



The methodology of media analytical weaving as a possibility in nursing research

A metodologia da tessitura analítica de mídia como possibilidade na pesquisa de enfermagem
La metodología del tejido analítico de medios como posibilidad en la investigación en enfermería

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: to present the methodological path of the media analytical weave and reflect on its implementation from the perspective of Foucault's archeogenealogy in a study on nurses' suffering during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. **Method:** this is a theoretical-methodological study, in which some concepts of media analysis were used as well as Foucault's theorizations of archaeogenealogy and discourse analysis. We presented the methodological sequence of the research, covering the selection of journalistic vehicles used, data collection, selection of the materiality to be worked on and subsequent stage of analysis. **Results:** the collected data were systematized, creating the media analytical weaving, composed of three stages: full reading of selected reports and applicability of rules of the discursive operators of print media; full reading and capture of excerpts – in the headlines – and of the discursive networks – in the reports; and categorization of the results and elaboration of analytical categories based on social and cultural threads. These procedural elements are freely inspired by the discursive operators of print media, Foucault's discourse analysis and Minayo's content analysis. **Conclusion and implications for practice:** media analysis and its weaving can represent a powerful possibility for data analysis in nursing research, providing conceptual and strategic tools for new perspectives and reflections in contemporary health.

Keywords: Nursing; Nursing Research; Pandemics; Social Media; Speech.

RESUMO

Objetivo: apresentar o percurso metodológico da tessitura analítica de mídia e refletir sobre sua implementação na perspectiva da arqueogenealogia foucaultiana em estudo sobre o sofrimento de enfermeiras na pandemia de COVID-19 no Brasil. **Método:** trata-se de estudo teórico-metodológico, no qual foram utilizados alguns conceitos de análise de mídia, além de teorizações foucaultianas da arqueogenealogia e análise de discurso. Apresentamos a sequência metodológica da pesquisa, abrangendo a seleção dos veículos jornalísticos utilizados, coleta de dados, seleção da materialidade a ser trabalhada e posterior etapa de análises. **Resultados:** os dados coletados foram sistematizados, criando a tessitura analítica de mídia, composta de três etapas: leitura integral das reportagens selecionadas e aplicabilidade das regras dos operadores discursivos da mídia impressa; leitura integral e captura dos excertos – nas manchetes – e das redes discursivas – nas reportagens; e categorização dos resultados e elaboração de categorias analíticas a partir de fios condutores sociais e culturais. Esses elementos processuais são livremente inspirados nos operadores discursivos da mídia impressa, da análise de discurso foucaultiana e da análise de conteúdo de Minayo. **Conclusões e implicações para a prática:** a análise de mídia e sua tessitura podem representar uma possibilidade potente de análise de dados em pesquisas na enfermagem, fornecendo ferramentas conceituais e estratégicas para novos olhares e reflexões na contemporaneidade da área da saúde.

Palavras-chave: Discurso; Enfermagem; Mídias Sociais; Pandemia; Pesquisa em Enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivos: presentar el recorrido metodológico de la trama analítica mediática y reflexionar sobre su implementación desde la perspectiva de la arqueogenealogía foucaultiana en un estudio sobre el sufrimiento de las enfermeras en la pandemia de COVID-19 en Brasil. **Método:** se trata de un estudio teórico-metodológico, en el que se utilizaron algunos conceptos analíticos de medios, así como teorizaciones foucaultianas de arqueogenealogía y análisis del discurso. Se presenta la secuencia metodológica de la investigación, abarcando la selección de los medios periodísticos, la recolección de datos, la selección de la materialidad a trabajar y la posterior etapa de análisis. **Resultados:** los datos fueron sistematizados, creando el tejido analítico de medios, compuesto por tres etapas: lectura completa de los informes seleccionados y aplicabilidad de las reglas de los operadores discursivos de medios impresos; la lectura completa y la captación de fragmentos en los titulares y de las redes discursivas en los reportajes; categorización de resultados y la elaboración de categorías analíticas basadas en hilos sociales y culturales. Estos elementos procedimentales se inspiran libremente en los operadores discursivos de los medios impresos, el análisis del discurso foucaultiano y el análisis de contenido de Minayo. **Conclusión e implicaciones para la práctica:** el análisis de los medios y su textura pueden representar una poderosa posibilidad para el análisis de datos en la investigación de enfermería, proporcionando herramientas conceptuales y estratégicas para nuevas perspectivas y reflexiones en la atención sanitaria contemporánea.

