

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Home care as a safe alternative in post-acute and long-term care during COVID-19 crisis

Home care como alternativa segura no cuidado pós-agudo e crônico durante crise por COVID-19

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Dear Editor,

Advanced age and comorbidities are associated with increased mortality related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The high prevalence of this combination, associated with physical environments that provide inadequate barriers to infection control, place patients in long-term care facilities at great risk. There are several reports worldwide about the high mortality related to COVID-19 among residents of long-term care institutions, showing they account for 25% of deaths from COVID-19, in the United States.^(1,2) Percentages are even higher in some US states and European countries.⁽³⁾

In Brazil, much of post-acute care and long-term chronic patient care is provided at home. Our organization provided home care to 2,931 patients in the first 3 months of the pandemic and reported only 31 cases of COVID-19 (1%) and six deaths. The low incidence of COVID-19 in this population reinforces that home care protects patients and lessens the risk of infections. Patients naturally remain at home isolation and are treated by a team of professionals in a directed way. This, together with proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and implementation of innovations (e.g. telemedicine), are key for safe care.

Shifting post-acute and chronic care to the household environment with the implementation of technology should be a recommended alternative.

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