Quality of life of students in polytechnic higher education at the Santarem and Leiria: the impact of COVID-19

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Background
The epidemic of COVID-19 caused by the Coronavirus -SARS-CoV-2, was declared by the World Health Organization an International Public Health Emergency. The 2019–2020 coronavirus pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the closure of educational institutions. This situation kept students socially distant, with little adaptation time, interfering with their quality of life.

Methods
The aim of this study is to evaluate the quality of life of higher education students in the face of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. 775 students were selected by convenience sampling. Study with a quantitative, descriptive, correlational approach. The WHOQOL-bref instrument adapted from WHO was applied. Data analysis was undertaken using the IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 27.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.

Results
Students’ self-assessment about Quality of Life is globally superior to the self-assessment with their satisfaction with health, where the female students have lower average values than the male students. The WHOQOL-bref domains referring to Quality of Life with higher values were the Physical and the Environment ones, with the Social Relations and Psychological domains having the lowest values.

Conclusions
The development of this study made it possible to achieve the objective set. The domain of social relations has low average values, with students from IPSantarém standing out, with lower self-assessment of QoL in this domain, compared to those from IPLeiria. In the psychological domain, the low average values in both institutes stand out, especially in IPLeiria, where the average is less than 50%, in both genders.

Keywords: COVID-19, Graduate education, Quality of Life, Students.