúde Global; Saúde das Minorias Étnicas; Saúde do Homem; Emigrantes e Imigrantes; Refugiados; Covid-19.

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic not only caused the spread of an unknown virus but also generated consequences and concerns in various sectors of our society; issues related to refugees and immigrants and their interface with health conditions have gained prominence. Public policies to combat the health crisis by closing borders directly affected the processes and flows of human mobility of international migrations, sometimes violating the rights of these people<sup>(1-2)</sup>.

Although Brazilian legislation guarantees various rights to immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers; access to these rights was hampered by the government's response to the crisis, making them a forgotten population in the management of the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>(3)</sup>. The pandemic exacerbated expressions of xenophobia and increased discrimination, processes to which these individuals are typically already subjected and which are motivated by the association of foreigners with the spread of the disease, an intrinsic stigma in the history of epidemics<sup>(1-2)</sup>.

Immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are not nationals; they are individuals who are outside their country of origin for various reasons. Immigrants are characterized by economic instigation; they leave their country voluntarily to escape poverty and misery, in search of better living conditions, housing, and food<sup>(4)</sup>. They are therefore free to choose their destination. Refugees, on the other hand, leave their country of origin because of insecurity, fear of persecution, and repression related to ethnicity, religion, nationality, social identity and/or political opinion, as well as severe human rights violations and armed conflicts<sup>(5)</sup>. Depending on the way they apply to enter the country of destination, this population can also be called asylum seekers if the motivation for moving between countries is political. Consequently, the governments that receive them cannot return them to their countries of origin, where their lives are threatened. To become citizens, they must go through a naturalization process that requires time and financial resources<sup>(3)</sup>. However, the impact of these outcomes and the characteristics of this population are reflected in their access to the health system. For global health, the pandemic scenario demanded unprecedented efforts; countries struggled to meet the demands of the healthcare system and also faced a growing number of reported deaths every day. The burden of this responsibility was projected onto healthcare professionals and caregivers, who were

tasked with the majority of these efforts, but often without due recognition and/or reward<sup>(6)</sup>. The pandemic has exacerbated structural, economic, and social inequalities and has created a global health crisis. As a result, the vulnerabilities and impacts that permeate the living conditions of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers also disproportionately affect them. This includes working conditions, housing, access to information and health services, as well as public policies and protection networks, which determine and affect the lives of the population in different ways. The array of resources, vaccines, tests, and treatments for Covid-19, which has had a significant impact in saving lives, has been initiated worldwide; however, it is known to have further increased inequality among populations, especially in richer countries, as the same has not been demonstrated in lower-income countries<sup>(6)</sup>. In this context, one can imagine how this part of the population has been confronted with all these social, economic, cultural, and health adversities, far from their origins. The effects can be seen in mental health but have not yet been quantified<sup>(7)</sup>, which justifies the importance of this study. The specific social determinants of these populations must be recognized, and their specificities must not be diminished. There is a need for practices of resistance, resilience, and solidarity, which can have an even greater impact in pandemic scenarios<sup>(5)</sup>.

The identification of the specificities of these specific populations in the Covid-19 pandemic is essential for the elaboration and implementation of public health policies that allow access to rights and services that meet the real subsistence needs of this population. However, the impact on the health status of these ethnic minorities is not clear. A preliminary search was conducted in July 2023 using the descriptors "health" AND "covid-19" AND "refugees" AND "immigrants" in PubMed, Virtual Health Library (BVS), Scopus, OSF search, JBI Evidence Synthesis, and Online Brazilian Journal of Nursing (OBNJ); in the end, no scope reviews or scope review protocols were found to outline the scientific evidence regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health conditions of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Therefore, the development and publication of this study is justified by the need for methodological rigor to transparently fulfill the complex stages of a systematic review<sup>(8)</sup>.

Thus, this study aims to outline the scientific evidence on the impact of the Covid-19 pande-

mic on the health status of migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men.

### **Review question**

What scientific publications are available on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health conditions of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men?

