

DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.15446/RCP.V35N1.111511](https://doi.org/10.15446/RCP.V35N1.111511)

# Quality of Life and Covid-19 Pandemic Among Brazilian Older Gay Men: An Analysis of Psychosocial Aspects

**EVAIR MENDES DA SILVA SOUSA**

Universidade Federal do Delta do Parnaíba, Brazil

**LUDGLEYDSON FERNANDES DE ARAÚJO**

Universidade Federal do Delta do Parnaíba, Brazil

**MATEUS EGILSON DA SILVA ALVES**

Universidade Federal do Delta do Parnaíba, Brazil

**IGOR EDUARDO DE LIMA BEZERRA**

Universidade Federal do Delta do Parnaíba, Brazil

**CAROLINA ALCÂNTARA TEIXEIRA**

Universidade Federal do Delta do Parnaíba, Brazil

**LAÍSLA POLIANA CAMPOS GOMES**

Universidade Federal do Delta do Parnaíba, Brazil



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**How to cite this article:** Mendes da Silva Sousa, E., Fernandes de Araújo, L., Egilson da Silva Alves, M., Eduardo de Lima Bezerra, I., Alcantára Teixeira, C. & Poliana Campos Gomes, L. (2026). Quality of Life and Covid-19 Pandemic Among Brazilian Older Gay Men: An Analysis of Psychosocial Aspects. *Revista Colombiana de Psicología*, 35(1). <https://doi.org/10.15446/rp.v35n1.111511>

Correspondence: Evair Mendes da Silva Sousa (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4594-6110>). Email: [evairmendes@hotmail.com](mailto:evairmendes@hotmail.com)

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SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ARTICLE

RECEIVED: OCTOBER 9TH, 2023 - ACCEPTED: MARCH 26TH, 2024

### **Abstract**

This study aims to understand the social representations on the quality of life and the COVID-19 pandemic among Brazilian older gay men. The research has the participation of 21 Brazilian men, at an average age of 64 years old. Two instruments were used to the research: a sociodemographic questionnaire and a structured interview; those were analyzed through the software SPSS and IRAMUTEQ, respectively. A total of 4 classes of words were collected: Older Gay: Double Difficulty; COVID-19: Necessary Care; COVID-19: Implications of the Pandemic; Quality of Life: Definition and Reality in the Old Age. The SR showed a positive view and adherence to the protective measures against COVID-19, and the impacts of the pandemic in the lives of the participants and their quality of life, concerning the measures of social distancing. The participants also demonstrated the perception that the old age becomes a more difficult phase among gay men. The group present a positive understanding of their own quality of life.

*Keywords:* old age, gay, quality of life, COVID-19.

### **Calidad de Vida y Pandemia COVID-19 entre Hombres Mayores Homosexuales Brasileños: Un Análisis de los Aspectos Psicosociales**

#### **Resumen**

Este estudio tiene como objetivo comprender las representaciones sociales sobre la calidad de vida y la pandemia de COVID-19 entre los hombres mayores homosexuales brasileños. En la investigación participaron 21 hombres brasileños, con una edad media de 64 años. Se utilizaron dos instrumentos para la investigación: un cuestionario sociodemográfico y una entrevista estructurada, que se analizaron mediante los programas informáticos SPSS e IRAMUTEQ, respectivamente. Se recopilaron un total de cuatro clases de palabras: «Homosexuales mayores: doble dificultad»; «COVID-19: cuidados necesarios»; «COVID-19: implicaciones de la pandemia»; «Calidad de vida: definición y realidad en la vejez». La RS mostró una visión positiva y la adhesión a las medidas de protección contra la COVID-19, así como los impactos de la pandemia en la vida de los participantes y su calidad de vida, en relación con las medidas de distanciamiento social. Los participantes también demostraron la percepción de que la vejez se convierte en una etapa más difícil entre los hombres gays. El grupo presenta una comprensión positiva de su propia calidad de vida.

