

# Examining the Effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and How the Deceased are Handled in Brazil

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## Abstract

The forensic community is crucial to the national and international crisis management during a pandemic like COVID-19. A lot has been written and shared about protocols for handling the dead, reducing the danger of infection, and investigating deaths. However, in many situations, the resources at their disposal prevent forensic practitioners from adhering to best-practice guidelines. The new coronavirus (COVID-19) has had significant negative effects in Brazil, and this article looks at some of them, with a focus on how the dead are managed and the difficulties medical-legal services encounter.

**Keywords:** Pandemic • Management of the dead  
• Forensic • COVID-19

## Introduction

The work of forensic professionals, who are significant professionals, has legal, social, and economic repercussions for communities, the deceased, and their relatives. The forensic community is crucial to the national and international crisis management during a pandemic like COVID-19. Both preventing the spread of the virus and advising authorities, hospitals, and funeral directors on proper protocol when deaths threaten to surpass the capacity of local medicolegal services have been a challenge for forensic professionals. A lot has been written and shared about protocols for handling the dead, reducing the danger of infection, and investigating deaths. However, in many situations, the resources at their disposal prevent forensic practitioners from adhering to best-practice guidelines. Many existing recommendations assume a fully operational laboratory or necropsy facility, as well as the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other materials. As a result, the capability of forensic experts frequently rely on a lengthy bureaucratic sequence of events. For other nations or regions within a nation, the reality is very different. The present pandemic is expected to make political and socioeconomic inequality in Brazil, in particular, worse. This article's objective is to investigate the effects of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Brazil, with a focus on the issues surrounding the management of the deceased and medicolegal services. Brazil is seeing a rapid COVID-19 outbreak, raising worries about the potential collapse of the healthcare system. There were 16,118 deaths associated with COVID-19 between February 27 and May 18 of 2020, with 241,080 confirmed cases. The state of Amazonas, whose capital Manaus had 95% of the 293 ICU beds in both commercial and public hospitals, was the first to declare on April 8th, 2020, that the collapse of its healthcare system was near. On May 17, Bruno Covas, the mayor of So Paulo, the

state's capital, declared that the city's public hospitals had reached 90% of their capacity and might be at capacity in two weeks [8]. The country's epicenter, with approximately 3000 fatalities, is So Paulo. Along with these potentially disastrous pandemic effects, federal government officials have downplayed the threat the virus poses to the public's health. For example, the current president, Jair Bolsonaro, has called COVID-19 "little flu" and encouraged the reopening of the nation for economic reasons as well as the use of the drug hydroxychloroquine to treat the virus. The federal government delayed implementing more severe health measures like a "stay at home" or social separation order despite doing so in an effort to stem the financial consequences of the crisis. Instead, local leaders like mayors and governors are leading the charge in holding the populace responsible for remaining in and participating in social isolation. The President has slammed these officials for using "extreme measures" in public. In addition, two officials vacated the position of Brazil's Minister of Health, leaving the nation without a replacement as it now faces a pandemic. Brazil is one of the nations attracting media attention due to the effects of the country's President pushing for policies that disobey directives made by worldwide public health agencies and depart from the practises used by the majority of other nations. Other leaders, including Presidents Kim Jong-Un of North Korea, Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico, John Magufuli of Tanzania, Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov of Turkmenistan, and Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus, have either denied the existence of the disease or downplayed its effects in their speeches. For instance, in some areas of Brazil, it is impossible to do a minimally invasive autopsy since the equipment is not available in sufficient quantities. As a result, many cases that required an autopsy or the collection of biological samples for COVID-19 death confirmation will not be handled. As a result, the current figures do not accurately represent the actual number of instances. In the end, this means that the total number of fatalities reported by COVID-19 will likely be based on an epidemiological evaluation of deaths as a whole in comparison to the average for the same period in the previous two to five years. The numbers above the threshold can subsequently be attributed to COVID-19. The main issue with postmortem testing is that it contributes to the current underestimating of cases, which also means that families are not properly informed and that opportunities to track contacts and aid in the epidemic's management are missed. The Adolfo Lutz Institute, a reference for coronavirus testing in So Paulo and an analytical lab recognised by the Brazilian Ministry of Health as a National Laboratory of Public Health and Reference Laboratory Macroregional, reportedly had a backlog of 16,000 tests that needed to be completed by April 1st 2020. Brazil has 3462 coronavirus test results for every million inhabitants, according to the unofficial website worldometer. For instance, in some areas of Brazil, it is impossible to do a minimally invasive autopsy since the equipment is not available in sufficient quantities. As a result, many cases that required an autopsy or the collection of biological samples for COVID-19 death confirmation will not be handled. As a result, the current figures do not accurately represent the actual number of instances. In the end, this means that the total number of fatalities reported by COVID-19 will likely be based on an epidemiological evaluation of deaths as a whole in comparison to the average for the same period in the previous two to five years. The numbers above the threshold can subsequently be attributed to COVID-19. The main issue with postmortem testing is that it contributes to the current underestimating of cases, which also means that families are not properly informed and that opportunities to track contacts and aid in the epidemic's management are missed. The Adolfo Lutz Institute, an analytical lab recognised by the Brazilian Ministry of Health as a National Laboratory of Public Health and Reference Laboratory Macroregional, and the current standard for coronavirus testing in So Paulo, reportedly had a backlog of 16,000 tests that needed to be completed by April 1st 2020. Brazil had 3462 coronavirus tests completed for per million people, according to the unauthorized.

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