

Perspectives and assessment of psychosocial risk in latin America: A systemic review of the literature

Perspectivas y evaluación del riesgo psicosocial en América Latina: una revisión sistémica de la literatura

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this systematic review was to analyze the perspectives and evaluations of psychosocial risk in Latin America. The reviews of the articles were carried out independently complying with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 15 were the articles that met the inclusion, criteria analyzed by the 8 dimensions, and in these studies, it was observed that the qualitative approach predominated, with non-experimental and cross-sectional design with descriptive scope, these searches were carried out through the Web of Science (WOS), Scopus and ProQuest databases. The results showed that psychosocial risk factors are related to social class and can be used as tools to propose interventions to reduce inequalities in health, socioeconomic status, and gender. The importance of research associated with the development of strategies for the prevention and promotion of psychosocial risk factors is discussed.

Keywords: Psychosocial risk, health, Latin America.

RESUMEN

El propósito de esta revisión sistemática consistió en analizar las perspectivas y evaluaciones del riesgo psicosocial en América Latina. Las revisiones de los artículos se realizaron de manera independiente cumpliendo con los criterios de inclusión y exclusión, 15 fueron los artículos que cumplieron con los criterios de inclusión, analizados por las 8 dimensiones y en estos estudios se observó que predominó el enfoque cualitativo, con diseño no experimental y transversal con alcance descriptivo, estas búsquedas se realizaron a través de las bases de datos Web of Science (WOS), Scopus y ProQuest. Los resultados mostraron que los factores de riesgo psicosocial están relacionados con la clase social y pueden ser utilizados como herramientas para proponer intervenciones que reduzcan las desigualdades en salud, estatus socioeconómico y género. Se discute la importancia de la investigación asociada al desarrollo de estrategias de prevención y promoción de los factores de riesgo psicosocial.

Palabras clave: Riesgo psicosocial, salud, América Latina.

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations face transcendental transformations from the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts that affect the quality of working life of workers, generating a risk to physical and emotional health, when this occurs, psychosocial support actions must be implemented to intervene unsafe behaviors that can cause adverse effects on people or work.

Studies on psychosocial risk factors have shown that “psychological or cognitive demand is the psychosocial risk factor most frequently reported by managers and supervisors” (1) and that violence and psychological harassment at work are psychosocial risk factors associated with impoverished organizations and ineffective management in communication, conflict management, and inappropriate leadership; the ravages can be very serious for both victims and organizations” (2).

The Joint Committee of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) state that “Psychosocial factors at work consist of interactions between work, its environment, job satisfaction and the conditions of its organization, on the one hand, and the other hand, the worker’s capabilities, needs, culture and personal situation outside work, all of which, through perceptions and experiences, can influence health and job performance and satisfaction” (3).

Likewise, the WHO defined psychosocial work factors as “those characteristics of work conditions, organization and emotional factors linked to the job that affect people’s health at the physiological and psychological level” (4). The effects of psychosocial risks on health can affect organizational performance at the individual, group, and organizational levels, generating alterations in behavior, interpersonal relationships, work performance, and subsequently productivity, creativity, and innovation (5).

In compliance with the protection of the safety and health of workers, organizations must implement the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS), for this, we find international standards such as OHSAS 18001

(Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series) that seeks to perform systematic and structured management to ensure the improvement of OSH (6) and the International Standard ISO 45001 (International Organization for Standardization) that adopts an OSH management system, which aims to enable an organization to provide safe and healthy workplaces, prevent work-related injuries and health impairment, and continuously improve OSH performance (7).

For its part, in Colombia, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, to comply with international standards, establishes in its Sole Decree of the Labor Sector 1072 of 2015, which in Chapter 6 emanates the mandatory guidelines to implement the Occupational Safety and Health Management System (SG-SST) (8).

In terms of Psychosocial Risk Factors, it is important to understand, analyze, evaluate and intervene in psychosocial risk factors, being a matter of concern for companies in the world, in this sense, an awareness of care and prevention of risks at work should be promoted. In countries such as Colombia, Mexico, Chile, and Peru we find legislation in favor of labor welfare that seeks to protect occupational health (9-12).

Therefore, we set out to develop a systematic review of the literature to answer the following question: What are the perspectives and evaluations of psychosocial risk in Latin America?