*Palabras clave:* vejez, gay, calidad de vida, COVID-19.

## Introduction

The old age is typically defined at around 60 years in less developed countries and 65 years in developed ones (Fonseca et al., 2020). The older people, individuals who are part of that age group, constitute the group that expands the most. Thereby, we have fewer children and more older people, which causes the modification of the age pyramid, at national and international level. This fact is connected to lower birth and death rates, as well as advances in political, social, and health care assistance areas (Borba Filho, 2022; Castellanos et al., 2022; Coutinho & Tomasi, 2020).

This way, according to the Brazilian Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies (DIESE, 2021), the number of older people in Brazil is close to 38 million, which corresponds to around 18% of the country's total population. This amount may increase in the next decades and until 2070 correspond to circa 35% of the total, according to the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2016). However, all that population dynamics reverberates in modifications at different social levels, evidencing that aging is an important issue to be discussed and studied in academic and scientific fields (Silva & Araújo, 2020). Moreover, the aging occurs in different ways among different populations, being affected by contextual differences on all the life cycle (Araújo et al., 2018).

Thus, biological, social, and psychological factors along the whole life are implicated in the process of human aging. Because of that, this phenomenon occurs in a heterogeneous and unique way to each subject, as Gomes et al., 2020 point out. Nevertheless, for a long time was aging seen solely thorough a biologizing bias; which focused on the physical losses and declines. This factor caused the maintenance of prejudice and discrimination related to the age, situation called ageism nowadays (Burnes et al., 2019; Nogueira & Boris, 2019). One of the most common stigmas in the old age is the idea of asexuality, i.e., the comprehension that elder people do not keep

an active sexuality (Fernandes-Eloi et al., 2020). That is a wrong perception, once that sexuality lasts all life, going beyond the intercourse, and being an indicator of higher levels of Quality of Life (QoL) (Jesus et al., 2019; Silva & Araújo, 2020). Sexuality in old age can be considered a complex phenomenon of a bio-psycho-socio-cultural nature, related not only to sexual activity but also to affective and romantic relationships (Araújo et al., 2023). Prejudice surrounding this contributes to the erasure of the subject and the feeling of shame in talking about sex (Fernandes-Eloi et al., 2020).

The stigma of the asexual old age corroborates even more to the social invisibility and erasure of beings who do not fit the heteronormative standard, i.e., the older LGBT people (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, cross-dressers, and transsexuals). Those individuals, during their life, are crossed by a double stigma. The first one is related to their age; the second, refers to their sexuality or gender identity. Those factors are related to the levels of QoL, welfare, and mental and physical health of that population (Fernandes-Eloi et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2018; Santos et al., 2020).

It is worth mentioning that only recently have scientific studies started to understand the specificities of older LGBT people; the interest in that issue has increased in the last years (Araújo, 2022; Henning, 2017). In that regard, those individuals have difficulties to access public and private health services, worsening the the state of physical and mental health of this population. Furthermore, they are the subjects most affected by mental disorders as anxiety and depression, and present higher rates of suicidal ideation, especially the trans people (Alves & Araújo, 2020; Kabir & Brinsworth, 2021; Slatch et al., 2018). In addition, the discrimination of older LGBT people happens even in the community itself, as the case of gay men. (Souza et. al., 2020).

In the gay community there is a physical standard, often impossible to have in the old age; that corroborates to the perpetuation of the internalized prejudice (Leal & Mendes, 2017). Research

points out that the internalized violence is related to body dissatisfaction, shame, depression, and eating disorders (Thepsourinthone et al., 2020). However, elder gay men cherish being in gay environments, considering the importance of friendship to keeping their mental and social health among those subjects. Due to homophobia, most of them live alone, with a restricted supporting network, which rarely includes their biological family (Oswald & Roulston, 2020).

On a recent study, Santos and Araújo (2020) highlight the relation among the aging of gay men, their sexual orientation, and homophobia. The authors show that there is a lower number of gay men in the old age, as a result of violent deaths because of the prejudice and suicide. Besides that, the authors also point out the development of risky sexual behaviors as precipitating causes of the invisibility of those subjects.

