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Promoting the mental health of university students: interventions carried out

Promoção da saúde mental de estudantes universitários: intervenções realizadas

Promover la salud mental de los estudiantes universitarios: intervenciones realizadas

RESUMO

Objetivo: Identificar na literatura científica as estratégias empregadas com estudantes universitários para promover cuidados relacionados à Saúde Mental no período da graduação. Método: Revisão Integrativa da Literatura. Resultados e Discussão: Verificou-se que 5 estudos apresentaram intervenções individuais, 3 trouxeram atividades voltadas para Práticas Integrativas e Complementares; 2 relataram intervenções realizadas em grupos; e 3 descreveram atividades individuais e grupais. Conclusão: As intervenções enunciadas mostraram-se positivas para promoção da saúde mental do discente e controle de sintomas já presentes, onde sua implementação torna-se essencial, proporcionando o suporte necessário para lidar com os problemas psicoemocionais despertados ou intensificados na graduação.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Saúde Mental; Estudantes; Psicoterapia.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify in the scientific literature the strategies used with university students to promote care related to Mental Health during the period of graduation. Method: Integrative Literature Review. Results and Discussion: It was found that 5 studies presented individual interventions, 3 brought activities focused on Integrative and Complementary Practices; 2 reported interventions carried out in groups; and 3 described individual and group activities. Conclusion: The interventions listed proved to be positive for promoting the student's mental health and control of already present symptoms, where its implementation becomes essential, providing the necessary support to deal with the psycho-emotional problems aroused or intensified during graduation.

DESCRIPTORS: Mental Health; Students; Psychotherapy

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Identificar en la literatura científica las estrategias utilizadas con los estudiantes universitarios para promover los cuidados relacionados con la Salud Mental durante el período de egreso. Método: Revisión Integrativa de la Literatura. Resultados y Discusión: Se encontró que 5 estudios presentaron intervenciones individuales, 3 trajeron actividades enfocadas en Prácticas Integrativas y Complementarias; 2 informaron intervenciones realizadas en grupos; y 3 describieron actividades individuales y grupales. Conclusión: Las intervenciones enumeradas resultaron ser positivas para promover la salud mental del estudiante y el control de los síntomas ya presentes, donde su implementación se torna fundamental, brindando el apoyo necesario para enfrentar los problemas psicoemocionales suscitados o intensificados durante la graduación.

DESCRIPTORES: Salud Mental; Estudiantes; Psicoterapia

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INTRODUCTION

Graduation is a period that lasts about four to six years, being marked by individual and collective experiences that demand responsibility and sociability of the university student. That is a phase in which many times a distancing of the familiar unit occurs, beyond being a time of important decision making, marked by conflicts and choices, who will influence these individuals' life trajectory¹.

During the graduation period many people present the first psychotic episode, since 12% to 18% of the university students have some mental disease liable of diagnosis².

In face of this scenario, it is worth noticing that exists the need of intervention measures at the university environment. With that it is possible to contribute to a better adaptation of the academic environment, easing the permanence at the graduation and, futurely, promoting a better transition for the beginning of the professional career.

In this way, awakening the interest in acknowledgement searching related to what has been done at the mental health ambit at brazilian universities, with the following guiding question: which interventions have been implemented at higher schooling for student's mental health care and promotion?

Therefore, the general main focus of this study was identifying the scientific literature and the strategies applied with the university students for promoting care related to Mental Health at the graduation period, at the preventive as well as in the therapeutic ambit.

METHODOLOGY

The present study used as method the integrative revision of the literature guided

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by the following steps: definition of the research's theme and objective; inclusion and exclusion of publishings criteria establishment (selection of the sample); searching at the literature; analysis and categorization of the studies; presentation and discussion of the results³.

The material searching was made in november 2019, being used the following databases: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Periódicos Eletrônicos em Psicologia (PEPSIC), Biblioteca Virtual de Saúde (BVS) e Google Scholar. It used the descriptors: Mental Health; Students; Psychotherapy.

The inclusion criteria were: publications in portuguese, with text fully dispoñible, that presented interventions about mental health made with university students, publications which refers to the period between 2009 and 2019. The exclusion criteria were: publications which did not describe the interventions, interventions made out of the university environment, interventions made with the community.

