Trend of cases of violence against elderly people in the metropolitan region of São Luís

Tendencia de los casos de violencia contra ancianos en la región metropolitana de São Luís

Tendência dos casos de violência contra a pessoa idosa na região metropolitana de São Luís

ABSTRACT
Objective: To analyze the trend of Violence Against the Elderly in the Greater São Luís Metropolitan Region, from 2015 to 2019. Method: This is an ecological study of time series, with descriptive analysis, presenting the absolute and relative frequencies, and trend analysis using Prais-Winsten linear regression. Results: In the period, there were 5,172 reports of violence, of which: 58.7% referred to female individuals, 52.44% were brown, 87.3% literate, 52.6% belonged to the age group of 60 to 70 years and 86 , 6% had an income of up to 01 minimum wage. There was a predominance of cases of neglect, psychological violence and financial abuse and an increasing tendency towards violence due to abandonment, neglect and self-neglect. Conclusion: It is pertinent to incorporate strategies for the prevention and identification of ill-treatment against the elderly, in addition to the need to enforce protective laws and carry out notification of confirmed or suspected cases of violence.
DESCRIPTORS: Elder Abuse. Aged. Time Series Studies.

RESUMEN
Objetivo: Analizar la tendencia de la Violencia contra el Adulto Mayor en la Región Metropolitana del Gran São Luís, de 2015 a 2019. Método: Se trata de un estudio ecológico de series de tiempo, con análisis descriptivo, presentando las frecuencias absolutas y relativas, y análisis de tendencias utilizando Regresión lineal de Prais-Winsten. Resultados: En el período, hubo 5.172 notificaciones de violencia, de las cuales: 58,7% se referían a mujeres, 52,44% eran morenas, 87,3% alfabetizadas, 52,6% pertenecían al grupo de edad de 60 a 70 años y 86,6% tenían un ingreso de hasta 01 salario mínimo. Hubo un predominio de casos de negligencia, violencia psicológica y abuso financiero y una tendencia creciente a la violencia por negligencia, negligencia y auto-negligencia. Conclusión: Es pertinente incorporar estrategias para la prevención e identificación de malos tratos contra las personas mayores, además de la necesidad de hacer cumplir las leyes de protección y realizar la notificación de los casos confirmados o sospechosos de violencia.
DESCRIPTORES: Maltrato al Anciano. Anciano. Estudios de Series Temporales.

RESUMO
Objetivo: Analisar a tendência da Violência Contra a Pessoa Idosa na Região Metropolitana da Grande São Luís, no período de 2015 a 2019. Método: Trata-se de um estudo ecológico de séries temporais, com análise descritiva, apresentando as frequências absolutas e relativas, e análise de tendência onde se utilizou a regressão linear de Prais-Winsten. Resultados: No período, houve 5.172 notificações de violência, sendo: 58.7% referiam-se indivíduos do sexo feminino, 52,44% pardos, 87,3% alfabetizados, 52,6% pertenciam a faixa etária de 60 a 70 anos e 86,6% apresentavam renda de até 01 salário-mínimo. Houve predominância dos casos de negligência, violência psicológica e do abuso financeiro e uma tendência crescente das violências por abandono, negligência e autonegligência. Conclusão: Torna-se pertinente a incorporação de estratégias para prevenção e identificação de maus-tratos contra a pessoa idosa, além da necessidade de efetivação das leis protetoras e a realização da notificação dos casos confirmados ou suspeitos de violência.
DESCRITORES: Maus-tratos ao Idoso; Idoso; Estudos de Séries Temporais.

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INTRODUCTION

For the United Nations (UN), in developed countries, a person can be considered elderly when reaching 65 years.[1] In developing countries, such as Brazil, people aged 60 or over are considered elderly, as provided for in the Elderly Statute.[2-3]

According to UN projections, by 2030 the world will have 1,4 billion elderly people and 2 billion in the year 2050.[3] In Brazil alone, the proportion of this age group, in 2017, reached almost 15% of the population.[4] Among the main factors associated with the growth of this population portion, the following can be highlighted: decrease in the morbidity, mortality and fertility rate, inclusion of women in the labor market, conditions for improvement in basic sanitation, greater longevity, accelerated urbanization, among others.[5]

Although the World Health Organization (WHO) already works with the definition of "active aging", increasing age is directly related to the elevation of the individual's vulnerability and, consequently, to violence, placing them in a state of potential victim.[5,6] Worldwide, it is estimated at more than 140 million the number of records of violence against this age group. However, underreporting is still a global reality. The combined prevalence rate of general abuse is 15,7%, with 11,6% for psychological abuse, 6,8% for financial abuse, 4.2% for neglect, 2,6% for physical abuse and 0,9% for sexual abuse.[7]

In the Brazilian context, the investigation of this theme by the academy only started less than two decades ago.[2] In national territory, women are the main victims of violence against the elderly (64%), with physical (28%) and psychological (28%) being more frequent. The aggressors, in general, are the children (28%), having as their main place their own residence (60%) and showing a tendency for cases to increase over the years.[8]

As it is a public health problem and still persists with little visibility and recognition,[9] this research is justified by contributing to the enrichment of scientific production about violence against the elderly, in addition to providing subsidies for decision-making based on reality.