METHOD

The main objective of this study was to learn about the perspectives and evaluations of psychosocial risk in Latin America, identifying definitions, regulations, evaluation instruments, and strategies for the prevention of psychosocial risks at work and in organizations.

Employing the systematic review, different studies were identified that allowed the description and analysis of the literature reports on the research topic. The search was carried out in the following databases: Web of Science (WOS), Scopus and ProQuest, in which the selected articles were ordered by rigorously establishing their general categories: sources, the context of the

problem, type of document, design, participants, method, instruments, procedure, results, and conclusions, as well as the existing relationships around the evaluation of psychosocial risk.

The search phase for information units focused on scientific and review articles, where combinations of the following keywords “Psychosocial risk” and “Latin America” were used, both in English and Spanish, and 190 articles were found, distributed as follows: in the Web of Science (WoS) database, 8 articles were analyzed, of which 2 met the general requirements of the study and were included for the in-depth review; 8 articles were analyzed in the Web of Science (WoS) database, of which 2 complied with the generalities of the study and were included for the in-depth review; 46 articles were obtained

from the Scopus database, among them, 10 were included for in-depth review and only 3 complied with the generalities of the study, and 136 articles were reviewed in ProQuest, of which 1 was carried out an in-depth review and only 10 complied with the generalities of the study.

Finally, 15 articles were selected for the systematic review.

For this review, 23 documents were examined, including scientific articles and standards issued by the ministries of labor and health.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria: Figure 1 show the criteria taken into account for the selection of the articles analyzed. The research had to meet all the criteria to be included.

Table 1
Study Selection Criteria

Inclusion criteria	<p>C1. Articles that contemplate variables such as psychosocial risk, work stress, working conditions, job satisfaction, health, and work.</p> <p>C2. Language of publication: Spanish and English.</p>
Exclusion criteria	<p>E1. Articles that do not consider the variables.</p> <p>E2. Articles that the context is different from the work and organizational environment.</p>

Data selection and extraction process

In the article selection process, we were able to identify and eliminate all the records that did not include the inclusion criteria. The reviewers developed a selection of titles, variables, and abstracts to discard all the records that did not meet the inclusion criteria. As a result, a ranking list was determined according to the exclusion criteria, and the articles were finally selected for analysis. After the selection, the data extraction process was carried out, examining the complete texts and recording all the compliance criteria in Excel form.

Finally, the reviewers consolidated each of the analyses of the results of the data selection

and extraction process. The description of the process (Figure 1).

RESULTS

It was possible to structure a matrix that allowed the extraction and analysis of each of the articles in eight dimensions: 1) Type of document, 2) Problem, 3) Design, 4) Instruments, 5) Procedure, 6) Results, 7) Conclusion, 8) Keywords. After establishing the dimensions and characteristics for the extraction of the criteria, we proceeded to code each of the texts, and we also observed that the main character was the predominance of a qualitative approach, with a non-experimental

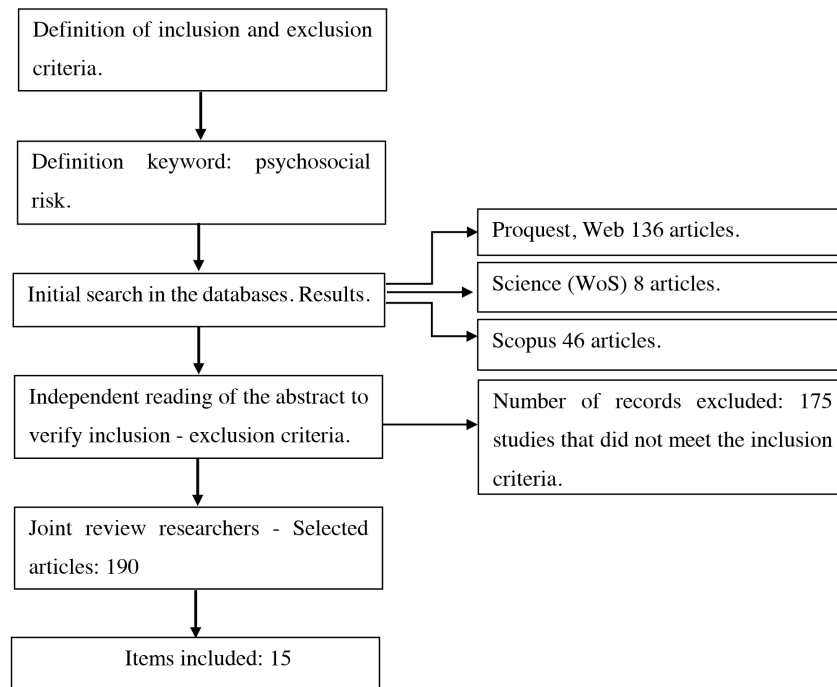


Figure 1. General Search Process.
Source: Own elaboration.

and cross-sectional design, mostly descriptive in scope. Table 2 shows the articles with the respective characteristics, approaches, design, and scope of the studies.

