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ABSTRACT:

Effects of COVID-19 on children's speech development: Brazilian approach to managing it

Introduction: The pandemic due to the rapid contamination of the Covid-19 virus directly affected sectors of society, which had to adapt to new ways in their lifestyles, mainly in limiting social contacts face-to-face. Language and speech development usually occurs during early childhood in a gradual acquisition of receptive skills and expressive. Thus, although the closing of schools, the distancing and the widespread use of masks could negatively impact language development, its specific effect has not yet been widely accessed. A longitudinal study of children born during the pandemic period showed preliminary evidence of reduced verbal performance compared to children born earlier of the pandemic. Therefore, there is an urgent need for further studies addressing this topic to better understand the potential impact of the pandemic COVID-19 on language and speech development in childhood. The studies reviewed suggest that epidemics can lead to high levels of stress in parents and children, which begin with concerns about children becoming infected. **Methods**: This review of the scientific literature about the impacts of isolation, environmental restriction, social distancing, and the challenges of maintaining general child health and development in Brazil gave us solid arguments to improve the approach of speech therapy. The researcher evaluated children before and after the speech therapy intervention for data collection; Results**:** The lack of socialization caused delays in the acquisition of phonemes in Brazilian Portuguese, a decrease in the syntactic structures of children between 3 and 4 years old and oral language with restricted vocabular. Parental guidelines were punctuated with systematic activities to improve children's response to stimulation. **Conclusion:** In that context, the speech therapist will certainly have a central role in the prevention and therapeutic approach to language delay. Along with parents and teachers, they should be aware of this possibility, especially in children small.

Keywords: COVID-19, Coronavirus, SARS-COV2, Child development of speech, speech therapy