

## CLINICAL AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE NORTHEAST OF BRAZIL EXPOSED TO TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES: A PREVALENCE CENSUS STUDY PROTOCOL

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**Background:** Adolescence and early adulthood are the most vulnerable period of life for exposure to traumatic experiences (70% of their deaths are due to external causes). The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is characterized by dysfunctional symptoms that cause distress or social, academic and occupational impairment, and results from exposure to a traumatic stressor. There is no consensus in the literature about why some individuals experience PTSD after traumatic events and not others. The aim of this multicentre study is to describe clinical and socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance in college student's population in the Northeast of Brazil, identifying traumatic experiences exposure patterns, and investigating the impulsivity's influence in the development of PTSD, as well as the impact of early traumatic experiences in vulnerability or resilience in this population.

**Methods/design:** 2282 subjects completed the protocol between April and July 2011 in a sample census of seven (public and private) college institutions in three metropolitan regions of the Brazilian Northeast, aiming to cover different academic areas (exact, biological, humanities /arts). All students aged 18 or older, enrolled and attending to the first and last theoretical period were eligible, and accessed by previously trained researchers. The self applied protocol consisted of socio-demographic questionnaire and validated scales of: Impulsivity (BIS-11), PTSD (PCL-C) and Trauma History Questionnaire (THQ). Data were entered into SPSS 15.0. Prevalence Ratio and Logistic Regression technique will be used to analyze the association between dependent and independent variables of the study, that was approved by Bahia and Paraiba's ethics committees.