

Analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic in Navarra

Lessons from the syndemic

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Since March 2020, we have experienced the shared reality of being unable to picture that three years have passed. We refer to 2019 as the past year and possibly the pandemic has broken the way we perceive time. Not only has our time been compressed; during these three years, certain weeks (e.g., March and April 2020) seemed like years and have had an effect that may well last for decades.

The singularity of the present report is that it somehow breaks down the above described time distortion. The monograph, published in the journal *Anales del Sistema Sanitario de Navarra*, dissects what has happened in Navarre and its healthcare system over the past three years, so we are able to arrange the facts, give a meaning, and think about the future. It is not intended to be a compilation or storytelling of the pandemic, although it may well serve for that purpose. Nor is it a formal assessment of the performance of the healthcare system. It is much more. It is the use of the available scientific tools to assess and provide lessons on an ongoing phenomenon. Not an easy task, as it implies that a part of the report remains alive and will need an update in the near future.

The aim here is not to assess the management use of the pandemic. Fortunately, although the term assessment semantically pushes away the search of guilt, it still has a rather cold connotation, far from the processes that are being evaluated. In this monograph, we take another perspective. Here, the actors who experienced the changes of Navarre's healthcare system recount how this three-year confusing mess is untangled, done with intentional broad perspective.

Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*, called COVID-19 a syndemic rather than a pandemic. With this, he brought to the table a reality accelerated by the pandemic: we cannot have a sectoral vision for complex problems. Navarre's healthcare system is a complex setting where changes in one place affect the rest; the pandemic does not start in the emergency department and end with the discharge from hospital; it involves research,

public health vigilance, social and community healthcare, local entities, medical care, or communication, among other.

Thus, our humble work was to try to coordinate a collective effort. Navarre's healthcare system must thoroughly assess what has happened, what could have been done differently, and what should we do in future syndemics, pandemics, or health emergencies, which unfortunately will occur at some point. This collective effort would have been impossible without the centrality of the people who coordinated and wrote each of the chapters, the tireless effort of the editorial team of *Anales del Sistema Sanitario de Navarra*, and the participation of external reviewers.

This monograph is not an assessment, not a story of what has happened or what could have happened. It is a tool and an opportunity for the future. Hopefully we will make good use of it to provide some order to future time

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