

## **INFORMATION DISORDER IN TIMES OF CRISIS: SCOPE REVIEW PROTOCOL**

## **DESORDEM INFORMATACIONAL EM TEMPOS DE CRISE: PROTOCOLO DE REVISÃO DE ESCOPO**

## **DESORDEN DE LA INFORMACIÓN EN TIEMPOS DE CRISIS: PROTOCOLO DE REVISIÓN DEL ALCANCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Objective: to map the literature on information disorder faced by the population during the COVID-19 pandemic. Method: the protocol will follow the methodological proposal designated by the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) and the recommendations for developing scoping reviews from the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Protocols - extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR). Searches will be conducted in the following databases: LILACS, PUBMED, MEDLINE, EMBASE, and SCOPUS, WEB OF SCIENCE, and in the gray literature in the Theses and Dissertations Database of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). A search strategy was developed and adapted for each database, from 2020 to 2025, with no language restrictions, full text. Articles will be selected by two independent reviewers. Results: data will be extracted from the selected articles using a standardized form. The full texts of the included articles will be read and analyzed according to the eligibility criteria. The results will be presented in a flowTable and narrative summary, following the PRISMA-ScR guidelines. Conclusion: the scoping review generated through this protocol is expected to present the general state of scientific evidence and identify gaps that need further study on the topic under investigation.

**Keywords:** Information Disorder. Covid-19. Scoping Review. Misinformation.

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## RESUMO

Objetivo: mapear a literatura sobre desordem informacional durante a pandemia de COVID-19 enfrentada pela população. Método: o protocolo seguirá a proposta metodológica designada pelo Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) e as recomendações para elaboração de revisões de escopo do Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Protocols - extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR). Serão realizadas buscas nas bases de dados: LILACS, PUBMED, MEDLINE, EMBASE e SCOPUS, WEB OF SCIENCE, e na literatura cinzenta no Banco de Teses e Dissertações da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES). Desenvolveu-se uma estratégia de busca que será adaptada para cada base de dados. no período 2020 a 2025, sem restrição de idiomas, texto completo. Os artigos serão selecionadas por dois revisores independentes. Resultados: os dados serão extraídos dos artigos selecionados por meio de formulário padronizado. Os textos completos dos artigos incluídos serão lidos e analisados conforme os critérios de elegibilidade. Os resultados serão apresentados em fluxograma e resumo narrativo, seguindo as diretrizes do PRISMA-ScR. Conclusão: espera-se que a revisão de escopo a ser gerada por meio deste protocolo apresente o estado geral das evidências científicas e identifique as lacunas que precisam ser estudadas sobre o tema investigado.

**Palavras-chave:** Desordem Informacional. Covid-19. Revisão de Escopo. Desinformação.

## RESUMEN

Objetivo: Mapear la literatura sobre el desorden de la información que enfrenta la población durante la pandemia de COVID-19. Método: El protocolo seguirá la propuesta metodológica designada por el Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) y las recomendaciones para desarrollar revisiones de alcance de los Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Protocols - extensión para revisiones de alcance (PRISMA-ScR). Las búsquedas se realizarán en las siguientes bases de datos: LILACS, PUBMED, MEDLINE, EMBASE y SCOPUS, WEB OF SCIENCE, y en la literatura gris en la Base de Datos de Tesis y Disertaciones de la Coordinación para el Perfeccionamiento del Personal de Nivel Superior (CAPES). Se desarrolló y adaptó una estrategia de búsqueda para cada base de datos. El período de 2020 a 2025, sin restricciones de idioma, texto completo. Los artículos serán seleccionados por dos revisores independientes. Resultados: Los datos se extraerán de los artículos seleccionados utilizando un formulario estandarizado. Los textos completos de los artículos incluidos se leerán y analizarán de acuerdo con los criterios de elegibilidad. Los resultados se presentarán en un diagrama de flujo y un resumen narrativo, siguiendo las directrices PRISMA-ScR. Conclusión: Se espera que la revisión exploratoria generada mediante este protocolo presente el estado general de la evidencia científica e identifique las lagunas que requieren mayor estudio sobre el tema investigado.

**Palabras clave:** Trastorno de la Información. Covid-19. Revisión Exploratoria. Desinformación.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Informational disorder during the pandemic emerges as a complex phenomenon, characterized by the massive dissemination of false, inaccurate, and misleading information in a context of global health crisis (Teixeira, et al. 2023). This scenario has been driven by the rapid spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the demand for accurate and reliable information to understand, prevent, and manage the spread of COVID-19.

However, the "overabundance" of informational sources, the diversity of digital platforms, and the speed of data sharing have created an environment conducive to the rampant spread of disinformation (Crestani, 2023). Misinformation has ranged from false cures and conspiracy theories to exaggerations about the severity of the virus, undermining public trust in authoritative sources such as health institutions, governments, and scientists.

This informational disorder has profoundly affected people's ability to make informed decisions, compromising adherence to public health measures, acceptance of vaccines, understanding of the real risks of the disease, and even trust in government and scientific guidance. This informational chaos has generated an environment of uncertainty and confusion, hindering people's ability to discern between what is true and what is false, what is scientifically proven and what is mere speculation, thus compromising the effectiveness of strategies to prevent and manage the spread of the virus.