The main objective of this study was to analyze the trend of violence against the elderly (VAE) in the Metropolitan Region of Greater São Luís – Maranhão, between 2015 and 2019. For this, the number of cases of VAE was determined, characterizing them sociodemographically. Finally, the types and forms of violence practiced were described to then assess the trend of cases in the period studied.

METHOD

This is an ecological study, consisting of time series of all cases of violence against the elderly in the Metropolitan Region of Greater São Luís (RMGS - Região Metropolitana da Grande São Luís), registered at the Integrated Center for Support and Prevention of Violence against the Elderly (CIAPVI - Centro Integrado de Apoio e Prevenção à Violência contra a Pessoa Idosa) , in the sector of the Public Defender's Office of the State of Maranhão (DPE/MA - Defensoria Pública do Estado do Maranhão), during the period from 2015 to 2019. Reported cases of violence were defined as all those who presented violence of any kind, registered in the CIAPVI Specific Service Form – DPE /MA, arising from formal denunciations, whether recurrent or not, anonymous or not, by the victim of violence or another person who witnessed it.

All inconsistencies and incomplete information were excluded. In addition, the variables that identified the individuals were also disregarded, thus safeguarding confidentiality.

To obtain information on cases of violence against the elderly in the 2015-2019 historical series, data provided in the CIAPVI Care Specific Form - DPE/MA were used. The collection was carried out during the year 2020 (pre-pandemic), with the choice of time frame being influenced by the calamity situation resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The data collected in the CIAPVI forms, in an instrument created by the researchers, contemplated the following aspects: Demographic Data (gender / age / education / income / color) and Data on Violence (type of violence). For the data analytical process, a specific spreadsheet was built, which was later exported to a statistical analysis program (STATA® 14.0). In the descriptive procedure of the data, the absolute and relative frequencies of the analyzed variables were presented.

To study the trend, the Prais-Winsten generalized linear regression model was used, since it takes into account the serial autocorrelation, that is, the dependence of a serial measure on its own values in previous moments. [10]

To carry out this method, the logarithm of the dependent variable (notified cases of violence) was used, with the year of notification being inserted as an independent variable. The regression model equation can be described as follows: $\log(Yt) = \beta0 + \beta1X$, where: $\beta0$ = constant or intercept; log(Yt) = logarithmized values of the dependent variable; $\beta1$ = linear trend coefficient, and; X = residual term. [10]

Thus, the β coefficient of slope of the line and the p value were obtained to assess statistical significance, with a confidence interval of 95%. The observance of the p value and the sign of the coefficient allowed the inference about the tendency of violence against the elderly, which can be classified as increasing, decreasing or stable. Values of $p<0,05$ indicate upward trends (positive coefficient) or downward trends (negative coefficient). On the other hand, values of $p>0,05$ indicate a stationary trend.

Next, the annual percent change (APC) was calculated using the formula: $APC=[-1+10b1]*100\%$, where: b1 is the coefficient of linear trend. [10] This statistical analysis was performed using STATA® 14.0 software.

Regarding ethical aspects, all the guidelines and recommendations of Resolution No. 466/12 of the National Health Council were respected and met. As this is a research with secondary data collection without identifying the subjects, the Free and Informed Consent Term (FICF) is waived. The project was assessed, evaluated and approved by the Ethics and Research Committee (CEP - Comitê de Ética e Pesquisa) of the Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA) under Embodied Opinion number 4.141.973.

RESULTS

A total of 5.172 notifications of VAE were registered in the Metropolitan Region of Greater São Luís, in the period from 2015 to 2019. Of the total number of cases notified, 58,7% referred to females, brown (52,44%), literate (87,3%), belonging to the age group from 60 to 70 years (52,6%), followed by the age range from 71 to 80 years (27,2%). Regarding income, the most expressive group was the one who received up to 01 minimum wage (86,6%) (Table 1).

Table 1 - Sociodemographic characteristics of elderly victims of violence in the Greater São Luís Metropolitan Region from 2015 to 2019. São Luís, 2020.