In this sense, the homoaffective old age is an invisible topic, and its discussion becomes sensitive; that fact can be related to the social-historic processes through which the topic crosses. It should be noted the inclusion of homosexuality as a pathology in the diagnostic manuals, or also the oppressive situation experienced in the context of the military dictatorship in Brazil (Gomes et al., 2020). Remains of a culture of fear are evidenced; they still have been lingering in the current cohort, even though some advances can be noticed in relation to the homosexual people rights.

This way, it can be noticed that older gay people do not age in the same way as heterosexual and cisgender people do. Although older heterosexual people face barriers, those difficulties are attenuated among individuals who are not part of minority groups (Alves & Araújo, 2020; Gomes et al., 2020; Oswald & Roulston, 2020). In the meantime, it is necessary to adopt an intersectional perspective in the production and in the investigation of this study, as previously pointed out by Araújo (2022). The intersectionality theories start from the understanding that the different factors related to the maintenance of power and

oppression structures are intertwined. Thus, the factors often add to each other, as older gay, which can be inserted in other socially vulnerable groups (Buchanan & Wiklund, 2021).

The intersectional discussion on that topic becomes even more pertinent considering the current context of the pandemic, caused by COVID-19. The abrupt changes caused by the pandemic affect the older population directly, especially because it presents more risks for aggravating psychoaffective and psychosocial demands (Castro et al., 2020). Among the various harms caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the older population, the exacerbation of negative emotions, as loneliness, insomnia, anxiety, and depression, stand out. The restriction of social interactions, imposed as a preventive measure, is closely linked to these effects (Moraes et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2021). Additionally, the widespread notion that only older adults were vulnerable to severe outcomes from the virus contributed to heightened, as they were classified as a high-risk group (Hammerschmidt & Santana, et al., 2020).

Moreover, the older people, mainly the ones who are part of social minority groups, are subjected to a policy of death. Thereby sometimes older people are seen as being insignificant and possible to be sacrificed, even from the perspective of the State (Henning, 2020; Swift & Chasteen, 2021). COVID-19 is an infectious disease, caused by the new coronavirus, SARS-Cov-2, the virus responsible for the pandemic officially announced by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March of 2020 (Nandasena et al., 2022). Nowadays, the world witnesses the reduction of death rates and infections, mainly due to the vaccines against COVID-19. However, it is important to evaluate the impacts of the pandemic, in the medium and in the long terms, indicating higher rates of psychiatric sickening and reduction of the welfare and of the QoL (Bourmistrova et al., 2022; Hansel et al., 2022).

The concept of the QoL is associated with the physical and mental health state, as well as the

independence level and the social relationships of each individual. Other aspects related to QoL are economic factors and life style, as the consumption of alcohol and other drugs, diet, and practice of physical activities (Ferreira et al., 2018). The older people's QoL is characterized as a core factor for intervention, once that it embraces aspects like the relation with themselves, with their context, and with the society (Castro et al., 2021).

In that aspect, the theory of the Social Representations (SRT) is pertinent to understand QoL and COVID-19 pandemic. The SRT is based on the knowledge shared in the common sense, in a process of individual-collective communication to make known something new, and to interpret the social reality (Jodelet, 2018; Moscovici, 2007). Likewise, the SR are divided in different approaches. Procedural approach: based on qualitative processes; and structural approach: which seeks to identify the structure of the SR (González et al., 2018). Moreover, SR are constituted from two basic processes. The first is the primary process in which newly arrived knowledge is linked to previous elements, endowed with values. Secondly, objectification occurs, a process in which the representation is concretized and externalized, becoming part of reality (Phillips & Cassidy, 2023).

This way, this pioneering study's scope is identifying and understanding the comprehension that Brazilian older gay men have of the COVID-19 pandemic and QoL. To this end, it is based from an intersectional view, based on the theory of social representations. So as to contribute to the development of news studies from an intersectional perspective, as well as the visibility of these individuals in the field of public policies.

