



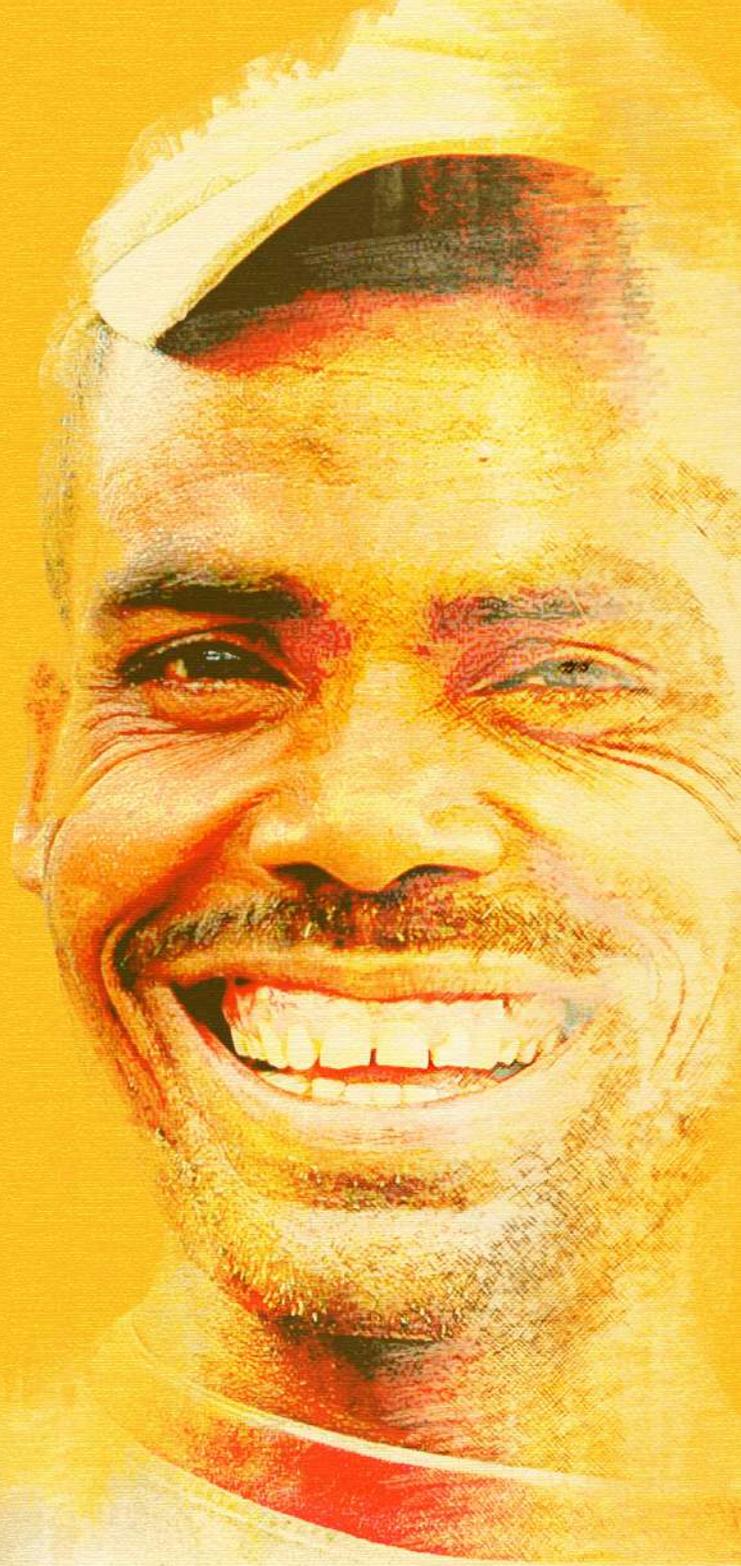
Datos
breve

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Data in Brief #

41

Street vendors' health has also been affected during the pandemic.



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Data in Brief #41

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POLIS is a public policy observatory at Universidad Icesi. We are located in Cali, the third largest city in Colombia. At POLIS, we are committed to conducting empirical research on policy-relevant topics using the rigorousness of academic research but responding to the needs of governments. We aim to provide relevant information to promote an evidence-based policy making culture in the city. We produce research on urban policies, crime, subjective well-being, health, and the informal economy.



