

**“Enhancing Interprofessional
Collaboration and Learning for
Strengthening Primary Health Care”**

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Title	THE NEW NORMAL IN A RURAL SMALL TOWN IN BRAZIL: A STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE
Type	Oral Presentation <i>What can we learn from your Primary Health Care Practice and Experiences?</i>
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Country	BRAZIL
Abstract N ^o	TUFH631
Content	<p>Background: There is no consensus if the COVID-19 is affecting more rural than urban areas. Some authors believe geographic distance can be protective, and others counter that rural areas are at greater risk due to the population demographics and the lack of healthcare infrastructure. Methods: This abstract consists of a students' experience report in a rural community from a peripheral country during the pandemic. Results: The students' clerkship has happened in a town with 16,000 inhabitants. Primary care faces a shortage of doctors due to the pandemic. Students who previously had primary care as their main practice were limited to the emergency department. There was a lack of guidance for the population regarding the mild and severe symptoms of COVID-19, which may have overloaded the healthcare services. Patients frequently refused to be seen in isolated rooms due to fear or lack of knowledge. Structural shortcomings and the need for transferring patients was evident. We identified the population's difficulty in understanding COVID-19 and its protection measures and accessing information and health services. These shortcomings made us realize the importance of health education during the pandemic and proper use of the health care network, which suffers under the pandemic when control measures are not followed. Conclusion: We identified how important health education is in rural settings. The vulnerability of primary care when facing a shortage of professionals impairs the propagation of health education, the care and monitoring of the local population.</p>