Implementation of the Support Center for COVID-19 Detection and Clinical Research at Marcílio Dias Naval Hospital

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The World Health Organization declared coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic in March 2020. The first documented case of the disease in Brazil occurred on February 26. A few days later, the Molecular Biology Laboratory (MBL)/Biomedical Research Institute at Marcílio Dias Naval Hospital (HNMD) carried out its first RT-qPCR to detect the new virus. This work presents an overview of an implementation of the "Support Center for COVID-19 Detection and Clinical Research" (SCCDCR) in HNMD, aimed at supplying the Brazilian Navy (BN) with human capital and infrastructure to support the diagnostic process and promote scientific discoveries that can generate new knowledge and technologies. The challenges faced in this research included remodeling space, acquiring new knowledge, materials, equipment, recruiting and training military and civilian personnel, according to biosafety standards. Since 2020, more than 16 thousand samples have been processed for diagnosis and research purposes. In addition, communication of science to the general public and scientific studies have been developed in partnership with renowned institutions. The implementation of the SCCDCR represented the HNMD independence as the gold standard for COVID-19 diagnosis in difficult times. The current MBL structure leaves a legacy to BN, which now has a robust space for molecular biology and virology. In line with the mission of the Navy Force, an efficient structure was built to minimize possible damage from biological threats. This project contributes to the fast diagnostic process, high-level research, and defense of our homeland.