

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The consequences of COVID-19 include various social, educational and economic damages on people. The pre-existing difficulties for the population in social vulnerability were potentiated, negatively affecting the well-being of children, adolescents and their families. Understanding well-being in the context of institutional care is relevant because they are children who were at risk, without the proper full protection that would guarantee them access to their rights. Institutionalization impacts both objective indicators of well-being and people's own subjective assessment of their lives. Added to the consequences of COVID-19, institutionalization makes up a scenario of important evaluation through listening to children and adolescents about the way they live and how they perceive the pandemic and the social support received. The social support network may assume an important protective role in the life of this population, considering its relevance in providing different types of support and in reinforcing individual skills associated with adapting to stressful situations. Recent literature points out that institutionalized children and adolescents who felt satisfied in their interpersonal relationships with colleagues and social educators during the pandemic period demonstrated high levels of subjective well-being. It is hypothesized that the social support network can act to strengthen aspects that help in the process of resignification and resilience, promoting the subjective well-being of this population. In this sense, the main objective of this study was to understand the perception of children and adolescents in institutional care about the relationship between the social support network and their subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a qualitative research with a cross-sectional design carried out with children and adolescents in institutional care between the ages of eight and 12 years old. Participants are from a non-governmental organization of a city in southern Brazil. Data were collected through two focus groups with boys (8) and girls (5) with an average of six participants each, organized by age group. The first was with children between 11 and 12 years old, and the second group involved children between 8 and 10 years old, with each focus group lasting around one hour. The analysis was carried out through reflective thematic analysis and the preliminary results indicate that social educators and siblings are the main people who compose the social support network, mainly providing affective and emotional support and contributing to their subjective well-being. It is expected to contribute to the discussion on how the social support network can be related to the promotion of subjective well-being during the pandemic period and to identify the main people who make up the social support network. The aim is to use the data to argue for the elaboration of

intervention strategies aimed at social protection, producing scientific knowledge in the psychosocial perspective of child well-being that promotes better life satisfaction for this population.

Keywords: Child, adolescent, institutional care, subjective well-being.