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Health education actions with the elderly in a community center: experience report

Ações educativas em saúde com idosos em um centro de convivência: relato de experiência

Acciones de educación para la salud con personas mayores en un centro comunitario: relato de experiencia

RESUMO

Objetivo: Relatar as experiências de ações educativas com os idosos desenvolvidas em um Centro de Convivência do Idoso. **Método:** Estudo qualitativo, descritivo, tipo relato de experiência, desenvolvido no Centro de Convivência do Idoso, localizado no município de Campina Grande-PB. Para a efetivação das ações educativas envolvendo planejamento e avaliação das atividades executadas foram realizados encontros semanais entre a coordenadora do projeto e os participantes (alunos dos cursos de Enfermagem e Psicologia). **Resultados:** Durante os seis meses de atuação do projeto, contando com um público de cerca de sessenta idosos, foram realizadas ações educativas a partir de temáticas sugeridas pelos profissionais do referido Centro, possibilitando o desenvolvimento de práticas de promoção da qualidade de vida. **Conclusão:** Enfatiza-se a importância de ações educativas em saúde como uma forma de cuidado humanizado e holístico que proporciona uma construção contínua e coletiva do conhecimento, estimulando a adesão de um estilo de vida mais saudável.

DESCRIPTORES: Envelhecimento; Saúde do Idoso; Centros comunitários para idosos; Educação em Saúde; Qualidade de vida.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To report the experiences of educational activities with the elderly developed in a Community Center for the Elderly. **Method:** Qualitative, descriptive study, experience report type, developed at the Centro de Convivência do Idoso, located in the city of Campina Grande-PB. In order to carry out the educational actions involving planning and evaluation of the activities carried out, weekly meetings were held between the project coordinator and the participants (students from the Nursing and Psychology courses). **Results:** During the six months of the project, with an audience of about sixty elderly people, educational activities were carried out based on themes suggested by the professionals of the aforementioned Center, enabling the development of practices to promote quality of life. **Conclusion:** It emphasizes the importance of educational actions in health as a form of humanized and holistic care that provides a continuous and collective construction of knowledge, encouraging adherence to a healthier lifestyle.

DESCRIPTORS: Aging; Elderly Health. Community centers for seniors; Health Education; Quality of life.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Informar las experiencias de acciones educativas con personas mayores desarrolladas en un Centro Comunitario para Personas Mayores. **Método:** Estudio cualitativo, descriptivo, tipo relato de experiencia, desarrollado en el Centro de Convivência do Idoso, ubicado en la ciudad de Campina Grande-PB. Para llevar a cabo las acciones formativas de planificación y evaluación de las actividades realizadas, se realizaron reuniones semanales entre el coordinador del proyecto y los participantes (estudiantes de los cursos de Enfermería y Psicología). **Resultados:** Durante los seis meses del proyecto, con una audiencia de alrededor de sesenta personas mayores, se realizaron actividades educativas basadas en temas sugeridos por los profesionales del citado Centro, posibilitando el desarrollo de prácticas para promover la calidad de vida. **Conclusión:** Se enfatiza la importancia de las acciones educativas en salud como una forma de atención humanizada y holística que brinda una construcción continua y colectiva del conocimiento, incentivando la adherencia a un estilo de vida más saludable.

DESCRIPTORES: Envejecimiento; Salud de los ancianos; Centros comunitarios para personas mayores; Educación para la salud Calidad de vida.

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INTRODUCTION

The considerable reduction in the fertility rate added to the increase in life expectancy brings a new configuration to the Brazilian demographic pyramid, responsible for the rapid and growing population aging, a phenomenon that has been occurring worldwide. This scenario has implied important changes in the epidemiological profile that lead to significant changes in morbidity and mortality indicators. (1) In Brazil, this rise resulted in several changes, ranking the country, according to projections for the year 2020, in sixth place in the world ranking in relation to the number of elderly people, and in 2030 it should reach a contingent of 41 million elderly people. (2)

Aging is a heterogeneous process, considered as a sequential and natural stage of life that affects all human beings. It begins before reaching adulthood and is built throughout life, being characterized as a continuous, active and differential process that undergoes changes due to biological, psychological and social factors. (3) Thus,

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it is necessary to adapt to the new conditions of life, as living with aging builds an experience of risk for balance, for the quality of life and for the psychological well-being of the elderly person. (4)

This stage of life is covered with numerous biopsychosocial changes that can affect balance and, therefore, demand assistance aimed at promoting and preventing health problems, whose objective is to achieve active and healthy aging, through the maintenance of functionality, independence and autonomy of the elderly person. (5) From this perspective, it is important to highlight the contribution of the coexistence group to the quality of life in old age, as it is considered a means of preventing damage to age, as it provides interaction, social inclusion, self-esteem, in addition to providing the rescue of autonomy. (6)