Palabras clave: Discurso; Enfermería; Investigación en Enfermería; Medios de Comunicación Sociales; Pandemias.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2020, contemporary societies were challenged by a new and sudden reality: the COVID-19 pandemic, first reported in Wuhan province, China, in December of the previous year. This scenario caused great harm to individuals, families, communities and societies on a global scale. Nursing, a professional group that has historically been essential in health institutions, received special visibility throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in the fight against the new coronavirus.

Amidst the spotlight and the status of heroines established, especially by social media, the issue of nursing work and the suffering of nurses who worked on the front lines of care work came to the fore. According to the World Health Organization (WHO),¹ nursing workers, pressured by the emergency situation of the pandemic, presented worrying levels of anxiety, depression and associated stress. The precariousness of employment directly affected these professionals' mental health, since low recognition and low wage interfered with the safety and development of the care provided.²

The relationship between nursing work and possible forms of suffering brought to light the challenge of understanding the different facets involved in professional practice from two dimensions: the world of work in a context of neoliberal capitalism; and care and its particularities in processes involving interpersonal relationships. From this perspective, both physical and psychological exhaustion have had important consequences for nurses' mental health, with these dilemmas being widely reported on television news, print media and social networks.

It is important to note that social media are conveyors, but also selectors, (re)processing various types of discourses, since, when transmitting them, they also cancel, omit, exclude, define and impose meanings. Reports, articles, advertisements and other media genres make up cultural texts that produce ways of doing, learning, teaching and, above all, understanding the world.³

Considering that social media acts as a producer of plots that teach cultural ways of being and existing in this world, we proposed other perspectives on the topic, analyzing the discourses that circulated in media outlets during the pandemic in Brazil about nurses' suffering. We sought to investigate discourses produced regarding nursing role in Brazil in order to understand how ways of being, suffering and exercising the profession have been constituted in contemporary times, especially amidst that pandemic.

Such discursivities were analyzed based on Michel Foucault's understanding,⁴ for whom there is nothing obscure in what is said and there is nothing behind the discourses that we seek to understand discursive networks. Analyzing the things said means looking only at them, at the relationships that constitute them and at the practices that allowed them to be said. Everything is set and alive: there are no truths to be uncovered from something hidden. In short, what is said and what is not said are the elements of the device. The device is the network that can be woven between these elements. Bearing this consideration in mind, we emphasized that the veracity of what is uttered by social media

was not analyzed. The intention was to analyze the discursivities that constitute the production of meanings about this suffering.

We chose media analysis because it brings to the scene more than media content observation and assessment, since it seeks to explore the historical constitution of discourses, processes of production, distribution and reception of media messages, as well as the social, political and cultural impacts resulting from these communications. By unraveling its various layers, media analysis allows us to understand how narratives are constructed, how power relations are exercised and how productions are transmitted and contested in contemporary society. This multidisciplinary field incorporates diverse approaches, from traditional content analysis to analyses based on theories of communication, sociology, psychology, and cultural studies. Media analysis, therefore, serves as a powerful tool for examining media influence on public opinion, cultural identity formation, and collective knowledge construction.⁵

We understand, therefore, that the media is more than a space for reproducing discourses and creating cultural identities, since it also plays a fundamental role in the constitution of subjectivities and, in this sense, in the discourses that circulate and that constitute subjects.

Considering the above, this article aimed to present the media analytical weaving (MAW) methodological path and reflect on its implementation from the perspective of Foucault's archegenealogy, in a study on nurses' suffering during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is, therefore, a theoretical-methodological article, whose originality can inspire new possibilities for nursing research.

METHOD

Ongoing methodological craftsmanship: study characterization, research *corpus* and data collection

The construction of a methodological path, for research freely inspired by a media analysis, requires understanding the existence of an almost infinite scenario of possible analyses. To this end, we took over as researchers-craftsmen, who worked with an empirical media corpus, as it was possible to broaden the interpretative lenses. The media and its discursivities invite the creation of analytical strategies in research that allow us to understand the current times beyond the methods and techniques widely used in nursing research.