It should be noted that, of the 190 articles found in the first search in the selected databases, only 26 were preselected that met at least two of the four inclusion criteria established to be taken into account. From these articles, in the third stage of preliminary readings, 15 documents were selected that were directly related to the chosen variable.

The coding and classification of the articles whose focus of attention included the variable psychosocial risk were carried out and finding associated with these: a) Occupational stress, b) Health and work, c) Psychosocial risk factors and disability, d) Mental health. After the analysis of the articles included in this review, the period in which they were published was from 2005 to 2022. Six of the research with all the inclusion criteria were developed in Colombia, but it was possible to observe analyses in Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, and Chile.

Perspective analysis and psychosocial risk assessments

It is important to note that a small number of articles were found that met the inclusion criteria defined for this systematic review (15 articles), only two systematic reviews were found related to psychosocial risk (5,13) and one to occupational stress, which is a consequence of psychosocial risk factors (14).

Table 3 shows the different perspectives of psychosocial risk in some Latin American countries.

Table 3 shows that there are similarities in the definition of psychosocial risk factors in the different countries; psychosocial risk factors are related to negative aspects that affect the psychological conditions, health, and well-being of workers (9-12). Likewise, for Serafim et al. (17), psychosocial risks are factors that deteriorate work relationships and generate suffering, occupational illness, incapacity, and organizational dysfunction (17).

PERSPECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK

Table 2

The main characteristics of the research review

Author	Country of Study	Variables	Approach	Design	Scope	Keywords
Salamanca Velandia, S. R., & Garavito Santander, Y. S. (2020).	Colombia	Work Stress	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Occupational stress, psychosocial risks, and occupational disease.
Monroy-Castillo, A., & Juárez-García, A. (2019).	Latin America	Psychosocial risk	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Keywords: stress, health, health, teachers, universities, Latin America.
Ortiz, V. G., Toro, L. E. P., & Hermosa, A. M. (2019).	Colombia	Psychosocial factors	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Psychosocial risk factors; university teachers; psychological demand-control model; effort-reward model.
Pujol, A., & Gutiérrez, M. I. (2019)	Argentina	Health and work	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Work, Health, clinic.
Rivera-Porras, D., Bonilla-Cruz, N. J., Carrillo-Sierra, S. M., Forgiony-Santos, J., & Silva-Monsalve, G. (2019).	Colombia	Occupational health	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Occupational health, risk factors, stress.
Muñoz Rojas, D., Orellano, N., & Hernández Palma, H. (2018).	Colombia	Occupational Risk	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Stress, risk factors, impact, occupational health, organizational culture.
Velasco, A. A., Orozco, C. S., & Lira, E. R. (2017).	México	Working conditions	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Working conditions, psychosocial, health, and safety, health and safety.
Acosta-Fernández, M., Parra-Osorio, L., Restrepo-García, J. I., Pozos-						Psychosocial working conditions, violence, harassment, mental

Continue in page 679...

...continuation Table 2.

