Academic Mothers during and Post-COVID-19 Pandemic

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The years 2020-21 had been marked by an unprecedented pandemic. The disease caused by the new coronavirus (COVID-19) has generated massive global social impacts on the lives of women [1]. Although not contaminated by COVID-19, they suffer strongly from the social impacts caused by it, mainly because with the pandemic many started to share their workplace with the home and the whole family dynamics. With the physical distance and the closing of daycare centers and schools, in addition to remote work, they have probably taken on the roles of taking care of the home, educating children, and caring for sick family members due to the collapse of health systems. The presence of children at home increases the amount of time women devote to unpaid care work [2]. When it comes to academic mothers, the contemporary health situation can significantly affect their careers and academic productivity. The gender inequality, historically present in the academic environment, that mark women’s careers [3] can be accentuated by the current crisis, generating impacts in the short and long terms. Motherhood alone has an impact on the productivity of scientists and on the progress and permanence in the scientific career [4] added to the pandemic, it can represent a propellant to undermine the fragile advances in gender equality, acquired over time. The social situations triggered by the pandemic have materialized in academic mothers, who have struggled to reconcile their formal work and the responsibilities of unpaid care work, at the risk of experiencing mental suffering, frustrations, guilt, exhaustion, and falling productivity. Therefore, it is important that as the crisis is faced, efforts are made to promote gender equality in the academic and scientific world. The need to create policies that contemplate academic mothers is emerging, taking into account the contemporary scenario. This is an important horizon to look at and cover so that women are not left behind.

Bibliography


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