The overlap between the health emergency and the flood of conflicting and often contradictory information has created an environment for distrust, hesitation, and even disregard for public health measures. Individuals were faced with a flood of information, not always based on solid scientific evidence, and the difficulty in discerning the veracity of this information had a direct impact on adherence to health recommendations, acceptance of vaccines, and understanding of the severity of the pandemic.

The pandemic has awakened this phenomenon, leveraging the sharing of false, manipulative or misleading content about covid-19 on social networks. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an infodemic is affecting people's lives in all areas, especially in health, thus classifying misinformation as one of the biggest threats to global health. (Carrieri et al, 2019).

Based on the studies of Bolesina and Gervasoni (2020), Carvalho, Sousa and Schneider (2021), Gomes (2022) and Goulart (2023), significant hypotheses emerge about informational disorder during the pandemic. First, it is considered that the overabundance and diversity of information sources, combined with the speed of information propagation

through digital networks, contributed to the massive dissemination of disinformation. The hypothesis raised is that the expansion of communication channels, although it can facilitate access to legitimate information, also opens space for the circulation of false, inaccurate or misleading content, creating a scenario conducive to informational disorder.

The importance of this study lies in the possibility of offering valuable information for the construction of preventive and corrective measures aimed at information management during emergency situations. By understanding the factors that contribute to the spread of disinformation, as well as its implications for individual and collective decisions, it becomes feasible to develop more efficient communication and media education strategies.

In view of the above, the objective of this manuscript is to present a scoping review protocol, which aims to map the literature on informational disorder during the COVID-19 pandemic faced by the population.

## 2 METHOD

This scoping review protocol will be carried out in accordance with the methodological proposal designated by the *Joanna Briggs Institute* (JBI) (PETER, 2020) for the type of study in question and will follow the recommendations of the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Protocols* - extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (TRICCO, 2018). The protocol of this review was registered in the *Open Science Framework* (OSF) platform, under DOI: [10.17605/OSF.IO/Y4C2B](https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/Y4C2B).

The acronym PCC (Population, Concept and Context) was used to prepare the research question (Peters et al, 2020) a) with regard to the population: adult individuals; b) regarding the concept: informational disorder c) regarding the context: studies that portray the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of this, the research question of this scoping review is as follows: "What is the available evidence on the informational disorder faced by individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic?

## 3 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The definition of the eligibility criteria will follow the acronym PCC (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Study eligibility. Rio de Janeiro, RJ.2025*

Inclusion Criteria
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Population	individuals exposed to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Concept	informational disorder, including misinformation, misinformation, and information overload.
Context	period of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2025), in any geographical or social setting.
Types of evidence source	Scientific articles available in full, with no language restrictions.

Source: Authors.

Studies that do not directly address the informational disorder associated with COVID-19, works that are not available in full, publications without a clear methodology or sufficient data, as well as opinion articles, editorials, comments, reviews, and letters to the editor devoid of empirical basis will be excluded. Duplicates, evidence prior to 2020, and research that does not focus on misinformation will also be disregarded, even if it mentions the pandemic tangentially.

#### 4 SEARCH STRATEGY

The search strategy will be directed to recruit published studies, using combinations between descriptors and words contained in titles, abstracts and keywords of pertinent articles on the subject in order to form a search strategy in PubMed/Medline (Table 2), which will later be adapted to each database (Table 3). The references contained in the articles found will also be considered.

**Table 2**

*Search strategy - MEDLINE/ PUBMED (search conducted July 15, 2025) Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil*

QUEST	KEYWORDS	TOTAL
Medline/ PubMed	((("Infodemiology"[MeSH] OR "Misinformation"[MeSH] OR "Disinformation"[tiab] OR "Fake News"[tiab] OR "Informational Disorder"[tiab] OR "Information Overload"[MeSH] OR "Information Overload"[tiab] OR "Vulnerability to Misinformation"[tiab] OR "Data Saturation"[tiab])) AND ((("COVID-19"[MeSH] OR "COVID-19"[tiab] OR "SARS-CoV-2"[tiab] OR "Coronavirus Disease 2019"[tiab] OR "2019-nCoV"[tiab] OR "New Coronavirus"[tiab] OR "Coronavirus Pandemic"[tiab] OR "COVID Pandemic"[tiab]))	119

Source: Authors.