A total of 212 articles were, then, found, 18 selected by the abstract, and 8 were excluded after the full read, being used at this revision a total of 10 articles. Those articles were analysed, and after that, the results analysis and discussions were made effectuated with the thematic gathering: The Higher Schooling Institutions (IES) at the prevention and treatment of psychic suffering of the students; Signs and symptoms in university students; Interventions implemented for student's mental health promotion.³

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At Table 1, arranged below, are presented the studies selected for these revisions according to the type of intervention found. There are described the article 's titles, name of the authors, year of publishing,

Table 1 – Characteristics of the selected studies

Intervention	Article	Author/year	Objective	Author's professional category
SHELTERING, PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING AND INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOTHERAPY	Institutional Duty: Relate of an Psychological Intervention Experience at UFPR	PAN, M; ZONTA, GA; TOVAR, A. / 2015	Describing the implementation of a attendance service to the university student	Psychologist
	Psychological Interventions with University Students in Student's Support Services	RAMOS, FB. et al. / 2018	Show interventions made in a brazilian public university	Psychology Graduation Students
	Actions of a educational and psychological unit gathered at university students	MURAKAMI, K. et al. / 2018	Describing the services developed by a Educational and Psychological Support Unit	Psychologists and Educational Psychologists
	Integrative and complementary practices at mental health of the university student	BELASCO, IC; PASSINHO, RS; VIEIRA, VA. / 2019	Describing interprofessional work about academic adaptation in a public university	Nurses Psychologist
	Impact of an intervention through Facebook for the increasing of the self esteem in nursing students=	RIBEIRO, RM., et al. / 2020	Evaluate the impact of the intervention "Impact of an intervention through Facebook for the increasing of the self esteem in nursing students"	Nurses
PICS (ACUPUNCTURE, AURICULOTHERAPY AND THERAPEUTIC TOUCH)¹	Undergraduate Nursing Students' Perceptions About Receiving Therapeutic Touch	MEDEIROS, SP. Et al. / 2019	Knowing the perceptions of undergraduate nursing students about receiving the Therapeutic Touch	Nursing Student Nurses
	Auriculotherapy in anxiety disorders in academics at the Lutheran University Center in Ji-Paraná: case reports	SANTOS, RF. Et al. / 2015	Assess the effectiveness of auriculotherapy in anxiety disorders	Pharmacist Graduating in Biomedical Pharmacy
ARTICLES THAT DO NOT BRING INTERVENTIONS	Integrative and complementary practices in university student mental health	BELASCO, IC; PASSINHO, RS; VIEIRA, VA. / 2019	Describe interprofessional work on academic adaptation at a public university	Psychologist Nurses
	Academic Experiences, Personal Skills and Mental Health in Health Science Students	PORTA-NOVA, R.; FLEMING, M. / 2009	Identify the Academic Experiences that impact and the Personal Skills that protect the Mental Health of students	Psychologists
	Cinema as an Educational Resource in Teaching Humanistic Attitudes to Medical Students	PICANÇO, TSC. et al. / 2019	Evaluate the effectiveness of cinema as an educational resource in teaching humanistic attitudes to medical students	Psychologist Doctors
	Mental health of Brazilian medical students: a systematic review of the literature	CONCEIÇÃO, LS. et al. / 2019	Knowing the production of knowledge about the illness of medical students in Brazil	Psychologist Doctor

Source: author, 2021.

goals and professional category of the responsible for the study's elaboration.

The IES at prevention and treatment of

psychic suffering of the students

The University represents a gathering of possibilities and obstacles for the students, willing to obtain success at its graduation.

At this strand, at the research made by Porta-Nova and Fleming over Academic Experiences and Personal Competences which impacts and protect Mental Health

of the students of health area, were it was seen the need of implementation of Mental Health promotion measures at higher schooling.

At this perspective, a systematic revision⁵ over sickening of medicine students verified that at the period there was an increase at productions directed at Mental Health of the Medicine students, where the major part of the studies were made in public universities.

It is important to highlight that despite the period of research at the literature being between 2009 and 2019, most of the studies that were found and inserted at the present study are from 2015; only one research was from 2009. This shows that the need of creating intervention measures and its application publishing is still much more recent and scarce, although the beginning of signs of that concern has come a long way.