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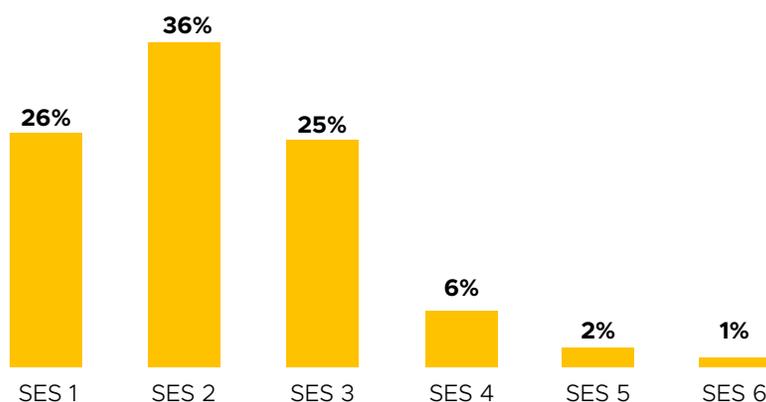
#41

Latin America is the region with the highest levels of inequality worldwide (UNDP, 2019). This inequality is not only economic, but also expressed in the health status of its inhabitants. For example, a study published by The Lancet shows that a woman born in a poor neighborhood in Chile has a life expectancy 18 years lower than a woman born in a wealthy area (Bilal et al., 2019). The pandemic has affected all of us, but everyday life has shown us how undemocratic its consequences have been since the poorest segments of the population has had the highest death rates (Ramos, 2020). In Colombia, 62% of Covid-19 deaths have occurred in socioeconomic strata 1 and 2¹ (DANE, 2020).

-

1. The national government uses households' stratification as a mechanism for targeting social spending. Households are classified in a scale 1 to 6 based on their physical and social conditions. Households classified as 1 on the scale are the poorest, 6 are the richest.

Graph 1. Covid-19 deaths by socioeconomic strata (SES) in Colombia 2020-2021



Source: DANE, 2021.

The difference in working conditions between the low and high socioeconomic strata has influenced the distribution of the deaths. In contrast to the remote working demands imposed by lockdown measures, the low-income population mainly has informal jobs that demand interaction with other people. In addition, the lack of a social protection (unemployment insurance) requires informal workers to leave their homes. Although the government created a cash transfer program during the pandemic (Ingreso Solidario), the subsidies did not replace lost income (Bentata et al., 2020). In Latin America, income reduction has been the primary concern instead of contagion (UN, 2020).

Street vendors are perhaps the informal workers most exposed to contagion due to their need to work on the streets to generate income. In 2019, Cali Mayor's Office did a georeferencing exercise and estimated that there were approximately 10,000 street vendors in the city. The local government, with this information, knew the number of street vendors in the city but could not obtain detailed data about this population because georeferencing is an observation exercise, not a characterization exercise. Today, the local government knows that the crisis probably increased the vulnerability of 10,000 street vendors but does not know to what extent it did so.

We know the first step to public policy intervention is to have data that contribute to understanding a problem. For this reason, researchers at the Public Policy Observatory (POLIS) of Icesi University and the Center for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighborhoods at the University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom surveyed 750 street vendors in Cali to analyze how the pandemic has affected their quality of life in different ways. One of these was their health status. Our objective is to show which issues public policy interventions should focus on to contribute to the socioeconomic recovery of this population in the post-pandemic period.

This Data in Brief aims to contribute to a better-informed public discussion about the effects of the crisis on this population. The document has three sections.

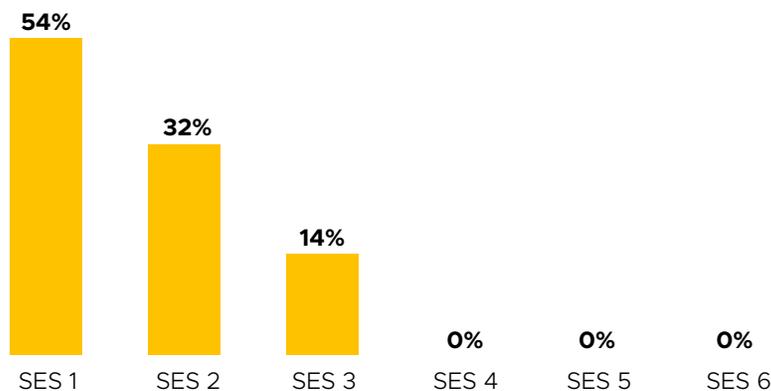


Food insecurity

In Colombia, 37% of the population does not have three meals per day (DANE, 2021). Jairo Madriñán, director of the Human Milk Bank of the Hospital Universitario del Valle, affirmed that most of the patients who enter intensive care due to Covid-19 and die have poor nutrition and a deficiency in their immune system (Función Pública, 2021). **21% of street vendors say someone in their household, including themselves, has gone to bed hungry during the pandemic**, i.e., approximately 2100 vendors have not had the minimum required meals. If you consider that 73% claim to be the economic provider of their home, their family circle (4 people on average) did not have access to a good diet.

