



Letter to the editor

From COVID 19 Pandemic to Endemic

José Eduardo Orellana-Centeno^{1,2,3}
Roxana Nayeli Guerrero-Sotelo⁴

- ¹. Profesor Investigador Tiempo Completo de la Universidad de la Sierra Sur, Instituto de Investigación Sobre Salud Pública, Licenciatura en Odontología. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9518-7319>
- ². Estudiante de la especialidad en bioética, Unidad Académica de Filosofía de la Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas.
- ³. Doctorado en Educación, Universidad Abierta de San Luis Potosí.
- ⁴. Profesora Investigadora Tiempo Completo de la Universidad de la Sierra Sur, Instituto de Investigación Sobre la Salud Pública, Licenciatura en Enfermería, Guillermo Rojas Mijangos s/n, esq. Av. Universidad, C.P. 70800, Miahuatlán de Porfirio Díaz, Oaxaca, México. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4503-7478>

Corresponding autor.

José Eduardo Orellana Centeno
E-mail jeorellano@unsis.edu.mx

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Mexico, like most countries in the world, had difficulty developing and implementing adequate public health measures in the early stages of the pandemic, and the Mexican government's response appears to have taken too long; the first three cases were confirmed in late February and it was not until March 24 that the Mexican government began promoting distancing measures and a consistent policy, to date, on issues such as the use of masks¹.

In Mexico, the Subsecretary of Prevention and Health Promotion, Hugo Lopez-Gatell Ramirez announced April 26, 2022 "the end of the pandemic and the beginning of the endemic

phase, based on the fact that Mexico met the four criteria of the World Health Organization considered to make the transition to endemic and end of the epidemic period, which are the following²:

- *High response capacity*
- *High vaccination coverage*
- *Very few deaths detected*
- *Few positive cases detected*".

According to the data presented by the Mexican Ministry of Health regarding these points, "there is a hospital occupancy rate of 2%, vaccination coverage in persons over 18 years of age is close to 90%, the number of infections per day in the last two weeks is two-hundred ninety-two per day and the average number of deaths in the last two weeks is four per day"³.

Furthermore, the federal authorities decided to suspend the issuance of the epidemiological risk traffic light, based on the reason that, according to these authorities, all the states that make up the Mexican territory were in green color, therefore, such monitoring will no longer be carried out due to the sustained decrease in COVID 19 infections. This decision is questionable from a political and legal point of view, since suppressing the publication by official authorities responsible for the health field generates, on the one hand, a situation of uncertainty for the general population regarding the real daily status and, on the other hand, the absence of a logical reason to justify the absence of such scientific-medical information increased distrust, confusion and ignorance.

In order to reach the endemic stage of the disease, and above all, for it to be controlled, security measures and social distancing should not be relaxed immediately or by decree, but in a controlled manner and with the freedom of those who wish to continue with them on an individual basis. An example of the relaxation of measures before their time was the cases that occurred in Europe and China, where, especially in the latter, there was an increase in cases, when it seemed that they were already in transit to this endemic moment of the disease⁴.

The governments of all the countries of the world must be up to the task of making decisions regarding the steps to be taken in this transition towards endemicity. Although the pandemic transitions from thousands of cases per day to less than one hundred or hundreds of cases per day, it is still a scenario that can change at any time and we must be cautious. There are no excuses for any country that could be unprepared to deal with this health problem. In Mexico we are in a transition process, but we are not in an endemic, we are still in a pandemic, even though the health authorities in Mexico consider the pandemic and its priority attention to be over; when not even the World Health Organization, as the highest international health authority, has indicated or declared the end of the pandemic and the entry into the endemic state. The pandemic does not end by decree; care and prevention by the government, institutions, health personnel and society must continue.

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