## Method

### Investigation type

This is a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive study, with transversal data. The sampling is non-probabilistic by convenience, once the participants agreed to participate voluntarily.

### Participants

A total of 21 older Brazilian gay men participated of the study. The sample size was based on a study carried out by Santos and Araújo (2021) on the SR among older gay men, which used a similar data analysis. See table 1 in results for more details. It should be noted that the results obtained are specific to sample and the context of this study and, therefore, cannot be generalized.

### Instruments

To collect the data, two instruments were used: a sociodemographic questionnaire, to characterize the participants' profile (it has data on gender, age, marital status, schooling, monthly income, religiosity, sexual orientation, health, transportation, and dwelling conditions, as well as aspects related to the infection by COVID-19). The second instrument was a structured interview, consisting of questions about the perception of the old age of gay men in Brazil, and about the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications to the QoL of older gay men.

### Ethical procedures

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of Universidade Federal do Piauí, under opinion document n° 942097. The Free and Informed Consent Form was presented to the participants before the research began, assuring them the confidentiality and the safety in their participation. In addition, the nature of the study and the possible risks of their participation were explained. Thus, the ethical criteria for research involving human beings were followed in accordance with resolutions 510/16 and 466/12, and, in particular, circular 01/2021 of the National Health Council, which addresses research involving human beings conducted in the virtual environment.

### Data collection

The data collection was carried out online by means of a virtual form and video calls. The

participants were contacted via social networks, as Instagram and Facebook and the application Grindr. In addition, posts announcing the research were published so that those interested in participating in the study could contact the researchers and answer the questionnaires. In the case of the Grindr app, the researchers created an official profile for the study, in which the profile continued information about the research and the promotional post was used as the profile photo. In this way, the app was filtered by age +60, displaying and contacting only those aged 60 or over. The “snow ball” technique was also used, when a participant suggested other possible participants. After the initial talk to present the study and to invite the person to participate, the Free and Informed Consent Term was explained. After the participants agreed upon it, the sociodemographic questionnaire was applied, followed by the structured interview. The total application time was, in average, 10 minutes for them to answer the online form, and 25 minutes for the interviews via video-calls.

It is also worth to mention that all the study, including its instruments and the participants’ responses, was carried out in Brazilian Portuguese. When the study report was completely finished, it was translated into English language.

### Data analysis

To analyze the interviews they were grouped into a textual database saved in txt. UTF-8 format. This database is organized using command lines that characterize each participant. Furthermore, the responses were separated into thematic lines; each interview question corresponds to a research topic to be categorized in the database. The data of the sociodemographic data were analyzed through the software SPSS for Windows, version 21.0; it provides descriptive statistics to characterize the population of participants. The data from the structured interview were analyzed by the software Iramuteq version 0.7, from the Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC). The software Iramuteq is use-free; it was created in 2013, and can be used for various analysis approaches of text data, by means of quantitative data, similar to content analysis (Sousa, 2021).

### Results and discussion

The participants had an average age of 64 years; most of them are white (76%); catholic (52%); single (62%); do not have children (71%); live alone (47%); are retired (62%); still work (66%); have an average income above six minimal wages (57%); and live in the Brazilian State of São Paulo (52%), see table 1.