The search for healthy aging requires the adoption of strategies aimed at promotion, which must be anchored in health education. It is responsible for encouraging the individual's participation in groups, the exchange of learning, the transformation of social and political reality, promoting

awareness of perception as an active agent in life modification. Educational interventions should consider the participants' way of thinking and living. For this, it needs methodologies aimed at the complexity of the aging process involving individual factors such as beliefs, values, norms and ways of life. (7)

It is understood that the performance of social activities makes people, in addition to becoming socially involved, to participate in social and productive interactions. With this, a sense of belonging to life in groups and adaptation, providing conditions to experience subjective well-being. (8)

In this sense, there is the social center, a space configured as a promoter of intersectoriality between health and social assistance for the offer of physical, recreational and cultural activities, among others, and which is intended for the daytime stay of the elderly, especially those in situations of vulnerability. (9)

Therefore, the discussion about aging and its peculiarities becomes relevant, seeking to promote an increase in longevity with quality of life through educational activities, as they are critical and reflective development strategies capable of encouraging the practice of self-care and stimulating autonomy favoring adherence to a healthier lifestyle. Thus, this study aimed to report the experiences of educational actions with the elderly developed in a Community Center for the Elderly.

METHOD

Qualitative, descriptive study, experience report type, carried out in a Living Center for the Elderly, in the city of Campina Grande-PB.

The experience occurred through educational actions developed in the Extension Project, linked to the Dean of Research and Extension - PROPEX, entitled "The University goes to the Elderly Living Center: educational actions and quality of life", during the period of June to November 2019 by 10 students, 5 from the Nursing course and 5 from the Psychology course, with the supervision of the project coordinator. It

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had the participation of 70 seniors from the aforementioned Center and 7 professionals from the service.

A meeting of project participants was held with the professional staff of the service to present the proposal, establish goals and plan activities. Then, a schedule was planned according to the demands discussed. The meetings took place every fortnight in the spaces of the project's headquarters (lounge of the Centro de Convivência do Idoso).

Most of the themes developed in the educational workshops were suggested by the team of professionals in the service (social worker, nursing technician, psychologist, geriatrician, physical educator, educator and physiotherapist).

The proposed activities were registered in a field diary and the data analysis took place in a subjective way, described according to each topic addressed. Submission to the Ethics and Research Committee was not necessary as it was an experience report. The activities carried out were aimed at education and teaching, without the purpose of scientific research. However, the ethical precepts of Resolution No. 466/12 were respected. (10)

EXPERIENCE REPORT

During the project's performance, ten actions were carried out through workshops, role plays, conversation circles and games to facilitate the understanding of the target audience. The opening action was about "Biopsychosocial Aspects" in aging. A staging of positive and negative views on the changes that occurred in aging was developed, providing a moment of reflection. Then, there was a round of conversation, in which desires, anxieties and satisfactions related to the changes were presented, reinforcing the importance of adapting to new living conditions. Through this action, a first bond was established with the elderly and at the end, after the presentation of the project participants, suggestions were heard on topics of interest to the elderly.

The action "Body and oral hygiene"

sought to emphasize the importance of self-care for well-being. In accessible language and using didactic material (mouth made with PET bottles and various types of toothbrushes), the correct ways of brushing and body hygiene, especially intimate, were explained, being the most questioned during the educational activity.

In the workshop held "Photo Wall" a clothesline was developed with photographs with various situations in the life of the elderly (dance, conversations, games, sadness, family life, loneliness, religiosity, sports practices, presence of addictions such as smoking and alcoholism), in which the elderly were guided to observe each image in silence and choose the one with which they identified best. After the observations, they reported on the memories that those photos brought. The activity provided encouragement, observation, reflections on the personal valuation of the elderly, rescue of the social role, participation, sharing of preferences, dreams, experiences and experiences. At the end of the activity, the importance of friendship for life was discussed, valuing group experience.

In the action on the theme "Foods rich in sugars", the importance of maintaining a good diet, especially in old age, was discussed, emphasizing the benefit it provides for the quality of life.

The integrative practice "Tale Tent" was also held. The participant was asked to take something for which he had an affective memory. A scenario was set up as a living room, containing a chair and a table with objects taken by the participants and coordinators. The participants were welcomed and when they felt more comfortable, they went to the chair, picked up the object taken or any object available in the tent and began to tell their tale.

In the provided workshop "Cognitive and Motor Stimulation" activities were developed with the aim of stimulating the exercise of cognitive and motor functions through some games (word searches, memory games, puzzles, assembly of plastic cups and rubber bands). It was possible to work on attention, concentration, categorization, expression, recent memory and

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motor coordination.

