INSEGURANÇA ALIMENTAR NO CENÁRIO DA PANDEMIA DO COVID-19

FOOD INSECURITY IN THE PANDEMIC SCENARIO OF COVID-19

Maria Elisabeth Medeiros Feitosa¹
Jéssica Maria Silva Leal¹
Guilherme Correia Alcantara¹
Roberta Larissa Rolim Fidelis²,³
Élida Mara Braga Rocha²

Food and Nutritional Security (FNS) concerns the right to quality and sufficient food, in a comprehensive, regular and continuous manner. In this sense, the non-compliance with this right promotes the situation of Food and Nutritional Insecurity (FNI), a situation of great importance in public health¹ that deserves special attention before the current crisis of COVID-19 faced worldwide.

The pandemic of the new Coronavirus is a situation that puts millions of people around the world at risk of FNI, especially in the case of populations already suffering from hunger and malnutrition before the arrival of the virus. The prerogative of social remoteness as a way to reduce the number of infected affected, in many cases, the main source of income for families, thus hindering the guarantee of access to food and endangering food security².

It is possible to observe failures in food systems, considering that 820 million people are currently starving, despite the existence of enough food for the entire world population². This whole situation is due to a structural and conjuncture model that affects, above all, the most vulnerable populations, resulting from the deconstruction of public policies and reduction of social spending³.

The virus affects people without discrimination; however, it is responsible for causing social impacts, which, in particular, exposed the weakening of the food security net and the emergency of investing in means to protect it, evidencing an adversity that remained hidden.

The occurrence of the health crisis can trigger a rapid expansion in the number of people with food insecurity. According to the Summary of the “Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition”, launched by the United Nations, the estimated value of people experiencing extreme poverty can reach 49 million more people in 2020, and in 2030, almost triple, reaching over 130 million extra people going through this experience³.

These estimates point to the main cause, the economic crisis, which may last even after the control and stabilization of the incidence of COVID-19 cases, expanding hunger statistics and considerably reducing FNS, as occurred in Brazil during the political and financial crisis that occurred from 2015 to 2017, due to the extent of unemployment numbers and a decrease in the purchasing power of families⁴.

Health measures to control the COVID-19 outbreak already cause disruptions in global food supply chains⁵. Uncertainty about food availability can cause a wave of export restrictions, changing the balance between food supply and demand, resulting in price increases and an additional difficulty for those already experiencing FNI⁶.

That said, keeping the food system alive is essential so that the health crisis does not become a food crisis with serious consequences. Ensuring the right to food for those in the most urgent states is paramount to cope with these profound structural changes and enable livelihoods to save lives in the pandemic scenario.

REFERENCES


¹ Núcleo de Estudos em Ciências Fisiológicas e da Coletividade (NUEFC), Centro Universitário de Juazeiro do Norte - UNJUAZEIRO, Juazeiro do Norte - CE, Brasil. E-mail: elisabeth.feitosa09@gmail.com
³ Programa de Bolsa de Iniciação Científica do CNPq (PBIC/CNPq)