**Table 1**

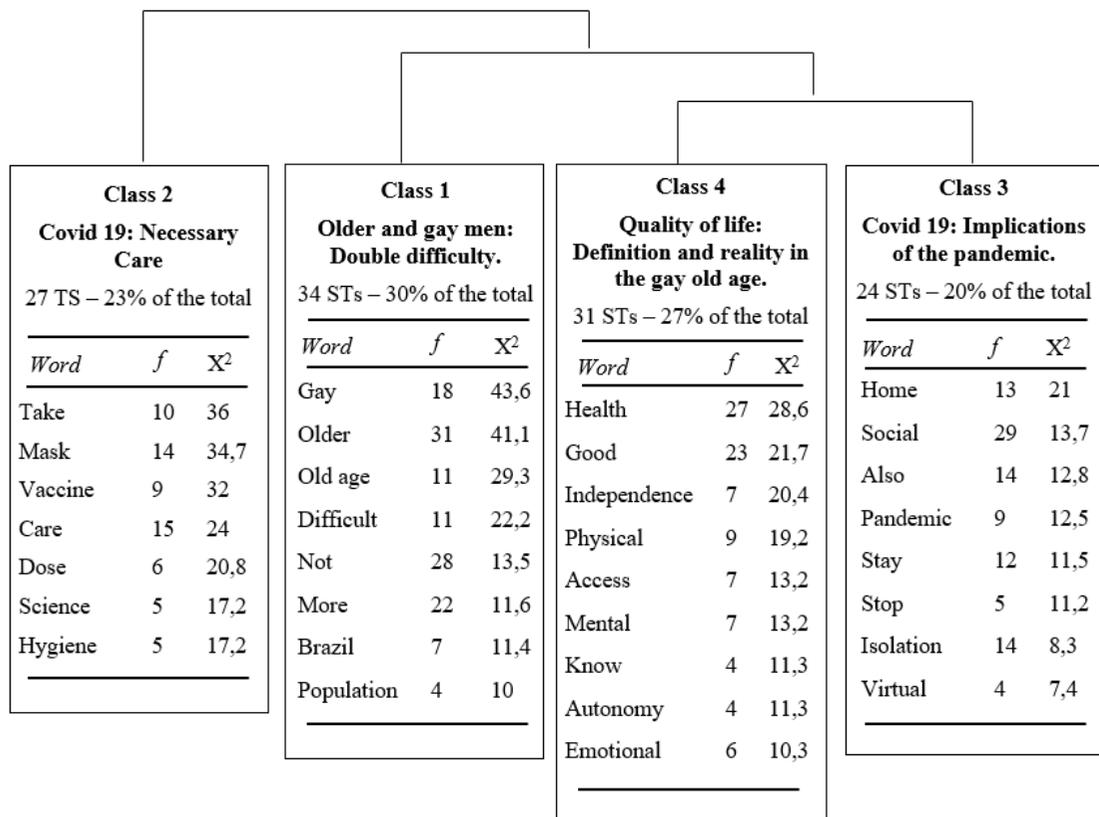
*Sociodemographic data of older gay men*

Sociodemographic data	
Religion	Monthly income
Catholic: 52,4%	Up to 1 minimal wage: 4,8%
Kardecist: 14,3%	Among 2 and 4 minimum wages: 28,6%
Spiritualist: 4,8%	Among 4 and 5 minimum wages: 9,5%
None: 28,5%	Above 6 minimum wages: 57,1%
Schooling	Professional Status
Secondary School: 14,3%	Do not work: 33,3%
Higher Education: 47,6%	Formal job: 61,9%
Specialization: 38,1%	Informal job: 4,8%
Lives with	Retired
Alone: 47,6%	Yes: 62%
Spouse: 23,8%	No: 38%
Relatives: 23,8%	
Friends: 4,8%	
Marital Status	Quantity of children
Single: 61,9%	None: 71,5%
Married: 4,8%	1 child: 19%
Common-law marriage: 19%	Between 2 and 5 children: 9,5%
Divorced: 4,8%	
Widow: 9,5%	

The data from the structured interview were grouped in a data bank that constitutes the text corpus, composed of 21 texts (interviews). From the analysis employed, the material was grouped in 116 text segments (TS), which compose 4 distinct word classes: Class 1 – 34 TS (30%); Class 2 – 27 TS (23%); Class 3 – 24 TS (20%); Class 4 – 31 TS

(27%). Below a dendrogram is presented. That is an illustrative figure containing data of the composition and organization of each class (see Figure 1). After that, the classes presented are described and discussed, considering the order of the classes participation in the subcorpus, the frequency of the words (*F*) and the chi-square test ( $X^2$ ).