Author	Country of Study	Variables	Approach	Design	Scope	Keywords
Radillo, B. E., de los Ángeles Aguilera Velasco, M., & Torres-López, T. M. (2017).	Colombia	Working conditions	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	health, teachers, medicine, nursing, mental health, nursing.
Arenas Ortiz, F., & Andrade Jaramillo, V. (2013).	Colombia	Psychosocial risk factors	Qualitative	Transversal	Descriptive	Occupational health, risk factors, occupational stress, food industry.
Serafim, A. D. C., Campos, I. C. M., Cruz, R. M., & Rabuske, M. M. (2012)	Brasil	Psychosocial risk factors and disability.	Qualitative	Exploratory	Descriptive	Psychosocial factors, occupational health, occupational diseases, occupational stress, and quality of life at work.
Palomo-Velez, G., Carrasco, J., Bastias, A., Mendez, MD, & Jimenez, A. (2015).	Chile	Psychosocial risk factors and job satisfaction	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Women's health; job satisfaction; risk factor women's work; Chile.
Rocha, K. B., Muntaner, C., Solar, O., Borrell, C., Bernales, P., González, M. J., & Vallebuona, C. (2014).	Colombia	Mental health, self-perceived health, neo-Marxist, psychosocial risk factors, and material deprivation.	Qualitative	Non-experimental/ Transversal	Descriptive	Social Class; Labor; Mental Health.
Celly, JJ y S Suasnavas, P. (2012, septiembre).	Ecuador	Psychosocial Risks	Qualitative	NR	Descriptive	Health and safety, psychosocial risk, FPSICO questionnaire, oilfield personnel.
Scarone, M. y Cedillo, LA (2007)	México	Psychosocial risk factors	Qualitative	Non-experimental	Descriptive	No Report
Pujol-Cols, L. & Lazzaro-Salazar, M. (2021)	América Latina	Psychosocial risk, health, performance	—	—	Descriptive	Psychosocial risks Work-related stress Well-being, Effectiveness, Bibliometric analysis.

Source: Own elaboration.

PERSPECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK

Table 3
Perspectives Psychosocial Risk

COUNTRY	NORMN	ENTITY	PERSPECTIVE
			Psychosocial conditions whose identification and assessment show negative effects on workers' health or work (9).
Colombia	Resolution 2646 of 2008	Ministry of Labor	Those that can cause anxiety disorders, non-organic disorders of the sleep-wake cycle, and severe and adaptive stress, derived from the nature of the job functions, the type of workday, and exposure to severe traumatic events or acts of workplace violence to the worker, due to the work performed.
México	Mexican Official Standard NOM-035-STPS-2018.	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare	They include hazardous and unsafe conditions in the work environment; workloads when they exceed the worker's capacity; lack of control over the work (possibility of influencing the organization and development of the work when the process allows it); working hours longer than those provided for in the Federal Labor Law, shift rotation that includes night shift and night shift without recovery and rest periods; interference in the work-family relationship, and negative leadership and negative relationships at work (10).
Chile	Resolution 218 Exempt	Ministry of Health; Subsecretaría De Salud Pública; Instituto De Salud Pública	Characteristics of work organization, labor relations, and work culture, can affect the well-being of workers, therefore, psychosocial work factors are present in all workplaces, as long as there is a work organization and a working relationship, with its own work culture (11).
Perú	Regulation of Law No. 29783. SUPREME DECREE N° 005-2012-TR	Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion	Exposure to psychosocial risks is considered to exist when workers' health is impaired, causing stress and, in the long term, a series of clinical symptomatology such as cardiovascular, respiratory, immune, gastrointestinal, dermatological, endocrinological, musculoskeletal, and mental diseases, among others. The clinical symptomatology must be supported by a medical certificate issued by medical centers or duly qualified medical professionals (12).

Source: Own elaboration.

As shown in Table 4, countries such as Colombia, Mexico and Chile have validated instruments endorsed by governmental bodies. It should be noted that there are standardized instruments that can be used in studies and research for the diagnosis and identification of psychosocial risk factors, among which we can highlight:

- The Questionnaire of Psychosocial Factors in Academic Work (FPSIS ACA- DÉMICOS): For exposure to work demands of psychosocial origin (18).
- Questionnaire of biopsychosocial risks associated with accidents (19).

Regarding the prevention of psychosocial risk factors, studies were found that refers to the need to develop methodological strategies congruent with the organizational reality, identifying the level of maturity (20). Second, to use preventive measures aimed at “modifying the organization of work, enriching tasks, allowing autonomy, rotate tasks and positions, improve the work environment, control risks, provide adequate workspaces, make reasonable time management by establishing adequate breaks and rests, provide assertive information about the processes and tasks to be performed, enable formal and informal communication between workers and superiors” (21).