Street vendors living in low socioeconomic strata and belonging to ethnic minority groups have gone to bed hungry in the highest proportion of those surveyed (see Graph 2). Twenty-seven percent of those who identify as a member of an ethnic minority group (Afro-Colombians or natives) have gone to bed hungry compared to 19% of those who do not identify as a member of an ethnic minority group (whites or mestizos).

Graph 2. You or someone in your household have gone to bed hungry during the pandemic



Calculations based on survey data

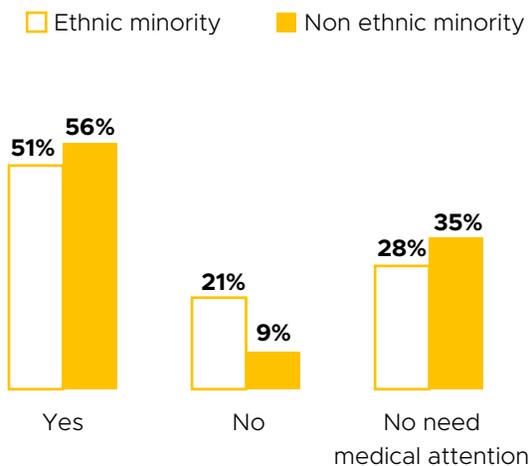
Inequality in health access

Access to health services is crucial in a person's quality of life, especially during a pandemic. In Colombia, 95% of the population has some health insurance scheme (Ministerio de Salud, 2021), and, in the case of Cali's street vendors, this figure is 91%. Although this figure highlights the advances in coverage that the national health system has achieved, some street vendors have had difficulties accessing health services when needed. For instance, 26% say that someone in their household, including themselves, became ill with Covid-19 (58%) or another illness during the pandemic (42%), but 12% could not receive medical attention. Street vendors who identify as a member of an ethnic minority group have had the most significant difficulty in accessing health services (see Graph 3).

34%

lost a loved one
or acquaintance to
the pandemic.

Graph 3. If you or a family member got sick during the pandemic, have you received medical care?



Source: self-made.

Note: the street vendors who identify as Afro-Colombians or natives are classified as members of an ethnic minority group, while those who identify as whites or mestizos are classified as members of a non-ethnic minority group.



Mental health

Mental health has become an important public issue during the pandemic. However, most of the mental health statistics during the crisis are among those who already have a diagnosis, but little is known about the prevalence of negative emotions experienced by other citizens. We know that street vendors' quality of life has been affected during the pandemic (see Data in Brief #38), so their mental health has also deteriorated. This section shows, based on the metrics stipulated by the OECD to measure subjective well-being, how street vendors' life satisfaction is and with what prevalence they experience negative emotions such as worry, anxiety, and depression.

Our previous research on street vendors shows that despite the vulnerability of their economic activity, they had an average life satisfaction of 8.1. When compared with the information in Table 1, this data gives us an overview of the pandemic's effects on the street vendors' mental health. In Colombia, health is the factor that most affects a person's quality of life (Castro et al., 2019). Therefore, it is essential to design public policies that contribute to improving the health status of this population. Public discussion on this topic has also made it possible to understand the close relationship between physical and mental health. The increase in worry, anxiety, and depression has a direct and adverse effect on our physical health and directly impacts our work productivity (POLIS, 2020).

Table 1. Subjective well-being metrics

Variable	Total	Minoría étnica	No minoría étnica
Life satisfaction*	6.9	6.5	7.1
How happy did you feel yesterday**	6.2	6.1	6.3
How worried did you feel yesterday **	6.3	6.5	6.2
How depressed did you feel yesterday **	3.4	3.5	3.5
I feel that in the last few days my levels of anxiety and stress have increased ***	6.8	6.9	6.7

Calculations based on survey data

*On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 means not satisfied, and 10 means completely satisfied.

**On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 means you did not experience these feelings at any time yesterday, and 10 means you experienced these feelings all the time yesterday.

***On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 means you completely disagree with the statement, and 10 means you completely agree.

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Statistical methodology:

Target group:
Street vendors of Cali, Colombia.
Sample size:
750 surveys
Data collection:
Telephone surveys. Street vendors' leaders provided phone numbers.
Margin of error:
95% confidence level and 3.5% margin of error.

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