**Figure 1.** Illustrative Dendrogram: QoL and COVID-19 pandemic among older gay men.



*Class 2: COVID-19 – Necessary care.*

This class is composed of 27 TS, which corresponds to 23% of the total. Among the words that belong to the class, the following ones can be highlighted: Take (*F*: 10;  $X^2$ : 36); Mask (*F*:14;  $X^2$ : 34.7); Vaccine (*F*: 9;  $X^2$ : 32); Care (*F*: 15;  $X^2$ : 24); Dose (*F*: 6;  $X^2$ : 20.8); Science (*F*: 5;  $X^2$ : 17.2); Hygiene (*F*: 5;  $X^2$ : 17.2). The set of words collected in this class demonstrate the representation shared

by the group in relation of the importance of the care to avoid getting infected by COVID-19. Among the measures pointed out as important and necessary, vaccination, wearing face masks, and hygienizing the hands using alcohol gel sanitizers are highlighted.

*“It is important to take precautions, wear a mask and get all the vaccines”.*

*(Jaime, 64 Years old)*

Within the pandemic context, a higher risk of having COVID-19-related complications is evidenced among older people, including a higher risk of deadly cases. Thus, the prevention measures became especially necessary to that population. This way, literature data point out that older people with comorbidities, i.e., other diseases, tend to be more open to follow prevention measures (Filho et al., 2021; Batista et al., 2020). That can be related to the data presented in this paper, once that the biggest part of the participants had comorbidities as hypertension (14%); HIV (33%); asthma (10%).

Likewise, the higher level of adherence to the preventive measures would possibly be related to the fear of infection and its serious damage to their health (Filho et al., 2021). Furthermore, the international literature indicates that older people are more exposed to negative emotions and psychological distress due to the pandemic (Santini et al., 2020). That fact also evidences two important aspects: the lack of a proper structure of the health service system and the structural ageism. Thus, all around the world, with the imminence of lack of resources, the older people were seen as disposable lives, an explicit death policy that can be related to the fear they have developed (Henning, 2020; Swift & Chasteen, 2021). In addition, the image of older people was associated with the stereotype of death in relation to the categorization of that population as a group of risk (Hammerschmidt & Santana, 2020).

*Class 1: Older and gay: double difficulty.*

This class is formed of 34 TS (30% of the total), characterizing itself as the most expressive of the study. The main elements that compose it are: Gay ( $F: 18; X^2: 43.6$ ); Older ( $F: 31; X^2: 41.1$ ); Old age ( $F: 11; X^2: 29.3$ ); Difficult ( $F: 11; X^2: 22.3$ ); Not ( $F: 28; X^2: 13.5$ ), More ( $F: 22; X^2: 11.6$ ); Brazil ( $F: 7; X^2: 11.4$ ); Population ( $F: 4; X^2: 10$ ). This class presents a dual view of the old age in a general way and of the gay men's old age. The old age is conceived as something difficult to every person, especially due to the lack of assistance in the Brazilian context.

However, specificities that affect the gay population are evidenced, as prejudice and loneliness, because they are surrounded by a double stigmatization.

*"I think that old gay people are more despised by their families and by the society. They are not respected, because there is prejudice and rejection against gays".*

*(Francisco, 61 Years old)*

According to the literature, with the intense growth of the older population worldwide, the old age belatedly became the focus of discussions, aiming at assuring the rights of that population. However, until nowadays, stereotyped views of that life stage still remain in our society. This way, older people are still victims of discrimination and invisibility, once that they tend to be seen as useless. In this sense, the older people need more attention and care from the State (Minayo et al., 2021; Nogueira & Boris, 2019). When the discussion is specifically on the lives of the older LGBT people, more difficulties can be noticed (Gomes et al., 2020).