### **Subquestion**

What are the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health conditions of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men?

### **Keywords**

Health; Covid-19; Refugees; Immigrants.

### **Inclusion criteria**

### **Participants**

Participants will be adult men in immigration, refugee, and asylum situations during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Concept**

This review will include studies that discuss the influence of Covid-19 pandemic on health conditions in their biological, psychological, and social dimensions.

### **Context**

Studies will be included from the emergence and classification of the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) by the World Health Organization (WHO) to the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>(9)</sup>. The Covid-19 pandemic is thought to have affected the health of the population in several ways. These effects may include the actions of health services of different levels of complexity, including primary health care units, specialized centers, and hospitals as well as social aspects such as income distribution, employment, and housing. The Covid-19 pandemic is thought to have had a cross-cultural impact on the health of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men. The literature findings may indicate adverse effects on survival, post-Covid-19 sequelae, impoverishment, difficulties in accessing health services, discrimination, stigma, xenophobia, family breakdown, loss of status, post-traumatic stress, suicide, and other adverse health phenomena.

### **Sources of evidence**

This scoping review will consider all available scientific research in its entirety, including

quantitative and qualitative studies, theses, and dissertations available in the health databases listed, that meet the inclusion criteria, depending on the research question, published in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, without temporal restriction, to retrieve the largest possible number of publications. Editorials, letters, commentaries, books, and book chapters are excluded.

### **METHOD**

This is a scoping review protocol. A scoping review is a synthesis of knowledge from a systematic analysis to outline scientific productions and identify the main concepts, theories, sources, and knowledge gaps on a particular topic<sup>(10,11)</sup>. This review will follow the methodology proposed by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI)<sup>(11)</sup>. The protocol will be registered on the Open Science Framework platform (<https://osf.io/uz937/>).

### **Sources of information**

To identify descriptors and keywords, an initial search of the PubMed portal was conducted to identify the main descriptors and keywords used in studies on the topic of interest. Descriptors were combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR to formulate the search strategy. There was no time restriction on publications. The libraries and databases defined were PubMed, Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS) via the Virtual Health Library, Web of Science, Scopus, Embase, and Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO). For theses and dissertations, searches were performed in the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations of the Coordination of Superior Level Staff Improvement (CAPES), and the Open Access Scientific Repositories of Portugal (RCAAP).

### **Search strategy**

Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS) and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) were used (Figure 1). According to the adopted reference<sup>(11)</sup>, the search strategy was carried out in three stages. The search strategy defined with the help of a librarian is "COVID-19" OR "pandemics" AND "immigrants" OR "refugees" AND "men." The search strategy is adapted for each database. A reference list of all sources of evidence included in the full-text search will be included for subsequent study retrieval.

**Figure 1- Keywords and entry terms in PubMed. Rio Grande, RS, Brazil, 2023**

Keywords	Entry terms
Men [Homens]	Boys
Undocumented Immigrants [Imigrantes indocumentados]	Alien, Undocumented Aliens, Undocumented Immigrant, Unauthorized Immigrant, Undocumented Immigrants, Unauthorized Immigrants, Undocumented Unauthorized Immigrant Unauthorized Immigrants Undocumented Alien Undocumented Aliens Undocumented Immigrant Undocumented Worker Undocumented Workers Worker, Undocumented Workers, Undocumented
Emigrants and Immigrants [Emigrantes e Imigrantes]	Alien Aliens Emigrant Emigrants Foreigner Foreigners Immigrant Immigrants Immigrants and Emigrants
Refugees [Refugiados]	Asylum Seeker Asylum Seeker, Political Asylum Seekers Asylum Seekers, Political Displaced Person Displaced Person, Internally Displaced Persons Displaced Persons, Internally Internally Displaced Person Internally Displaced Persons Person, Displaced Persons, Displaced Political Asylum Seeker Political Asylum Seekers Political Refugee Political Refugees Refugee Refugee, Political Refugees, Political Seeker, Asylum Seekers, Asylum Seekers, Political Asylum Statutory Refugee

