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Primary care for children with autism in Brazilian health

O cuidado primário para as crianças com autismo na saúde brasileira

Atención primaria para niños con autismo en salud brasileña

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever os cuidados oferecidos pela atenção primária à saúde para crianças autistas no Brasil. **Método:** Este estudo possui caráter descritivo, qualitativo, sendo uma revisão integrativa. Foi realizado no mês de julho de 2021, nas plataformas eletrônicas: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) e Google acadêmico. Foi realizado com pesquisas entre os anos de 2017 e 2021, seguindo critérios de inclusão e exclusão. **Resultados:** Fizeram parte do estudo 07 publicações científicas. Os estudos trouxeram muitos desafios enfrentados pelas crianças autistas e suas famílias, e estes desafios, perpassam desde o funcionamento e integração da rede de atenção à saúde, até a capacitação dos profissionais de saúde para cuidar dessas crianças. **Conclusão:** Dessa forma, o cuidado primário encontra-se um pouco fragilizado no que tange a criança autista, tanto na detecção precoce do diagnóstico, quanto no acompanhamento após o diagnóstico.

DESCRITORES: Autismo; Cuidado; Atenção Primária à Saúde; Crianças

ABSTRACT

Objective: describe the care provided by primary health care for autistic children in Brazil. **Method:** This study is descriptive, qualitative, and an integrative review. It was carried out in July 2021, on the following electronic platforms: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and Academic Google. It was carried out with research between 2017 and 2021, following inclusion and exclusion criteria. **Results:** The study included 07 scientific publications. The studies brought many challenges faced by autistic children and their families, and these challenges range from the functioning and integration of the health care network, to the training of health professionals to take care of these children. **Conclusion:** In this way, primary care is somewhat weakened with regard to the autistic child, both in the early detection of the diagnosis and in the follow-up after the diagnosis.

DESCRIPTORS: Autism; Caution; Primary Health Care; Kids.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir la atención brindada por la atención primaria de salud a los niños autistas en Brasil. **Método:** Este estudio es descriptivo, cualitativo e integrador de revisión. Se llevó a cabo en julio de 2021, en las siguientes plataformas electrónicas: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) y Academic Google. Se realizó con investigación entre 2017 y 2021, siguiendo criterios de inclusión y exclusión. **Resultados:** El estudio incluyó 07 publicaciones científicas. Los estudios trajeron muchos desafíos que enfrentan los niños autistas y sus familias, y estos desafíos van desde el funcionamiento e integración de la red de atención de salud, hasta la formación de profesionales de la salud para cuidar de estos niños. **Conclusión:** De esta forma, la atención primaria se encuentra algo debilitada con respecto al niño autista, tanto en la detección precoz del diagnóstico como en el seguimiento posterior al diagnóstico.

DESCRIPTORES: Autismo; Precaución; Primeros auxilios; Niños.

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INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a disorder that affects human development, usually identified in childhood and characterized by communication and social interaction difficulties and by the presence of repetitive or restricted behaviors and/or interests. (1) Autism has always existed, however, it was only identified in the 40s, by doctors Leo Kanner and Hans Asperger. Through other surveys that were being carried out, knowledge about autism was disseminated to the population. (2)

Continuously, with the advances in the health area, the characteristics of people with autism started to be more identified and it was noticed that the patients present: social isolation, repetitive movements, directed and sometimes intense fixations, gaze deviation, changes in language, good relationship with goals, toys, anxiety to perform tasks and other characteristics according to the severity of the pathology. (2)

In Brazil, the right to health is guaranteed for everyone, according to the Federal Constitution of 1988, which addresses in Article 196, that health is a duty of the State, which is for everyone, through health policies, with the objective of reducing grievances, promoting, protecting and res-

toring people's health. (3)

Considering this context, people with autism have the right to life, protection against any form of abuse, exploitation or similar origin, right to health, access to health services according to their needs, reaching: multidisciplinary care, diagnosis, medicines, development monitoring and other health-related demands. (4)

In view of MS/GM Ordinance No. 4279, of December 30th, 2010, (5) and Presidential Decree No. 7.508, of June 28th, 2011, (6) there is the Health Care Networks (RAS - Redes de Atenção à Saúde), which aim to organize the actions of the Unified Health System, ensure the integration between services, offering health. Within a macro perspective of RAS, there is the Psychosocial Care Network (RAPS - Rede de Atenção Psicossocial), (7) in which the person with autism is supported by health care, along with other network services. The reality still demonstrates that health professionals have difficulties in managing children who have signs of autism, and sometimes they do not know how to communicate, or where to direct the care, how to proceed with the diagnosis, or at least in an orientation, therefore, this study is relevant.

Thus, the research question was cons-

tructed: How is primary care given to autistic children in Brazil? The aim is to describe the care provided by primary health care for autistic children in Brazil.

METHOD

This study has a descriptive, qualitative character, being an integrative review. It was held in July 2021, on the following electronic platforms: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and Academic Google. To select the publications, the inclusion criteria were followed: publication in English, Spanish and Portuguese, complete, available free of charge, between 2017 and 2021, that do not appear in duplicate in the search, in addition to responding to the objective of research. Publications outside the inclusion criteria were excluded.