The ageism, i.e., the discrimination due to the age, has become even more intense and explicit in the pandemic context, as evidenced previously (Burnes et al., 2019; Swift & Chasteen, 2021). The ageism and the death policies are more intense among who are part of minority groups, as older gay men. It evidences the weight of the double stigmatization on the lives of those individuals in the COVID-19 pandemic (Henning, 2020).

Furthermore, Rabelo and Diogo (2024) point out that public policies, despite their limitations, should ensure a dignified aging process, considering specificities of those who are aging, as social vulnerabilities or health conditions like HIV. According to the authors despite the increasing rates of older adults infected with HIV, these individuals are rarely included in campaigns or policies addressing this issue. In this sense, it is clear that the implementation of policies regarding comprehensive health care of the older adults has not kept pace with the growing number of older population in Brazil (Ferreira et al., 2024).

*Class 4: Quality of life: definition and reality in the gay old age.*

Class 4 was composed of 31 TS (27% of the total). The main elements of this class are: Health ( $F: 27; X^2: 28.6$ ); Good ( $F: 23; X^2: 21.7$ ); Independence ( $F: 7; X^2: 20.4$ ); Physical ( $F: 9; X^2: 19.2$ ); Access ( $F: 7; X^2: 13.2$ ); Mental ( $F: 7; X^2: 13.2$ ); Know ( $F: 4; X^2: 11.3$ ); Autonomy ( $F: 4; X^2: 11.3$ ); Emotional ( $F: 6; X^2: 10.3$ ). This class is based on the topic “quality of life”, comprising how the participants understand that topic. This way, evidence the independence, autonomy, and integral health as the main elements to define QoL. Moreover, the class demonstrates the comprehension of their own QoL in comparison with other older people, in a way that the participants affirm having a good QoL.

“It is being able to enjoy life with health and physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being, with autonomy and financial independence”.

(Carlos, 61 Years old)

Concerning that, what has been learned from other scientific studies can be corroborated. That QoL is a broad concept, embracing conceptions of physical, mental and social health, as well as life style (Ferreira et al., 2018). In the old age, the QoL is a concept related to independence, or the capacity of being the protagonist of one’s own aging process. Those concepts can be intensively noticed in the representations shared by the participants of the study.

Regarding the QoL of older LGBT people, the economic aspect is fundamental, as Wang et al. (2021) point out. Considering the positive perception of the QoL, it is possible to relate it to economic features. It is highlighted that once that 57% of the participants have a monthly income above 6 minimal wages. Nevertheless, it is common that older LGBT people are unemployed or have a low income, mainly when they live multiple vulnerabilized roles. Those older people are subjected to different risk situations, as difficulties to assure their health and socioeconomic resources (Kim et al. 2017; Wang et al. 2021).

*Class 3: COVID-19: Implications of the pandemic.*

Finally, Class 3 is composed of TS, corresponding to 20% of the total. Among its elements, the following ones are highlighted: Home ( $F: 13; X^2: 21$ ); Social ( $F: 29; X^2: 13.7$ ); Also ( $F: 14; X^2: 12.8$ ); Pandemic ( $F: 9; X^2: 12.5$ ); Stay ( $F: 12; X^2: 11.5$ ); Stop ( $F: 5; X^2: 11.2$ ); Isolation ( $F: 14; X^2: 8.3$ ); Virtual ( $F: 4; X^2: 7.4$ ). In this section, the understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic is evidenced, especially in relation to the implications to the daily routine and to the QoL of the participants. The participants’ answers converge into a common aspect: the social distancing measures employed to contain the virus dissemination.

“The pandemic restricted my ability to travel, which was very important to me. I also couldn’t visit my family; I was struck at home due to the social isolation that was necessary”.

(Inácio, 63 Years old)

Within the pandemic context, Brazil started to follow sanitary measures as social distancing and interruption of collective activities (Hammer-schmidt & Santana, 2020). According to Castro et al. (2020), the changes caused by the pandemic affect directly the older population; this way, those individuals are at a higher risk of having aggravations of psychoaffective and psychosocial demands in the current pandemic context.

