

LETTERS

Impact of the lethal "Politics" variant on the population in Brazil

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The Covid-19 pandemic has provoked a deep and extensive health crisis and a trail of deaths globally and in Brazil (1). Brazil had reached the mark of 22,499,525 cases and 619,937 deaths by January 10, 2022 (2). The current Jair Bolsonaro government took too long to recognise the severity of the pandemic and also tried to discredit the vaccination process, and generated further controversy around the negotiations with the global suppliers. The harvest of this disastrous failure to manage the purchase and supplies of vaccines has been a hugely negative impact on the vaccination campaign, which was at a low of 22.4% in August 2021, and has only now reached 67.47% (3). There is still a long way to go to improve vaccination levels and to ensure easy access for the population (4).

The extent of Brazil's health crisis is even more evident when considering the number of births and deaths in some states (5). According to the Transparency Portal of the Civil Registry of Brazil, the State of Rio Grande do Sul registered in March 2021 a total of 12,017 births and 15,853 deaths, of which 8,309 (52.14%) were suspected Covid-19 deaths (6).

Many genetic changes have taken place in the virus since its emergence in Wuhan, China, in late 2019. According to the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), 92 variants of the coronavirus are currently circulating throughout Brazil (7), but 3 of them are shown to be causes of concern for the population due to higher transmissibility. They are the variant P1 (originating from Manaus), the B.1.1.7 (from the United Kingdom) and the B.1.351 (from South Africa).

In light of the catastrophic health situation that the country faces, it is imperative to clarify the aggressiveness and lethality of the crucial variant in Brazil's pandemic scenario, called "Politics". This variant goes beyond the scope of health and has had a deep and long-lasting social and economic impact on the country. The severity of the coronavirus variant called "Politics" was recognised in the preliminary decision of the Plenary of the Supreme Federal Court (STF), confirmed on April 14, 2021, that the Federal Senate should set up a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (CPI)(8). The CPI is to investigate the acts and omissions of the Federal government on the mismanagement of the pandemic and the health system collapse in the state of Amazonas, at the beginning of 2021. Among the facts that justify the establishment of the Federal

investigation, are: i) the impairment of the capacity of states and municipalities to implement policies such as social distancing, the mandatory use of masks and alcohol gel; ii) suspected corruption and delay in the purchase of the CoronaVac vaccine developed by a Chinese company in partnership with the Butantan Institute; iii) the delay in the creation and implementation of a national vaccination plan; iv) the lack of equipment and supplies for treatment of Covid-19 patients, such as respirators, oxygen and beds, among others.

The "Politics" variant has been lethal for the entire Brazilian population, leaving a legacy of unprecedented deaths in the country. The right to health of the citizens should be paramount, and in this context, it is essential to put aside partisan differences, or even personal or emotional convictions of those who govern, in order to prioritise the right to life of the population. Science has advanced in record time in the discovery and production of vaccines against the Covid-19 virus. However, it is the "Politics" variant that is resistant and slowly kills; but is also unable to survive the exercise of rationality and democracy. It is necessary to act collectively to mitigate this variant.

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