Raw material: study characterization

In order to organize a structure for the analysis of the discursivities present in the selected reports, based on their statements, we proposed a strategy called MAW, designed based on Foucault's theoretical-methodological inspiration, with the intention of analyzing the media discourses produced about nurses' suffering during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. By analyzing the knowledge-power structures in the health field and the discourses that surround them, it was possible to understand

the complex relationships that constitute them as nurses and that shape nursing practice.

Foucault opens space for new interpretations of practices that, over time, have been naturalized and, in many cases, trivialized. Their theories, like a toolbox, make it possible to investigate the complex relations of power and knowledge that permeate health practices, encouraging discussions about professional practices, work activities, public policies, care strategies, history and nursing knowledge in a way that distances itself from traditional approaches.⁶ Thus, it is a powerful methodological choice for an investigation into nursing role and suffering production, constituting ways of being and exercising the profession in contemporary times.

Weaving possibilities: selecting materiality

When choosing the news outlets and selecting the material that would be analyzed in this study, we were faced with many possibilities and some doubts. Firstly, we were certain that the readings would be too intense, due to the number of reports published during the pandemic period. Despite the large number of articles, many of them seemed to be repeated: the same subject, published in different newspapers or websites and written in a similar way. In the vast majority of cases, the photos and images were also repeated. Our concern was to resist the temptation to look at things from a decontextualized perspective, detached from historical contingencies, especially because we were experiencing the pandemic both as researchers on the subject and because some of the research participants were women, nurses, who lived and worked in times of health and social crisis.

The time frame chosen for the selection of reports was February 25, 2020, when Brazil reported the beginning of the disease, even before the WHO announced the pandemic, on March 11, 2020.¹ The three-year analysis period was intentional, as it also includes the end of the public health emergency declared on May 5, 2023 by the WHO.⁷

We determined that the analysis of reports would cover the entire pandemic period, in order to obtain sufficient materiality so that, like a timeline, it could better capture the discourses on nursing at all moments of the pandemic. With the aim of (re)thinking nurses' suffering from other perspectives, we set out to choose the journalistic outlets. This selection, therefore, included reports published by the *Folha de São Paulo* (FSP), *El País Brasil*, BBC News, *Portal G1* and *Portal Universo Online* (UOL) newspapers.

The choice of these newspapers and news portals was also intentional, based on the researchers' daily experience in searching for information and news. It should be said here that, at first, we were caught by the avalanche of reports that arrived, through different means (social networks, emails, messaging groups) on the subject, but also that, generally, these reports were from the five vehicles mentioned. Since most of the news was free to access, it was easy to access. For FSP reports, it was necessary to subscribe in advance to access them.

As for the main characteristics of these media outlets, we considered it important to briefly describe them. In February 2021, FSP celebrated its 100th anniversary and is the newspaper with

the largest circulation in Brazil. A pioneer in the digital subscription model in the country, the outlet has seen significant growth in the paid audience of its online version in recent months, consolidating its leadership in this segment as well. *El País* is a general news daily. Its first issue appeared on May 4, 1976, when Spain began its transition to democracy. Four decades later, it is still the Spanish media of reference inside and outside the country. Its Brazilian version appeared in 2013, and was closed in 2021. BBC News is the department, within BBC, responsible for the corporation's news area. *Portal G1* is a Brazilian free-access news portal, maintained by *Grupo Globo*, under the guidance of *Central Globo de Jornalismo*, launched on September 18, 2006. Through the news portal, it is also possible to access videos of news programs produced by *Grupo Globo*. Moreover, the portal provides access to news from each region and videos of local news programs from *TV Globo* and its affiliates throughout Brazil as well as access to radio stations. *Portal UOL* is a Brazilian company that provides content, products and internet services from *Grupo UOL*.

Craftsmanship and its details: data collections

The first stage taken in relation to the chosen media outlets was to subscribe to the online version of FSP. We immediately looked at the many search possibilities: which keywords should we use? Should we broaden or narrow the search? Which filters should be used and which strategy should be used to cross-reference the selected words? Initially, an organization was made that included both printing the reports and sorting them in online spreadsheets. From then on, investigative clues were organized.

