



**Psychosocial aspects in individuals with trisomy 21  
during the COVID-19 pandemic**

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3 Dear Editor  
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5 The COVID-19 pandemic has presented society with a health challenge that has  
6 had the most impact in recent times. This continues to be a true emergency  
7 worldwide (1). Numerous publications have highlighted the prevention measures  
8 and special care required for the people with Trisomy 21, given their specific  
9 clinical characteristics, in particular their impaired immune response and potential  
10 complications. In addition, specific education initiatives are required on infection  
11 prevention and recommendations for immunization for people with learning  
12 difficulties (2).  
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20 However, the impact of the pandemic is not only on physical health, but also on  
21 psychological and mental well-being. Mandated isolation or social restriction to  
22 prevent the spread of the disease has had a major impact on the general  
23 population and this is magnified in adults with Trisomy 21 (3), older adults with  
24 intellectual disabilities (4,5), children with disabilities, and the general pediatric (1-  
25 5).  
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31 During medical check-ups, parents or representatives of schoolchildren and  
32 adolescents with Trisomy 21 have expressed concern about the regression of  
33 previously achieved developmental milestones, loss of sphincter control, loss of  
34 educational progress despite remote classes, sleep disturbances, depression,  
35 irritability and behavioral disorders and aggressive episodes. Some of these  
36 required intervention or hospitalization.  
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42 Although the causes of the psychosocial changes are multifactorial, it is possible  
43 that the additional problems are exacerbated by the significant changes in the  
44 lifestyles of the Trisomy 21 population in their family environment resulting in lack  
45 of recreation, decreased physical activity, lack of interaction with their peers  
46 thereby affecting their development and mental well-being. In addition, it is  
47 important to study the wider impact on the family, including economic, and the  
48 effects of COVID-19 within the family on the individual with Trisomy 21.  
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3 We recommend that all involved in the care of people with Trisomy 21 should be  
4 curious and inquire about the presentation of psychosocial symptoms, compare  
5 these to pre-pandemic symptomatology and initiate required interventions to meet  
6 the new needs of people with trisomy 21 to enhance their well-being. This will  
7 require longitudinal monitoring to understand the impact of major events like the  
8 pandemic on people with learning difficulties. We then may be able to respond in a  
9 better way not only for the general population, but also for those with greatest  
10 need.  
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12 We declare no competing interest  
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#### 49 **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

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51 None  
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#### 53 **FINANCE**

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