Table 4
Psychosocial Risk Assessment Instruments

COUNTRY	NORMN	ENTITY	PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK
			Psychosocial Risk Assessment Battery.
			Questionnaire of intralaboral psychosocial risk factors.
Colombia	Resolution 2404 of 2019	Ministry of Labor	Questionnaire of psychosocial risk factors outside the workplace.
			Stress assessment questionnaire.
			General data sheet (sociodemographic and occupational) (16).
			Measuring instruments:
			Questionnaire I: Reference Guide I.
			Questionnaire: Reference Guide II.
			Questionnaire: Reference Guide III (10).
México	Mexican Official Standard NOM-035- STPS-2018.	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare	
		Superintendency of Social Security and the Labor Directorate and the Institute of Public Health.	
Chile	_____		Questionnaire for the evaluation of psychosocial risks at work SUSESO/ISTAS21 (1)

Source: Own elaboration

In accordance with the above, it was observed that psychosocial risk factors are related to social class and can be used as tools to propose interventions to reduce inequalities in health, socioeconomic status, and gender (22).

DISCUSSION

It is evident that, in Latin American countries, psychosocial risk factors should be identified to implement prevention and intervention measures from the Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSHMS), according to current legal regulations (6,7), given that the unfavorable demands of the development of the functions caused by mental workload, working hours, interpersonal relationships, salary,

environment, and job, affect the social and labor well-being of workers in organizations (5).

It was found that countries such as Colombia and Mexico have exclusive legislation for the evaluation and control of psychosocial risk (9,10), and Chile and Peru implement them from the SGSST (11,12). Likewise, it was identified that most of the articles establish the definitions of psychosocial risk factors from the perspective of the WHO and the ILO, which are linked to intrinsic and extrinsic factors that generate affectations associated with anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, and social maladjustment (23).

The electronic search for studies on psychosocial risk factors carried out in WOS, Scopus and Proquest allowed us to find two

systematic reviews. The first one “Psychosocial risk factors at work in academics in higher education institutions in Latin America: A systematic review” evidences the characterization of risk and health factors that the precarious work environment, age, sex, and lifestyle contribute to the development of diseases (13).

Likewise, the second research entitled “Ten years of research on psychosocial risks, health, and performance in Latin America: an integrative systematic review and research agenda”, reports 85 studies that examined the relationships between psychosocial risks, health, and performance in a wide range of organizational contexts in Latin America during the last ten years. The review found that psychosocial risks are a consequence of job demands, autonomy, social support, imbalance, and effort-reward (5).

Regarding the evaluation of exposure to psychosocial risks, it was found that in Colombia organizations must apply the psychosocial risk battery (16); in Mexico, there are the reference guide questionnaires I, II, and III (10), while Chile validated and adapted the SUSESO ISTAS-21 questionnaire (1). In addition, there are other instruments such as the Questionnaire of Psychosocial Factors in Academic Work (FPSIS ACA-DEMICOS) (18) and the Biopsychosocial Risk Questionnaire associated with accidents (19).

Finally, it is emphasized that more research should be developed aimed at developing strategies for the prevention and promotion of psychosocial risk factors since few studies related to this topic were found. On the contrary, several results associated with the identification, measurement, and diagnosis of psychosocial risks in organizations were highlighted.

CONCLUSIONS

We emphasize that psychosocial risk factors allow organizations to identify which work conditions and interactions affect people from the mental, emotional, personal, and work-related components, which contribute negatively, generating difficulties in physical and psychological well-being. This perspective

is formulated from the experience obtained in the articles and regulations analyzed, which report definitions of psychosocial risk factors in countries such as Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Chile.

From this perspective we can infer that the theoretical bases of Psychosocial Risk Factors and their key concepts have been issued by the WHO and the ILO, allowing various countries to establish their conceptualizations and regulations for the regulation of these in their territories, to ensure the welfare of the working population in the world. This allowed to establish the processes of evaluation and diagnosis of psychosocial risks, some Latin American countries such as Colombia, Mexico, and Chile implemented questionnaires for risk assessment according to the needs of organizations, however, it has been shown that in these countries for research processes other instruments can be used.

It is important to highlight that the evaluation of psychosocial risk factors provides important input to developing prevention and promotion strategies according to the needs of the working population, so we emphasize that strategies should be developed to improve the working conditions of workers taking into account their health and welfare; in the research, there were not many results aimed at this process of intervention and treatment against the findings evidenced in the evaluations and diagnoses that are developed within organizations.

Finally, it is recommended to carry out studies related to intervention strategies in psychosocial risk factors, to identify the tools that are used to mitigate the factors that affect people’s health at the physiological and psychological levels. This will undoubtedly provide relevant information to support the design and implementation of action plans to address the health effects generated by work.

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