Keywords	Entry terms
Health Status [Nível de Saúde]	General Health General Health Level General Health Levels General Health Status Health Level Health Level, General Health Levels Health Status, General Health Status, Overall Health, General Health, Overall Level of Health Level, General Health Levels, General Health Overall Health Overall Health Status Status, General Health Status, Health Status, Overall Health
COVID-19	2019 nCoV Disease 2019 nCoV Infection 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 Novel Coronavirus Epidemic 2019 Novel Coronavirus Infection 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak 2019 Novel Coronavirus Pandemic 2019 Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia 2019-20 China Pneumonia Outbreak 2019-20 Wuhan Coronavirus Outbreak 2019-nCoV Acute Respiratory Disease 2019-nCoV Disease 2019-nCoV Diseases 2019-nCoV Epidemic 2019-nCoV Infection 2019-nCoV Infections 2019-nCoV Outbreak 2019-nCoV Pandemic 2019-nCoV Pneumonia 2019-New Coronavirus Epidemic 2019-Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Infection 2019-Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia Coronavirus Disease 19 Coronavirus Disease 2019 Coronavirus Disease-19 COVID 19 COVID 19 Pandemic COVID 19 Virus Disease COVID 19 Virus Infection COVID-19 pandemic COVID-19 Pandemics COVID-19 Virus Disease COVID-19 Virus Diseases COVID-19 Virus Infection COVID-19 Virus Infections COVID19 Disease 2019, Coronavirus Disease, 2019-nCoV Disease, COVID-19 Virus Infection, 2019-nCoV Infection, COVID-19 Virus

## Study selection

After the search, all identified citations are grouped and loaded into EndNote software (Clarivate Analytics, USA)<sup>(12)</sup> to remove duplicate studies. They are then sent to the Rayyan software<sup>(13)</sup>, where they are assessed based on the titles and abstracts of all identified studies, taking into account the inclusion and exclusion criteria established. The selected studies are fully evaluated for subsequent data extraction. This process is performed by three reviewers independently and blinded, with disagreements resolved by a fourth reviewer. Reasons for excluding full-text evidence that does not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded. The flow of

study identification and selection will be presented according to the PRISMA-ScR flowchart<sup>(10)</sup>.

## Data extraction

Data will be extracted independently by the three reviewers using a JBI data extraction tool<sup>(11)</sup> adapted by the authors, which includes information on study type, year of publication, country of origin, objective, identified health outcomes, DOI, and access link (Figure 2). Disagreements during data extraction are resolved by consensus or by evaluation by a fourth reviewer. This tool may be modified during the process to better serve the aim of the present scoping review.

**Figure 2** - Data extraction tool. Rio Grande, RS, Brazil, 2023

### Data extraction tool

**Title:** Influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men: A scoping review protocol

**Objective:** To map scientific production on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health conditions of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men.

**Review question:** What are the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health conditions of immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men?

**Inclusion criteria:** Editorials, comments, letters to the editor, abstracts of papers presented at events, experience reports, expert opinions not based on research, theoretical studies, books, book chapters, and publications that do not detail the adversities and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health of the immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking population will be excluded.

**P:** Immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking men.

**C:** Impact on health conditions.

**C:** Covid-19

### Data extraction

Title	Country/year of publication	Study objective	Type of Study	Impacts identified	DOI/Access link
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Source: JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis adapted from Aromataris e Munn, 2020.

## Analysis and presentation of data

The results of this scoping review will be presented in narrative, pictorial, and tabular form. A table will be created with information on the title, authors, year of publication, study method, and interventions described using the PCC mnemonic.

## Ethical considerations

The study does not require approval from a research ethics committee because it uses secondary data. However, all ethical aspects and principles have been considered and the appropriate data sources have been cited.

\*Paper extracted from the dissertation "Pandemia da COVID-19: condições de saúde de homens imigrantes, refugiados e asilados no Brasil", presented to the Federal University of Rio Grande, Rio Grande, RS, Brasil.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have declared that there is no conflict of interests.

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