The educational activity on the theme "Medicinal plants in the daily lives of the elderly" was also carried out. For this, it had the participation of a student from PET-Phytotherapy who spoke about the plants that reduced blood glucose and blood pressure. At the time, a survey was carried out on which elderly people had been diagnosed with hypertension and diabetes and what type of herbal medicine was used to reduce levels. Then, there was an explanation about how they could be used to achieve a better use of their properties, and the importance of not stopping taking the drugs was reinforced. Finally, there was a didactic bingo, in which the card consisted of marking the name of the plants next to the corresponding figure, being associated with their medicinal action until the entire card was filled. Those who could not read were helped during the activity.

The month of October is reserved for the Breast Cancer Prevention Campaign, which aims to raise awareness about primary prevention and early detection. Therefore, an educational action was developed aimed at this theme, discussing with the elderly (women and men) the importance of self-examination of the breasts, as well as the performance of breast ultrasound and mammography exams. For this purpose, a dummy/simulator with healthy breasts and alterations was used so that the elderly could feel the differences based on the demonstration of how the self-examination should be performed.

The workshop "I keep wishing" provided the construction of a mural of desires, in which the elderly were instructed to express, on a sheet of paper, what they continue to desire and dream of in life. The representations took place in various ways, mainly in text and drawing format, about everything that remains alive within them. After making it, each participant reported about their creation and at the end they put together the collage on a mural.

The educational activity "Blue November" addressed knowledge about what the prostate is, what prostate cancer is, what the symptoms are, how and where to seek

help, how the diagnosis is made, and how to prevent it. Some elderly people reported cases themselves or with family members who experienced the diagnosis.

DISCUSSION

Human aging is partly due to advances in medicine related to the control of diseases that were responsible for early mortality. (4) The search for quality of life reflects on the elderly people's search to be part of social groups, providing a strengthening of autonomy and inclusion in collective projects, avoiding loneliness and social isolation. (11)

Health education can be characterized as a form of effective non-pharmacological intervention to promote the health of the elderly, encouraging critical and reflective thinking that leads the individual to their autonomy, promoting quality of life and health. (7)

Thus, the importance of health actions aimed at playful and active educational activity is perceived, as they encourage the understanding of themes, generating reflection on acquired knowledge and creating relationships between knowledge produced in a recreational way, including individual and collective behavioral aspects. (12)

It is understood that seeking self-care implies the execution of actions directed by and for the person in order to satisfy their needs and contribute to the maintenance of life, health and well-being. (13)

Knowing that remembering past memories provides an adaptation to life transitions, promotes self-esteem and self-perception, preventing the emergence of depressive symptoms and favoring the increase of well-being and quality of life, which is very useful to work with the elderly, as it provides maintenance of mood and stimulates cognitive skills. (14)

The adoption of unhealthy lifestyles, as well as the lack of knowledge about the disease are some factors responsible for the increase in the incidence and prevalence of diabetes among the elderly, which is a chronic disease responsible for the high rate of morbidity and mortality in addition to sig-

nificant economic repercussions. (15)

It is known that the Tale Tent is a dialogic and participative practice that seeks to provide an activity to stimulate memory and quality in the communicative competence of elderly users. It is a practice that enables the expression of unique voices, discourses and subjectivation processes. (16)

Stimulating the maintenance of cognition is an indication for preventing or even delaying the process of brain degeneration, in addition to being a contributing aspect to promoting the elderly's independence and autonomy. (12)

It is understood that aging is a stage of human development that provides reflection on their own existence, allowing the rescue of their dignity, projecting more expectations for the future, enabling the realization of some existing dreams. (11)

The month of November is dedicated to the importance of men's health when it reinforces the prevention and early diagnosis of prostate cancer. The existence of elderly people who have never undergone preventive and screening tests reinforces the importance of continuous educational activities about prostate cancer and its early detection is currently the second most common type of cancer in the male population. (17)

CONCLUSION

From the actions developed, it was possible to observe the satisfaction of the elderly through active participation in the dialogues built during the activities, as it sought to prioritize the participants' way of thinking and living. Valuing their knowledge, experiences, values and culture, through careful and welcoming listening, were essential to stimulate self-esteem and the practice of self-care, contributing to the maintenance of quality of life.

It emphasizes the importance of health education as a form of humanized and holistic care that provides a continuous and collective construction of knowledge through the exchange of experiences during group activities, encouraging adherence to a healthier lifestyle. The importance of ex-

tension activity in universities is also highlighted as a mediator in the development of strategies aimed at promoting health in old age and as a collaborator for academic training in health in the line of aging.

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