Concerning the search criteria, some definitions were made, such as selecting, through the search filter of newspaper websites and news portals, using some combined keywords. The inclusion criteria were: a) Brazilian reports; b) reports that represented women in the nursing team as the main or highlighted topic; and c) reports that discussed the topic of suffering and/or mental health of these professionals, based on the Brazilian historical context.

After selecting the reports, the initial exercise was based on careful reading, looking for clues that referred to nurses' work process during the pandemic, especially those that emphasized suffering and discomfort in the workplace. In order to select the reports, we used the organization of headlines based on an analytical look at the data, with initial information, to collect other data, such as publication date, report title, headline, outlet and access link. Chart 1 shows the combination of keywords for searching for reports.

An important piece of information in this initial selection stage refers to the duplication of reports found. Those that resulted from the main intersection "*Enfermagem AND Pandemia*", for the most part, were repeated in other searches, in other media outlets. Thus, after the search process, it was necessary to perform a manual selection to exclude those reports that appeared more than once, based on the different crossings. In this pre-selection stage, the contents of the reports were read in full, and those whose topic did not refer to the object of study were discarded.

Those that met the inclusion criteria and that dialogued with the research objective were added to the analysis *corpus*, totaling 179 eligible reports.

Craftsmanship and ethics

In relation to the ethical aspects of this research, it is important to note that it was a bibliographic and documentary research. Therefore, it does not include research activities directly involving human beings. The guidelines set forth in Resolution 510/2016,⁸ which waives the ethical analysis of research carried out with information in the public domain, were followed. The copyright of the texts, documents and works consulted was protected in accordance with Law 9,610 of February 1998.⁹

RESULTS

Below, we present the results related to the methodological stages discussed in this article. Initially, it can be seen the constructed methodological flowchart and, subsequently, the description of the other research stages.

Chart 2 describes the methodological flowchart for including reports.

The media analytical weaving methodology and its possibilities in nursing research

The data from the selected reports were arranged according to the data analytical organization structure. We named it MAW, which emerged from our experiments in this research, based on other possibilities of interpreting a media analysis. It is composed of some procedural elements freely inspired by the discursive operators of print media (DOPM),³ from Foucault's discourse analysis,⁴ from Minayo's content analysis¹⁰ and from analytical categories arising from Fischer's media studies.¹¹⁻¹³

The bias in the data that will be analyzed is a topic for important reflection. The power that appears in the production of media discourses is not far from the need to review and analyze the policies of meaning of these discourses. In this way, we are immersed in social, economic, educational, cultural and philosophical problems of our time. In this regard, we are invited to (re)think about other ways to understand current events, finding the meanings of media discourses and realizing how these are products of a system that organizes meanings.¹³

Thus, extracting the discourses relevant to this study was only possible after prior organization of this methodological path.

Chart 1. Combination of keywords to search for reports on FSP/UOL and BBC News, *El País Brasil* and *Portal G1* portals

Keyword combination	FSP/UOL	BBC News	<i>El País Brasil</i>	<i>Portal G1</i>
<i>Enfermagem AND Pandemia</i>	293	57	146	383
<i>Enfermeira AND Pandemia</i>	278	54	146	308
<i>Enfermeira AND Sofrimento AND Pandemia</i>	44	38	115	54
<i>Enfermeira AND COVID-19</i>	198	48	130	214
<i>Enfermagem AND COVID-19</i>	230	56	130	114

Chart 2. Methodological flowchart.

IDENTIFICATION	Broad search for reports based on descriptors = 3,036 Combination of descriptors and inclusion criteria FSP/UOL= 1,043; BBC News =253; <i>El País Brasil</i> =667; <i>Portal G1</i> =1,073	
SELECTION	Reports excluded after reading the headline (n=1,632)	Reason: reports that did not correspond to the objective of this study.
ELIGIBILITY	Reports deleted after being read in full (n=1,210)	Reason: duplicate reports (same topic and approach, but published in different outlets).
INCLUDED	Final sample (n=179)	

Based on the theoretical framework explained earlier in this text, in parallel with the stages proposed for the path of this research, the three stages for MAW methodology systematization were elaborated as follows:

