


## Letter to the Editor

# The (in)competence of the Bolsonaro government in confronting coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Hesley Machado Silva PhD 

University Center of Formiga (UNIFOR/MG), Formiga city, and State University of Minas Gerais (UEMG), Ibitiré, Brazil

*To the Editor*—When one speaks of the inability of the Brazilian government to combat the pandemic, it is generally associated with a total lack of direction and erratic policy decisions,<sup>1</sup> but it is rarely considered that a determined path within a perverse logic is actually being followed. The use of social networks,<sup>2</sup> some television channels, and their daily discourse follow what the Bolsonaro himself defined in April 2020: “May social isolation end, (that) life return to normal and die as many as have to die.”

That is exactly what is happening in Brazil. The idea that the best vaccine would be the virus is based on the odd and perverse reasoning of Bolsonaro, which has been in practice since the beginning of the pandemic and became even more evident in March 2021. The government exhorted the Brazilians to go out and face the virus because they would be cowards if they did not. The spread of speeches in favor of drugs without scientific proof has been part of this ongoing planning.<sup>3</sup> Misinformation (ie, “fake news”) has caused more Brazilians to expose themselves and die in the belief that there is efficient treatment for COVID-19 with the support of a few thousand doctors<sup>4</sup> and millions of followers. But as Bolsonaro said, “So what?”<sup>5</sup>

These representatives continue to make daily pronouncements and postings doubting the benefits of vaccines<sup>6</sup> because they can alter the DNA of people, they should not be mandatory, or they are experimental and were produced in a hurry. Some doctors endorse this sanctimonious fascist propaganda, and the result of this kind of ideology is evident in the deaths of the weak by

suffocation shown in the images of Manaus, capital of the State of Amazonas—analogue to “gas chambers” for those who do not have the presidential “athleticism.” Brazilian society must react so that this plan does not perpetuate and to save many Brazilians from this supremacist project.

### Acknowledgments.

**Financial support.** No financial support was provided relevant to this article.

**Conflicts of interest.** All authors report no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

### References

1. Barberia LG, Gómez EJ. Political and institutional perils of Brazil’s COVID-19 crisis. *Lancet* 2020;396:367–368.
2. Ricard J, Medeiros J. Using misinformation as a political weapon: COVID-19 and Bolsonaro in Brazil. *Harvard Kennedy Sch Misinformation Rev* 2020. doi: 10.37016/mr-2020-013.
3. Pontalti Monari AC, Santos A, Sacramento I. COVID-19 and (hydroxy) chloroquine: a dispute over scientific truth during Bolsonaro’s weekly Facebook live streams. *J Sci Commun* 2020;19(7):A03.
4. Silva HM. Medicines and illusions in the fight against COVID-19 in Brazil. *Ethics Med Public Heal* 2021;16:100622.
5. COVID-19 in Brazil: “So what?” *Lancet* 2020;395:1461.
6. Silva HM. The danger of denialism: lessons from the Brazilian pandemic. *Bull Natl Res Cent* 2021;45:55.

**Author for correspondence:** Dr. Hesley Machado Silva, E-mail: [hesley@unifor.br](mailto:hesley@unifor.br)

**Cite this article:** Silva HM. (2021). The (in)competence of the Bolsonaro government in confronting coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, <https://doi.org/10.1017/ice.2021.431>