

# Repercussion on social networks of the switched keyboard syndrome

*Repercusión en redes sociales del síndrome del teclado cambiado*

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Covid-19 has caused numerous health problems in the general population and in health professionals. Some of these problems are not well known, as is the case of the changed keyboard syndrome. The aim of this study was to assess this syndrome among health care personnel in the health area of Cartagena.

**Methodology:** A survey was carried out among 156 health care workers in the health area of Cartagena to assess the changed keyboard syndrome. The repercussion of this syndrome in different social networks was also assessed.

**Results:** 45.1% of the people who responded to the survey stated that they had suffered from this syndrome at some time. As for the repercussions, 16.6% indicated that they were too concentrated and should stop, 14.1% believed that they were starting to get sick and 17.2% thought that this situation was funny. Some 52.1% stated that it does not happen to them.

**Conclusions:** Switched keyboard syndrome is a new consequence of the pandemic that should be evaluated in greater depth to see what repercussions it may have on healthcare personnel.

**Keywords:** Keyboard, telemedicine, telephone, social networks.

## Resumen

**Introducción:** La Covid-19 ha ocasionado numerosos problemas de salud en la población general y en los profesionales sanitarios. Algunos de esos problemas no son demasiado conocidos como es el caso del síndrome del teclado cambiado. El objetivo de este trabajo ha sido valorar este síndrome entre el personal sanitario del área de salud de Cartagena.

**Metodología:** Se realiza una encuesta en 156 trabajadores sanitarios del área de salud de Cartagena para valorar el síndrome del teclado cambiado. Se valora también la repercusión de este síndrome en diferentes redes sociales.

**Resultados:** El 45,1% de las personas que respondieron a la encuesta manifiestan haber sufrido este síndrome en alguna ocasión. En cuanto a las repercusiones, un 16,6% indican que están demasiado concentrados y que deberían parar, un 14,1% creen que están empezando a enfermar y un 17,2% creen que esta situación es graciosa. Un 52,1% manifiestan que a ellos no les ocurre.

**Conclusiones:** El síndrome del teclado cambiado es una nueva consecuencia de la pandemia que debería ser evaluada con mayor profundidad para ver las repercusiones que puede tener en el personal sanitario.

**Palabras clave:** Teclado, telemedicina, teléfono, redes sociales.

## Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic, and the increase in positive cases at the most complicated times, has forced hospitals and health centers to close in order to prioritize patient safety. An unprecedented situation that has led to an increase in medical assistance via telephone, telematic consultations or through the Patient Portal, causing a change in habits for users and healthcare professionals.

Among the consequences of this new reality, a team of doctors specializing in Family and Community Medicine at the West Cartagena Teaching Health Center has detected a hitherto unknown syndrome that has been baptized as "switched keyboard syndrome" (SKS), which consists of trying to enter computer data using the telephone keyboard or vice versa, trying to make a telephone call using the computer's expanded keys.

A study reveals that when we are faced with an extraordinary situation and we focus our work on one task we perform actions that distort our reality.

"In the toughest phases of the pandemic, we spend hours on the phone trying to reach everyone, plus you're on the computer all the time entering data or writing electronic prescriptions. And when you realize you are trying to use the computer by pressing the phone keys, then you get scared and think you are going crazy," says Alfonso Piñana, the physician who led the study.

But his was not a unique case and he decided to launch this research by carrying out an extensive questionnaire among other healthcare professionals in Murcia. The results have been surprising, since 4 out of ten doctors and nursing professionals have suffered at some time from this new syndrome. These conclusions were accepted at the 2nd National Multidisciplinary Covid-19 Congress of the Spanish Scientific Societies.

According to those responsible for the study, when we are faced with an extraordinary situation and we focus our work on a task, we sometimes carry out actions that distort our reality.

In this sense, they have also been able to verify that with the return to relative normality, with the return of patients to healthcare centers and the decrease in new positives, the incidence of this syndrome among healthcare professionals is decreasing.

During 2020 the healthcare professionals of the Primary Care teams of the Cartagena Health Area have attended more than 600,000 consultations by telephone:

- 418,834 corresponding to family physicians.
- 53,205 from pediatricians.
- 149,390 from nurses.