- 1) Full reading of selected reports and applicability of the rules inspired by DOPM:³ this is the first stage of analysis, in which there was the structural organization of reports and their descriptive elements together with the DOPM rules, such as:
 - Emphasis rule: refers to which aspects reports highlight and emphasize. In addition to the alleged “informative neutrality”, the published texts indicate the positions taken by newspapers and news portals, sometimes through the use of words or expressions (e.g., of an evaluative nature), and other times it is the arguments themselves that indicate the positions taken (favorable or contrary);
 - Resource rule: refers to which graphic resources are used in published articles (use of images, colors, photographs, font types and sizes, etc.). For the MAW methodology, images will be analyzed as part of the discourses enunciated by the media, and the text will be written as the main element articulating truths;
 - Repetition rule: the topics presented are sometimes repeated at varying frequencies and in the most different conditions (from the practically “literal” repetition of a report to repetitions in which the topic is presented using arguments contrary to what has already been published).
- 2) Full reading and capture of excerpts from the reports: from a qualitative perspective, the entirety of the collected material was examined, capturing the circulating discourses. At this stage, we were inspired by Minayo’s content analysis,¹⁰ initially carrying out a skim reading of the entire data *corpus* to then identify the discursivities that were most present in the analyzed material. We associated this technique with Foucault’s understanding of discourse in the use of ways of saying something, at a given time and intention, which inscribes discourse in the “game of its appearances and its dispersions”.^{14:40} We understand that reading each report requires constant reflection that discourse production is regulated by social and cultural modes that produce us as subjects in a social system that is the result of knowledge/power relations, especially addressed by the media. It is important to emphasize that images had the same analytical value as excerpts.
- 3) Categorization of results and elaboration of analytical categories based on social and cultural threads: the analytical categories were constructed based on the analyses proposed in stages 1 and 2 of this method, and its weaving was embroidered from social and cultural threads, which can be made up of historical and political facts, technical documents, artistic and religious aspects, diversity and other social and cultural elements that allow the analyses to be constituted in diversified, living and dynamic elements. In this research, the guiding

thread was labor suffering, supported by a neoliberal and necropolitical context,¹⁵ in which certain population groups are abandoned by the State, doomed to death, due to lack of assistance.

We thus confront current hegemonic discursivities, seeking to identify the conditions of possibility that allowed their emergence and permanence as unique truths, and their confrontation with many others, producers of knowledge. We emphasized that data analysis corresponded to Michel Foucault’s archigenealogical perspective.¹⁴ From this perspective, from the construction of analytical categories, through the identification of discursivities, the analysis followed that used genealogy as a guide. Thus, the historical moment in which discourses were produced becomes fundamental to delimit what were the conditions of possibilities, or the factors, that made the production of such discourses possible. By taking historicity into account, it becomes possible to explain the origins of certain discourses and events.

DISCUSSION

Michel Foucault and media analysis: other lenses for nursing research

Media analysis, under the influence of Michel Foucault’s conceptual tools, involves the investigation of the power strategies that shape the breadth of media production, discursive networks, the analysis of hegemonic discourses and the identification of control mechanisms in the narratives produced. This strategy allows us to investigate the norms, values and institutions that shape ways of life in contemporary societies.

Foucault emphasizes the importance of discursive formations, which are sets of communicative practices that give shape and meaning to knowledge. Discursive formations include not only written texts, but also oral discourses, images, and other forms of signification. For the author,⁴ discourse is made up of a set of statements, which can define the conditions of existence, and treated politically as practices, due to their effects of truth. The notion of statement takes the “function of existence”, exercised over units such as the sentence, the proposition or the act of speech. The statement itself would not constitute a unit either, since it is found in the transversality of sentences, propositions and acts of language: it is “always an event, which neither language nor meaning can exhaust entirely”.^{16:32} It is “a function that crosses a domain of possible structures and units and that makes [these] appear, with concrete contents, in time and space. The stances, behaviors and ways of life are, concomitantly, produced and producers of these meanings”.^{16:32} The topic of discourse was addressed in the work “The Archaeology of Knowledge”,¹⁴ in which the author sought to understand the way in which power relations need to produce and put discourses into circulation, in order to produce and legitimize truths.