VARIABLES	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		□*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex												
Male	397	39,2	438	43,4	410	40,3	415	42,8	474	40,8	426,8	41.3
Female	616	60,8	571	56,6	608	59,7	554	57,2	689	59,2	607,6	58.7
Age												
60 – 70 years	589	58,1	576	57,1	518	50,9	527	54,4	498	42,8	541.6	52.6
71 – 80 years	238	23,5	289	28,6	261	25,6	242	25	382	32,9	282.4	27.2
Over 80 y/o	186	18,4	144	14,3	239	23,5	200	20,6	283	24,3	210.4	20.2
Education												
Literate	922	91	921	91,3	863	84,8	806	83,2	1005	86,5	903.4	87.3
Illiterate	91	9	88	8,7	155	15,2	163	16,8	157	13,5	130.8	12.6
Income												
Up to 1 salary	873	86,2	917	90,9	835	82	824	85	1041	89	898	86.6
> 01 salary	140	13,8	92	9,1	183	18	145	15	128	11	137.6	13.4
Color**												
Black	504	49,7	506	50,2	231	22,7	197	20,3	178	15,3	323.2	31.64
White	103	10,2	78	7,7	183	18	224	23,1	237	20,4	165	15.88
Brown	404	39,9	425	42,1	604	59,3	548	56,6	748	64,3	545.8	52.44

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| Total | | 1013 | 100 | 1009 | 100 | 1018 | 100 | 969 | 100 | 1163 | 100 | 1034.4 | 100 |

* ☐ = period average. ** the total for this category is = 1011. Source: CIAPVI/DPE (2020)

Regarding color, in 2015 and 2016, the elderly self-declared black were the ones who suffered the most from violence, accounting for 504 and 506 cases, respectively. However, in 2017, the number of cases against this group dropped dramatically, with a total of 231 cases of violence being registered. In the same year, there was a predominance of the brown color, accounting for the second largest annual record of violence in the entire period studied (604 cases), being lower only for the year 2019, in which 748 cases of violence against this same group were recorded. population and representing a total of 64.3%. Another aspect that deserves attention is the fact that violence against the literate elderly presents such expressive numbers, being predominant in all years, although it shows a decrease in the range

of 2015 (922 cases) to 2018 (806 cases) (Table 1).

As for the types of violence, there was a predominance, respectively, of typologies: negligence (31%), psychological (24.9%), financial abuse (21,5%), physical violence (13,9%), abandonment (4,7%) and self-neglect (3,9%). The years 2015 (27,4%), 2017 (33%), 2018 (34,6%) and 2019 (33,2%) were marked by cases of negligence and, in 2016, more cases of psychological violence were registered (31,8%). It is also noted that the total number of cases in 2019 (N = 1.194) represented a significant leap compared to 2015 (N = 676), recording almost twice that identified in the first year of the study (Table 2).

After submitting the raw data from the historical series to the Prais Winsten regression, it was observed that abandon-

ment, negligence and self-neglect had p-value < 0,05 and coefficients with a positive value, which denotes an increasing trend with a rate of variation of, respectively, 6,79%, 20,41% and 29,08%. The other types of violence had a trend considered stable in the period (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

There was a predominance of cases of negligence, psychological violence and financial abuse and a growing trend of violence due to abandonment, negligence and self-neglect. Furthermore, in the period studied, 58,7% of the cases referred to females, 52,44% of mixed race, 87,3% literate, 52,6% belonging to the age group of 60 to 70 years and 86,6% had income of up to 01 minimum wage.

Table 2 – Registration of types of violence against the elderly in the Metropolitan Region of Greater São Luís, from 2015 to 2019. São Luís, 2020.

TYPES OF VIOLENCE	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		☐	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Physical violence	114	16,9	73	16,4	90	14	57	12,9	138	11,6	472	13,9
Psychological violence	183	27	141	31,8	146	22,8	100	22,6	277	23,2	847	24,9
Abandonment	37	5,5	14	3,2	46	7,2	16	3,6	48	4	161	4,7
Financial abuse	132	19,5	99	22,3	117	18,2	88	20	295	24,7	731	21,5
Negligence	185	27,4	107	24,1	211	33	153	34,6	396	33,2	1052	31,0
Self-negligence	25	3,7	10	2,2	31	4,8	28	6,3	40	3,3	134	3,9
Total	676	100	444	100	641	100	442	100	1.194	100	3397	100

* ☐ = period average. Source: CIAPVI/DPE (2020)

Table 3 – Trend of violence against the elderly in the state of Maranhão, according to typology, in the period from 2015 to 2019. São Luís, 2020.

