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INFLUENCE OF COVID-19 ON BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS AND FOLLOW-UP IN BRAZIL

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Objective: The aim of this study was to verify the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the expected number of breast cancer diagnoses in Brazil. **Methods:** This is an observational, cross-sectional, analytical study conducted using secondary data collected from the Cancer Information System (SISCAN/DATASUS), analyzing two time slices (2020–2021 and 2021–2022). Women diagnosed with breast cancer who underwent mammography between 2020 and 2022 were included in the study. Research Ethics Committee review was waived because aggregated public data were used without identifying participants. **Results:** In the data collection conducted in 2021, it was possible to see underdiagnoses of breast cancer in the year 2020, when only 22,167 new cases were reported, when about 66,280 cases were expected. However, in 2022, with the update of the data in SISCAN/DATASUS, it was observed that in addition to underdiagnoses, there was a scenario of underreporting, since in 2022, the number of diagnoses was about 47,557 new cases of breast cancer in 2020 in Brazil. This scenario reflects the epidemiological health overload resulting from the pandemic, resulting in neglected attention to other diseases of high incidences, such as breast cancer. **Conclusion:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant underreporting of breast cancer diagnoses was observed in Brazil, affecting epidemiological monitoring. It is believed that this scenario will reflect not only on the increase in severe cases of breast cancer but also on public health expenses.

Keywords: Breast cancer. COVID-19. Underregistration.