Discourses thus form a dynamic and relational network of forces, supported by truths that are repeatedly enunciated and, thus, compose events that are configured by knowledge and powers that subjectify individuals. These elements produce

subjects and promote the circulation of knowledge that have combined effects of force.⁴ By mapping social practices, discourses and institutions, they reveal the complex networks of power that permeate our existence. One of the central concepts of Foucault's genealogy is the idea that practices, institutions and discourses are not inevitable products of historical evolution, but rather the results of historical contingencies. Foucault argues that we must investigate how relations of power and knowledge emerged at specific moments in history.¹⁷

Based on these concepts, the media can be analyzed to show us how the discourses that produce and circulate knowledge reflect power relations. Hence, we can use these analyses to deconstruct certain hegemonies in contemporary societies. The media is conceptualized as synonymous with means of communication that disseminate information, such as television, newspapers, magazines, among others, and is considered one of the institutions responsible for education in the world, whether beneficial or not. The media, in this context, is responsible for transmitting values and socializing knowledge as well as imposing standards of social conduct.¹⁸ As an object of analysis, it comprises a means of communication that configures a privileged space for information and educability, since the means of communication enable individuals to assume for themselves sets of truths that act in the processes of subjectivation and recognition in these processes.¹¹

It is, therefore, a pedagogical device that is not limited to "a discussion about language, about strategies for constructing cultural products [...], but, above all, a discussion about power and forms of subjectivation".^{19:115} In this regard, subjectivation devices can be considered "decidedly heterogeneous sets, which include discourses, institutions, architectural arrangements, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, philanthropic propositions, in short: of what is said, as much as of what is not said".^{19:115} In its capillarity, the media, as a device of subjectivation, guides and challenges individuals' daily lives, participating in the production of subjectivities and identities, relating to the constitution of subjects in culture.

In social and institutional contexts, the media device acts as a producer of meanings, and functions as a voice of authority that opens paths for meanings to crystallize into effects of truths, affecting everything that is said in words, images, colors or in the absence of them. The media can be a network in which meanings are woven according to the dispute of the discursive formations in play, which will determine which meanings can remain in the order of discourse, and which must be transformed or erased.²⁰

When working with these discourses, there are many possibilities for analyzing the conditions that operate for their legitimacy and veracity. Analyzing media discourses presupposes involving the analysis of our society and culture based on a complex relationship of what is inscribed in communication systems, which includes what is imagined and what is sayable.²¹ Thus, the meaning in Foucault's analysis is given through the examination of the relevance of the uses that are made of the truths instituted

in the world.²² Analyzing the media and its discourses, from this perspective, means understanding its effects, limits and powers in the contemporary world.

From this perspective, social media can be understood as devices that produce subjectivities, including around the image and visibility in relation to nursing work. For this reason, the use of a methodology capable of analyzing social media, the way it conveys information about nursing work, being able to enable the correlation of such information with historical and social aspects, becomes a powerful tool for the field of nursing research.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Thus, developed based on inspiration from the archeogenealogical method and media analysis, we present this new methodological proposal for data analysis, MAW, described throughout this article, addressing its systematization, from the techniques used to collect data to the stages and methodological tools used for analysis and categorization.

This study presented a new methodological possibility for nursing, since the media acts as a vehicle, and reports, articles, advertisements and other journalistic genres make up cultural texts that produce ways of doing, learning, teaching and, above all, understanding the world.

Furthermore, based on the central objective of this research, it was possible to investigate some of the discourses produced regarding nursing performance and its process of labor suffering, in order to understand how ways of being, practicing the profession and fighting for their rights have been formed in contemporary times, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic, in Brazil.

These statements contributed to the search for answers to the research problem that served as a constant direction for the research that gave rise to this article: what were the discourses conveyed by the media about female nursing workers' suffering during the pandemic in Brazil? Thus, the main contribution of this research and the methodological uses presented here is the new focus on a qualitative approach, allowing for diverse investigative paths beyond those already traditionally used in nursing research.

As limitations, we pointed out the scarcity of studies with this methodological approach, making comparisons between studies and contexts impossible. In this regard, we identified the need and potential of conducting research in nursing that uses this methodological approach.

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DATA AVAILABILITY RESEARCH

The contents underlying the research text are included in the article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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