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NÚCLEO DE ESTUDANTES  
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## LEVELS OF ANXIETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

**Frontini, R. <sup>1</sup>, Gonçalves, R. <sup>2,3</sup>, Amaro, N. <sup>2,4</sup>, Salvador, R. <sup>2,4</sup>, Matos, R. <sup>2,4</sup>, Morouço, P. <sup>2</sup>, Antunes, R. <sup>2,4,5</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Center for Innovative Care and Health Technology (ciTechCare), Polytechnic of Leiria, Leiria, Portugal, <sup>2</sup>ESECS, Polytechnic of Leiria, Portugal, <sup>3</sup>Research Unit for Sport and Physical Activity (CIDAF – uid/dtp/04213/2019), University of Coimbra, Portugal, <sup>4</sup>CIEQV - Life Quality Research Centre, Polytechnic of Leiria, Leiria, Portugal, <sup>5</sup>Sport Science School of Rio Maior (ESDRM), Polytechnic Institute of Santarém, Portugal, <sup>6</sup>CIPER, Faculty of Human Kinetics, University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal

To mitigate the transmission of the new coronavirus (COVID-19), several measures (e.g., social isolation and quarantine) were implemented worldwide. These measures may have last-longing consequences, namely through raising higher levels of anxiety. Considering the future waves and the adaptations we all have to face, it is important to understand if there are differences in peoples' anxiety levels and the role that gender may play. The present study had two main purposes: a) to explore the levels of state-anxiety and trait-anxiety in the Portuguese population during the first weeks of the COVID-19 isolation measures by examining gender-related variation and b) to explore the possible relationship between anxiety-trait and anxiety-state and the possible role of gender as a moderator. This was a cross-sectional study comprising 1387 Portuguese adults (aged 18-67 years old) recruited during COVID-19 outbreak measures. Participants self-reported socio-demographic data and answered the validated Portuguese version of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. A positive significant correlation between state-anxiety and trait-anxiety was found. Females presented higher levels of both state-anxiety and trait-anxiety compared to males. Participants presented higher levels of state-anxiety compared to trait-anxiety. Path analysis was performed to test a moderation model. Higher levels of trait-anxiety were related to higher levels of state-anxiety independently of gender. State-anxiety levels were higher than trait-anxiety, which may be a consequence of this pandemic, the social isolation and the quarantine situation people were facing during recruitment. The relationship between state-anxiety and trait-anxiety was also found but was not moderated by gender happening equally in men and women. Interventions aiming to support people psychologically during this outbreak should consider anxiety. Health professionals working with people during this pandemic should not only consider the anxiety related to the situation we are living but also address anxiety-trait to help overcome COVID-19 psychological consequences.