The descriptors for the search for publications were: Autism (Autismo); Care (Cuidado); Primary Health Care (Atenção Primária à Saúde); Kids (Crianças). These descriptors were crossed by the Boolean AND operator. In addition, a simple instrument, built by the authors of this study, was used to organize the information from each publication in a record format. The information collected was: authors' names, title, year of publication, journal and the

QUADRO 1- Apresentação das publicações sobre o cuidado primário para crianças autistas

AUTHORS	TITLE	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	JOURNAL	KEY FINDINGS ON PRIMARY CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM
Silva Ribeiro SG, Araújo Ferreira Rocha J, Cerazi Sartori M, Valadão FB, Jurado SR. (8)	Challenges of care for individuals with autism spectrum disorder in basic health care: a literature review.	2020	Revista Multidisciplinar em saúde.	Difficulty identifying autism. Lack of training of health professionals. Little technology available to assist in the care that is provided and in communication.
Costa CS, Guarany NR. (9)	Recognition of signs of autism by professionals working in childcare services in primary care.	2021	Interinstitutional Brazilian Journal of Occupational Therapy.	No professional has training in autism. Health professionals are interested in training on the subject. They have difficulties in identifying symptoms in the child development process.
Bortone ART, Wingester ELC. (10)	Identification of the autistic disorder spectrum during child growth and development: the role of the nursing professional.	2016	Revista Digital FAPAM.	Few studies on nursing in identifying the signs of autism. Greater encouragement among health professionals is needed.
Rezende LO de. et al. (11)	Knowledge about Autistic Spectrum Disorder among primary health care professionals.	2020	Manuscripta Médica.	The findings showed that physicians had better knowledge regarding ASD. The need for continuing education to train professionals who accompany children was highlighted
David Amaral, L., Fabiano de Carvalho, T. y Barreto Bezerra, A. C. (12)	Bioethical attention to the vulnerability of autistic people: Dentistry in the family health strategy.	2016	Revista Latinoamericana de Bioética.	A dental care protocol for the autistic is suggested. The dental treatment of the autistic patient must be short-term and organized. Communication with the patient must be done through clear and objective commands, with positive or negative reinforcement
Martins RA. et al. (13)	Nurse assistance to autistic children in primary care.	2021.	Brazilian Journal of Health Review.	Weakness of the Unified Health System (SUS) in the care of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Lack of theoretical knowledge about the specifics of autism.

Ranalli, NMG. (14)	Impact of a training model on early signs of autism for primary health care professionals.	2017.	Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie.	Sensitivity to knowledge about autism and its warning signs.
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Source: Data research, 2021.

main findings about primary care for children with autism in Brazil.

In the search for publications, 145 publications were found, and after filtering the publication period, only 100 followed the analysis. The titles were read, in which 25 publications directed to the chosen theme. After reading the abstracts of the 25 publications, only 07 were within the main objective of the research. The full reading of the 07 publications was carried out, and all remained in the research. There was validation of the search for publications, carried out by two researchers on the subject.

RESULTS

Thus, the body of results was composed of 07 publications on the subject. The search validation process was carried out by two researchers in the field. Thus, the publications were displayed in a single frame, with the help of the Microsoft Word program.

Two publications were obtained in the years 2016, 2020 and 2021 and only one in 2017. All studies brought many challenges faced by autistic children and their families, and these challenges permeate from the functioning and integration of the care network to the training of health professionals to take care of these children. Thus, primary care is somewhat weakened with regard to the autistic child, both in the early detection of the diagnosis and in the follow-up after the diagnosis.

DISCUSSION

Given the results found, it is understood that Brazil has been bringing new strate-

gies, with other models of health care, such as the mental health care network, as well as the network for people with disabilities. The restructuring of the health model was an important step in organizing the assistance that was being offered, in this case, to children with autism. (13-15) It is known that the care provided to the child needs to meet their needs, also covering the family. (13-16)

Primary care needs to be humanized, with patience, dedication, uniqueness and love, in situations that need more attention. (13-17) Literature points out that children with autism are spontaneous, say what they think, and that is why it is important to make care something playful, without being imposed on them, generating anxiety in the child. Communication is also important at any stage of primary care, using resources such as music therapy, theater, gestures, games and drawings can help reduce the child's fear, making them closer to the healthcare professional who is welcoming them. (16)

In primary care, health professionals need to be trained and find the signs of autism from the initial stage, acting early. (13-16-18) The studies that participated in the research identified a deficit at this point, in which health professionals did not have the proper knowledge to assess the signs of autism, and still did not have the direction of the best conduct after identifying the warning signs. (8-10-11-13)

In primary care, which is multiprofessional, it was seen that the nurse is very close to the children, as they carry out childcare and monitor child development, together with the other team professionals. (12) However, it was also evidenced that the lack of

training is a problem, as there is no investment in health management for this. In oral health, dental treatment also needs to be objective, humanized, with care, family support, and if possible, with scheduling, aiming at the child's well-being. (12)

Rezende points out (11) that children with autism also get sick from other pathologies, and have acute moments, needing other health services. And the professionals' lack of knowledge, in the form of approach, communication and even behavior, hinders the health care process within the RAS.

Bortone and collaborators (10) emphasize that there is a shortage of publications on the subject, and when it comes to nursing and professional assessment for children with autism, studies are still insufficient. Health professionals need theoretical foundation to improve their practice, and publications offer this, therefore, it is necessary to encourage the production and publication of materials. Costa and the other authors, (9) understand that health care needs to aim at promoting care, and primary care is essential in this process, caring individually and collectively, from prevention to rehabilitation.

CONCLUSION

The research achieved its objective, raising important questions about a fundamental theme for collective health. The need for further research in this area was understood, as the results describe the difficulty in offering theoretical support to professionals and improving care for children.

It is necessary to encourage state and municipal administrations to advance in the primary care that is offered to children

with autism. The training of professionals is essential, aiming at early identification, monitoring and monitoring of child development in a healthy way. The RAS needs

to be integrated, in a broad, intersectoral, multidisciplinary and effective way, to guarantee access to health. Finally, it is understood that all professionals work in a unified

way in the care of children with autism, and that the family needs to be inserted in this context, aiming at an inclusive health care.

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