**Table 3***Search strategy - (search conducted July 15, 2025) Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil*

Database	Search String	Collection Date	Findings
PubMed/ MEDLINE	("COVID-19"[MeSH Terms] OR "SARS-CoV-2"[MeSH Terms] OR "Pandemics"[MeSH Terms] OR "Coronavirus Infections"[MeSH Terms] OR "COVID-19"[tiab] OR "SARS-CoV-2"[tiab] OR "Coronavirus Disease 2019"[tiab] OR "2019-nCoV"[tiab] OR "New Coronavirus"[tiab] OR "Coronavirus Pandemic"[tiab] OR "COVID Pandemic"[tiab]) AND ("Misinformation"[MeSH Terms] OR "Information Dissemination"[MeSH Terms] OR "Information Seeking Behavior"[MeSH Terms] OR "Health Literacy"[MeSH Terms] OR "Rumors"[MeSH Terms] OR "Infodemic"[tiab] OR "Fake News"[tiab] OR "Digital Information Exposure"[tiab] OR "Informational Disorder"[tiab] OR "Disinformation"[tiab] OR "Informational Vulnerability"[tiab] OR "Data Saturation"[tiab] OR "Information Overload"[tiab])	15/07/2025	310
Embase	('covid-19'/exp OR 'sars-related coronavirus'/exp OR 'pandemic'/exp OR 'coronavirus infection'/exp OR 'coronavirus disease 2019'/exp OR '2019-ncov'/exp OR 'new coronavirus' OR 'covid pandemic') AND ('misinformation'/exp OR 'information dissemination'/exp OR 'information seeking behavior'/exp) AND 'health literacy'/exp OR 'rumor' OR 'information overload'/exp OR 'infodemic'/exp OR 'fake news'/exp OR 'digital information exposure' OR 'informational disorder')	15.07.2025	41
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "COVID-19" OR "SARS-CoV-2" OR "Coronavirus Disease 2019" OR "2019-nCoV" OR "New Coronavirus" OR "Coronavirus Pandemic" OR "COVID Pandemic") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Infodemic" OR "Fake News" OR "Digital Information Exposure" OR "Informational Disorder" OR "Disinformation" OR "Informational Vulnerability") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Health Literacy" ) )	15.07.2025	202
Web of Science	TI=( "COVID-19" OR "SARS-CoV-2" OR "Coronavirus Disease 2019" OR "2019-ncov" OR "New Coronavirus" OR "Coronavirus Pandemic" OR "COVID Pandemic" ) AND TS=( "Infodemic" OR "Fake News" OR "Digital Information Exposure" OR "Informational Disorder" OR "Disinformation" OR "Informational Vulnerability" OR "Data Saturation" OR "Information Overload" OR "Misinformation" OR "Health Literacy" OR "Information Seeking Behavior" )	15.07.2025	435
LILACS via VHL	("COVID-19" OR "SARS-CoV-2" OR "Coronavirus Disease 2019" OR "Novel Coronavirus" OR "Coronavirus Pandemic") AND ("Infodemic" OR "Misinformation" OR "Fake News" OR "Digital Information Exposure" OR "Information Disorder" OR "Information Overload" OR "Health Literacy")	15.07.2025	217

Source: Authors.

## 5 SELECTION OF STUDIES

The titles and abstracts of the materials found will be read exhaustively, excluding those that do not meet the objective of the review. The other materials will be read in full and selected based on their relevance in relation to the guiding question and the inclusion/exclusion criteria. In the event of divergences during the search and/or selection,

consensus will be sought between the two reviewers and, if this is not possible, a third reviewer will be invited to resolve them.

## 6 DATA COLLECTION

The data of the selected materials will be mapped, identifying the information of interest with the help of a script adapted from the JBI manual (Peters et al, 2020)(Figure 1). The list of data may be modified as other pertinent information is identified, especially with regard to the mapping of the gray literature. A spreadsheet prepared with the aid of Microsoft Excel software, synthesizing the collection script, was prepared and tested during the refinement of descriptors/keywords.

For the selection of articles, the EndNote software (Clarivate Analytics, PA, USA) will be used, in which the references will be imported for the management and removal of the identified duplicate studies. After this phase, the articles will be imported into the free software Rayyan (Qatar Computing Research Institute, Doha, Qatar) in order to screen the articles by title and abstract in a blind manner among the reviewers to classify the included and excluded articles. All these steps will be carried out by two reviewers independently, however, in case of divergence in the election of the article and if it is not resolved between them, a third reviewer will assist in the decision.

The data will be analyzed according to the content under study and the results of the research will be presented in a flow diagram recommended by PRISMA-ScR and published in the product of the scoping review. To detail the information, an auxiliary tool developed by the reviewers will be used (Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Data extraction script. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2025*

Title	Author	Keywords	Year	Language	Country	Location	Sample size	Goal	Method	Findings	Conclusion
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Source: Prepared by the authors (2025)

## 7 PRESENTATION OF DATA

The extracted data will be analyzed and presented, in a descriptive way, with the narrative summarization of the evidence. It is expected to identify possible advances, setbacks, and gaps in knowledge, referring to the informational disorder faced by individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other strategies can be devised after completing the steps

of this protocol. The final wording of the review will be guided by PRISMA-ScR (Tricco et al, 2018), and any change in relation to this document will be recorded and justified.

## 8 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This scoping review protocol was developed following the recommended guidelines for the preparation of this type of study and is within the standards for immediate execution. The study to be developed from the protocol will present the general state of the literature on the researched topic. The prior publication of this protocol will assist in the planning and dissemination of the development of the research to the academic and scientific environment.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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