The bulk of the activity has been the follow-up of covid-positive patients, almost 15,000 since the beginning of the pandemic, to which must be added their contacts. In total, around 45,000 patients were contacted by telephone from Monday to Sunday.

The aim of the study was to test the impact of the SKS on social networks.

## Methodology

A Google search was carried out to assess the impact on the presentation of the paper at the 2nd Covid 19 national interdisciplinary congress on the "switched keyboard syndrome" one week after its presentation. A questionnaire was elaborated, thanks to the google form platform, with 5 questions on age, gender, field of work and whether, when providing health care via telephone, the patient had tried to enter data into the computer using the telephone keyboard or vice versa or tried to make a telephone call using the expanded keyboard of the computer. A final question was asked about what the respondent was thinking when the CTS happened to him/her. All responses were recorded from December 2020 to February 2021. Dissemination was carried out via Twitter, e-mails and WhatsApp groups of Area 2 of the Murcian Health Service.

## Results

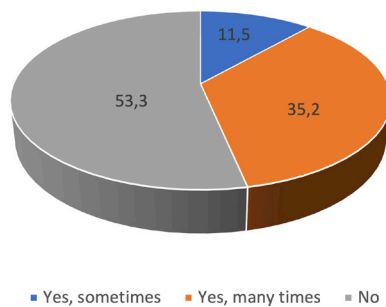
The results of the work were presented at the 2nd National Interdisciplinary Congress of Covid 19 and consisted of responses from 156 forms. The age distribution was 5.1% (8) under 30 years, 16% (25) between 31 and 40 years, 34% (53) between 41 and 50 years, 30.1% (47) between 51 and 60 years and 14.7% (23) over 60 years of age. 58.3%(91) were female and 41.7%(65) were male. A total of 77.6% (121) were primary care physicians, 10.9% (17) were hospital care physicians, 5.1% (8) were primary care nurses and the remaining 6.4% (10) were other health professionals. In relation to the question of whether they had suffered from the changed keyboard syndrome, 53.3% (83) answered that it had never happened to them, 35.2% (55) answered that it had happened to them on some occasion and 11.5% (18) admitted that SKS had happened to them many times (**Figure 1**).

In response to the last question, "What does the respondent think about when SKS happens to him/her? 51.6% (81) answered that it had never happened to them. Some 17.2% (27) answered that they were too concentrated and should stop, 14.6% (23) answered that they started to get sick and the rest, 16.6% (53) that it was a funny event. These results led to a diffusion in social networks and media, such as press, radio and television

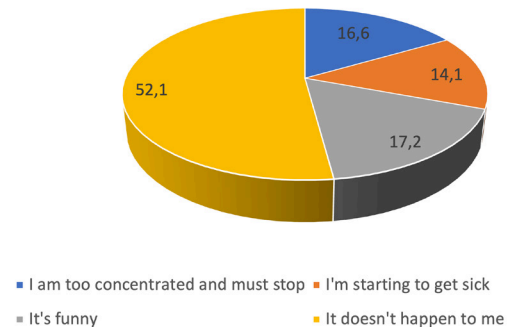
that a week after its publication, by putting in the google search engine: "changed keyboard syndrome" makes all

the results of the first page of the search engine are related to the news and part of the results of the second page.

**Figure 1:** When using telephone consultation in health care, have you ever tried to use your telephone keypad to enter data into the computer or vice versa?



**Figure 2:** When using telephone consultation in health care, have you ever tried to use your telephone keypad to enter data into the computer or vice versa?



## Conclusions

The reality is that when we face a new reality and focus our work on a task, we assume behaviors that distort reality. The work originated from a comment on the situation of wanting to enter computer data with the telephone keyboard, thinking that it was a unique behavior, but that other colleagues began to comment that it also happened to them. Therefore, the SKS can be considered as a consequence of the pandemic times we are living in.

Given its repercussion in the media, it should serve us to be open to any new activity that appears in health care and as a warning sign, to stop, take a breath and return to the service of users who demand health care.

## Interests conflict

The researchers declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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