TYPOLOGY	COEFFICIENT	P-VALUE	TENDENCY	APC – RATE OF CHANGE (%)	CI 95%
Physical violence	-0,243851	0,304	Estável	----	----
Psychological violence	-0,0422811	0,055	Estável	----	----
Abandonment	0,0285538	0,014	Crescente	6,79	2,52; 11,24
Financial abuse	0,0105084	0,693	Estável	----	----
Negligence	0,0806856	0,016	Crescente	20,41	6,93; 35,60
Self-negligence	0,1108804	0,036	Crescente	29,08	3,24; 61,39
Total (all types)	-0,4429455	0,125	Estável	----	----

Fonte: Elaboração própria a partir dos dados do CIAPVI/DPE (2020).

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As for the predominance of the female gender, the data obtained are similar to other studies carried out in the national territory. [2,11-15] This reality is justified by the fact that women tend to experience a process of precariousness in their own old age, which is often marked by cumulative social inequalities caused by the imposition of gender stereotypes. [16]

Regarding the high number of cases of violence in mixed-race elderly people, our findings corroborate other studies. [13,17,18] It is known that black and brown Brazilians make up the lowest social strata, which, in turn, are usually marked by significant inequalities and also have racism as an aggravating factor. [19]

With regard to education, other authors [20] found similar results. However, the literature indicates that the lower the level of education of the elderly person, the greater would be their chances of suffering violence. This would be justified, mainly, by the lack of access to information, probable financial dependence on third parties, absence of social support or even fear of ruptures, in the event of a complaint, with family members. [19,21-22] However, the elderly with higher education, having higher income and assets, will be more likely to be victims of financial violence. [5,9,13,23]

As for the age group of the battered elderly in the studied sample, there was a prevalence of the interval equivalent to 60-70 years, a result similar to that found in studies carried out in Palmas-TO [17] and Florianópolis-SC. [24] In general, and taking into account the physiological process of aging itself, it is understood that the younger the elderly, the more autonomy, functionality and knowledge about their rights they have. Thus, it is easier to denounce mistreatment. On the other hand, older adults, as they tend to have a more fragile physical and health condition, may face several obstacles when trying to proceed in the same way. Regarding the difference shown when compared to other studies, it is justified that, depending on the region of the country to be studied, life expectancy may vary. [17,24]

With regard to the income of the elderly, the result of this study is consistent with that identified by other authors. [11,12] As a justification, it is emphasized that the social and economic vulnerability of the elderly population is considered a risk factor for violence. The absence of a minimum structure, on the part of the families, in the act of caring for the elderly relative or even the low value of pensions and retirements, makes life difficult for the elderly who cannot meet their basic needs, such as the purchase of food, medication, clothing, among other items, a factor that only gets worse when this is the only source of income to be shared between him and his dependents. [11,19,25]

Regarding the types of violence practiced, negligence led the number of notifications registered in the RMGSL.

Regarding the types of violence practiced, negligence led the number of notifications registered in the RMGSL. With regard to the frequency of this type of violence, this result corroborates those found in the state of São Paulo [26] and in Recife - PE [27] which indicated that about 43% and 58,5% of victims reported ha-

ving suffered this form of abuse, respectively. Other similar studies, [16,28] claim that, although the association of two or more types of violence is very common, negligence and psychological violence are the ones that stand out the most in the oldest-old group.

Concerning the submission of data to the Prais-Winsten regression, it was observed that abandonment, neglect and self-neglect showed an increasing trend. As for the other typologies, there was a trend considered stable in the period studied. Family helplessness grows faster than life expectancy, which reveals the need to reinforce long-term care and assistance for old age in Brazil and also in Maranhão. [29]

CONCLUSION

It appears that, in the period from 2015 to 2019, there was a growing trend of violence due to abandonment, neglect and self-neglect against the elderly in the Metropolitan Region of Greater São Luís. Additionally, it was possible to characterize the sociodemographic profile of the elderly victims: predominance of: gender female, brown, literate, aged between 60 and 70 years old and earning up to 1 minimum wage. Regarding the types of maltreatment practiced, the prevalence of cases of negligence, psychological violence and financial abuse was detected.

As limitations of this study, it is evident that there may be underreporting of cases of violence in the RMGSL, as a result of different factors (professionals' difficulty in detecting signs indicative of aggression towards the elderly, lack of monitoring and guidance for a continuous record in the various services they serve. this public, fear and fear of the elderly to file complaints, among others). It is also noteworthy that data on violence in Brazil are historically scarce, since the databases are state, not unified and not integrated.

In view of these results, it is pertinent to incorporate strategies for the preven-

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tion and identification of abuse to the elderly, protection for the elderly in situations of violence, as well as the reinforcement of the importance of compulsory notification of confirmed or suspected cases of VAE .

It is expected that the data presented will contribute to the enrichment of scientific production on this topic, in addition to providing subsidies for decision-making based on the current reality, especially in RMGSL. It is suggested that further research be carried out on this issue, in view of its high social impact and the limitations found. ∎

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