Measures as social distancing may be related to feelings of loneliness, insomnia, anxiety, loss of appetite, and depression (Moraes et al., 2020). Additionally, sanitary measures imposed by the pandemic impact more strongly on socialization. This is an aspect that affects all the generational groups, but mainly the older people, because they tend more to live alone, having more difficulty to communicate remotely/on-line (Silva et al., 2021).

The social support is thus characterized as the most worrying aspect among gay men, especially in the pandemic context. This population is more likely to live without a spouse, and without their biological family support. This way, gay men have a kind of chosen family in their friendship

relations (Oswald & Roulston, 2020). It is worth to highlight that around 47% of the participants live alone, 60% are single, and 70% do not have any children.

In this regard, the importance of including the discussion of intersectionality in the creation and implementation of public policies emerges. In the Brazilian context, policies aimed at the LGBT population began to rise in the 2000s. However, there are still few that establish a dialogue between these population and topics as aging and old age (Sousa & Araújo, 2024). The role of healthcare professionals is especially important from this perspective, considering not only the creation but also effectiveness of these regulations, particularly in the post-pandemic context (Rabelo & Diogo, 2024).

Representations related to the gay old age can be noticed, including the difficulties that they face and the reality of the population studied. The participants present a positive comprehension of their own QoL, fact which is possibly justified by their schooling level and high monthly income. Moreover, the comprehension also addresses aspects related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this case, was evidenced the adhesion of that population to the prevention measures and the implications of distancing measures in their QoL.

### **Final remarks**

The present study has discussed the COVID-19 pandemic and the QoL among older gay men. It aimed to understand the SR shared by this group, considering the invisibility and the stigmatization that tend to affect their lives, particularly in the pandemic context. Thus, by directly listening to older gay men, this research amplified the voices of a group often overlooked in scientific literature, especially in non-English-speaking countries like Brazil.

The representations identified focused on three main themes: 1. COVID-19, with the necessary care and its implications on the daily lives and on the QoL; 2. QoL, evidencing the reality of

the population studied and the comprehension shared on the topic; 3. Old age and gay old age, comprising the representations shared about the common aspects and the specificities of the gay men. The study population shares SR in favor of the measures against the COVID-19; like hygiene methods, use of face mask, and vaccination. In this sense, one can highlight the influence of the ageism to the perpetuation of negative feelings, as fear. It can also be observed that the implications of social distancing should be a warning to that population. These measures led to greater isolation, especially considering that most participants live alone and are single.

Likewise, the representations suggest that old age is perceived as a difficult stage. This view seems to be related to the perception of a lack of state assistance, mainly among older gay men, who are affected by multiple stigmas. Moreover, the group studied sees their own QoL as good, in comparison with other older people. This is possibly related to their economic conditions, for the participants have a high education level and a high income.

Because of the study's characteristics, which is solely qualitative, with non-probabilistic convenience sampling, it is limited in relation to the data presented. One limitation of the study is the impossibility of generalizing the findings. Furthermore, the data collection was exclusively virtual, which on the one hand allows for a broader data collection across different regions of the country, but on the other hand exposes the risk of excluding individuals with less access to the internet, especially when considering older population. In this sense, participants' specificities can be highlighted, as high education and income levels, as well as the prevalence of older white men can be highlighted. This way, in future studies, the use of mixed collection (virtual and in-person), would allow for variability in the samples, which, in turn, could end up in different results, allowing the perception of different realities and the possibility to notice more intersected experiences.

Finally, this study may contribute to the development of other investigations about the older gay men's QoL and the implications of the COVID-19 pandemics on their QoL. Besides that, the study contributes to the establishment of public policies that can support advances in care for the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and the QoL of that population. Therefore, it indicates the need to, above all, consider intersectional factors when creating public policies, but also to develop comprehensive health care actions, encouraging professional improvement and the life-long development, as well as socialization spaces; also approximating that population to the virtual spaces by means of incentive and betterment of the use of communication technologies.

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