



# Technical-Scientific Challenges for Psychology in the Legal and Forensic Context in View of the Consequences of the SARS-CoV2 Pandemic (COVID - 19)

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## Abstract

The consequences of the pandemic include maintaining the quality of professional care in psychological monitoring and evaluation processes on all continents. This communication presents points of attention to the topic initiated with norms and guidelines for professional performance by various scientific and technical associations. The author demonstrates the need for investigations aimed at obtaining scientific evidence of effectiveness on the use and resizing of remote instruments and procedures, with a view to supporting the evaluation process of the proposals to support the recommended standards. Specifically, in the legal and forensic context operated by criteria of scientific and legal assumptions, the problem does not refer only to the use or choice of a technique or instrument that meets these standards, but also to the set of operations and analyzes carried out throughout the process evaluative and expert. Topics such as acceptance of the task, planning, development and analysis of the collected data, registration of these in the reports, in the oral defense, as well as the safeguarding of the collected material. Given the possibility of maintaining social distance care, studies to replace operational procedures in remote interviews, administration of psychological instruments and techniques are necessary in the short term, due to the risk of institutional compromise of rights and duties of the populations, especially the most fragile and compromised.

**Keywords:** Legal and Forensic Psychology; Technical Guidelines; SARS-CoV2 Pandemic (COVID - 19); Tests and Psychological Techniques; Professional Technical Standards

## Introduction

The various activities in societies are experiencing a complex situation, the result of a pandemic, with consequences for bonds, daily actions, and the impact on the practice of various professional actions. Legal and Forensic Psychology, as a field of knowledge and research, also has direct and indirect consequences in its activities due to the pandemic. Professional entities turn to review procedures and processes of scientific technical activities in their work to develop professional actions with the same scientific rigor

and quality, to guarantee professional practice [1-3]. With the declaration of the World Health Organization - WHO (2020) on the pandemic called the Coronavirus SARS-CoV2 (COVID - 19), urgent and efficient measures were taken to always protect human rights (Inter-American Court of Human Rights at its Resolution 01/2020 [4,5]. This situation is not foreign to the work of Legal and Forensic Psychology in the world, and especially in the context of Latin America.

Legal and Forensic Psychology in its intervention role, such as Forensic Psychological Assessment in different

areas of the administration of justice, and considering the contingency of the pandemic, has the challenge of developing processes that meet the current need adjustment, complying with science norms and legal guidelines for each country. The professional exercise oriented, based on the principles of ethics, science and justice based on intervention processes, in different areas and contexts of legal and forensic psychology, in essentially face-to-face activities. With the social contingency of the pandemic, this situation causes changes, and it is imperative to provide guidelines and recommendations for the practice / evaluation of specialists in the field of Legal and Forensic Psychology aimed at quality professional practice.

The purpose of this review is based on enabling scientific technical development on the relevant theme of psychological practice, concentrating, and fostering discussions to guide, advise and empower professionals in the different areas and themes of psychological work, and to elaborate scientific technical support material for professionals. The current use of information and communication technologies is an option of necessary and effective technological tools for continuity in the economy, in education, in the social and legal environment, in the face of emergency health measures taken by countries affected by the pandemic. Entities such as the American Psychological Association - APA, Asociacion Latinoamericana de Psicologia Juridica y Forense - ALPJJF, Internation Test Commission ITC [6], Brazilian Association of Legal Psychology - ABPJ and Asociacion Argentina de Estudio e Investigacion em Psicodiagnostico -ADEIP [7] sensitive to the current contingencies recommended technical instructions regarding the management of psychological instruments, care procedures in various contexts (interviews, data collection and interventions) [8]. The challenge of the legal and forensic area is to operate with scientific criteria and in this principle of rigor, it does not refer only to the necessary use or choice of a technique or instrument that meets these standards, but also to the set of operations and analyzes carried out throughout of the expert process. Starting with the acceptance of the task, the planning, development and analysis of the collected data, the due record of these in the reports, even in the defense in oral proceedings, as well as the safeguarding of the collected material. In this context, it is essential to review norms and requirements for applicability to less traditional scenarios, phenomena, or contexts, so that methodological adaptations in line with relevant technical, legal, and ethical principles can be anticipated. Also, to identify lines of research that can contribute to these questions and that cannot be answered from the current stage of knowledge at the present time. The procedures and techniques recognized by the scientific community, and implemented in different scenarios, such as psychological assessments using the so-called new communication and information technologies, are the

biggest challenge at the present time, and investigations can demonstrate evidence of validity and reliability in the use of procedures. The literature identifies that technological procedures have been implemented in recent years, especially in other areas of psychological activity, such as clinical, educational, and work areas, but scarcely in the field of forensic psychology, given its technical characterization and mainly, due to legal precepts in the different countries.

In view of the estimated temporality of the pandemic period for 2019-2022, due to the possibility of contagion waves in different continents and the prophylaxis actions instituted, studies to replace operational procedures in remote interviews, administration of instruments and psychological techniques are needed in the short term, due to the risk of institutional commitment of rights and duties of the populations, mainly the most fragile and compromised.

## Conclusion

Technical and scientific challenges transcend and complement the contribution to health needs during the SARS-CoV2 Pandemic (COVID - 19) pandemic, in all societies. The possibility of integrating technical and scientific actions in the context of legal and forensic psychology is a need that has become international. The regulations presented in this manuscript, coming from some technical scientific entities, are timid and can be expanded to support broader and more effective technical actions that assist societies in the post-pandemic reconstruction process.

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