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Researching under the bombs



A recent article highlights the impact that war can have on the process of working on a doctoral thesis. It addresses from the difficulty of valuing one's own research in a war-torn context where values change, to the importance of having humane institutions that offer real support to those living through such circumstances.

What happens to our feelings when we are conducting research, such as for a doctoral thesis, and people are dying around us, bombs are falling on our homes or we are forced to flee? With the support of his supervisor, Carme Ferré-Pavia, Lebanese doctoral student Hussein Bajouk, now a doctor, have published a "defining moment" in the most prestigious journal on health communication. These essays provide a human perspective on the background of research, the lessons learned, the challenges, and the social or psychological implications of the studies.

The article entitled "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Research Amid Poverty, Disease, War, and Death" —published in *Health Communication*, a Taylor & Francis journal, in December 2025— outlines the researcher's journey and their conflicting feelings from different perspectives.

Firstly, what impact does the war have on research when you have to conduct interviews and it breaks out, causing values to change and making what you are doing seem unimportant. Secondly, how does this affect your determination to continue with your research. In this case, you are working on a doctoral thesis. How do you decide whether to continue when

you have lost part of your family or your home? Thirdly, the issue of the institution emerges, involving both the government and the Autonomous University of Barcelona. With the support of the PhD programme in Media, Communication and Culture, the International Area of the UAB and even the Department of International Cooperation of the Generalitat de Catalunya, Bajouk was able to leave Lebanon at the height of the Israeli attacks. This conveys a vision of a humane university that cares about people, far removed from clientelism or elitism.

This is a humane text that reveals the challenges and feelings involved in research, which do not usually appear in international journals.

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References

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