Signs and symptoms in university students

It is possible to justify the symptomatology presented by a big part of the university students by considering that the academic period at University makes the student think about the expectations that his family as well as the society has concerning what he will reach and offer.

Among the selected studies it is shown the students relate about complaints that lead to intervention searching. The main problem flagged was anxiety. It was also related to depressive symptoms and adjustment disorders; academic issues and concerning interpersonal relationships; insecurity concerning the course choice; pseudobulbar affect, sadness, lack of concentration and stress; insomnia, neck and shoulder pain and headaches.^{7,8,9,10.}

For that being a phase that asks concentration, effort and learning, the student found himself vulnerable to many emotions and situations. It is perceived that some of the symptoms found may be associated to psychosomatic processes, through which the psychic suffer promotes physiologic changes that lead the individual to demonstrate physical symptoms.

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Concerning those risks and protection of mental health factors, the World Health Organization flaggers that they are associated with individual characteristics, social circumstances and ambiental factors. Related to individual characteristics, the adverse factors are: low self esteem; cognitive/emotional immaturity; issues in communicating; somatic disease, use of substances. At the social circumstances, the adverse factors are solitude, grief, negligence, familiar conflicts; exposure to violence and abuse; poorness; school insuccess; stress at work, unemployment. Considering ambiental factors, it has as adverses factors lack of basic services; unfairness and discrimination; social and gender inequalities; disasters and wars¹¹.

At the selected articles it is not approached under which risk and protection factors the students are submitted.

Interventions implemented for mental health promotion for students

At the selected studies it was verified that the content was presented at the format of: 1. Presentation of the offered mental health service, describing the activities and proposals; 2. Relates of the public beneficiary with intervention activities; 3. Description of the experimental research for analysing the influence that those activities have over the students.

It was verified that 5 studies present individual interventions, among those, 3 brought activities turned for Integrative and Complementary Practices; 2 related interventions made in groups; and 3 described activities at group and individual ambits.

At the interventions turned to the individual appointment, this is characterized as shelter interview¹²; Shelter and Psychological Trial¹³; Psychologic Trial, Short Psychotherapy and Psychological counseling; cognitive-behavior therapy⁷. The appointments are made by spontaneous demand of the university students, being conducted by psychologists and psychology trainees, those one previously trained.

In this matter, the presence of psychological support services at the universities

are important for offering to the student the necessary support for adaptation to the environment and creating coping mechanisms for dealing with challenges that the graduating period provides.

The use of other technologies for symptom support offering it is also possible, being demonstrated with the application of the intervention "self esteem strengthening", through Facebook, with students in Nursing¹⁴.

Concerning the group activities we have: thematic workshops¹³; tutoring programs, psychopedagogy orientation reflection workshops^{6,15}, therapeutic groups¹⁶; listening and reflection group with operative aims¹⁷; group psychotherapy¹⁸; and learning based in teams (ABE)¹⁹. The literature²⁰ also brings the cinema use as a tool for promoting humanistic attitudes at clinical practice.

From those studies it is perceived that the group activities beyond helping the student in his particular needs, promote social interaction. It becomes more beneficial at the beginning of the course for allowing convenience with other people in a moment where new relations start to be forged, at the insertion of a new environment to be discovered.

Evidences^{8,9,10} have been pointing the use of the Integratives and Complementary

Practices (PICs) as a tool for symptoms control related with psycho emotional changes. At the selected it was verified the use of auriculotherapy and acupuncture show themselves efficace at students who received the therapy symptoms control, being considered as techniques to be used also as preventive measures^{8,9}.

That way, the use of PICs at the university ambit makes itself necessary as a viable alternative for student's suffering psychic prevention and control of symptoms that are associate with stress of academic adaptation, beyond the contribution at decreasing of psychotropic drugs use. Beyond that, specialization of this acknowledgement field is not limited to one profession, which eases those practices expansion.

FINAL REMARKS

The literature found interventions turned to individual psychological appointments, group activities and PICs applications. All of them show themselves positives for mental health promotions of the student and already present symptoms control.

Is important to emphasize that there is protection factors that are also possible of being crafted and stimulated during the graduation, as well as those who are turned

to health habits of life. It can be mentioned as examples the regular physical activity, healthy feeding, sleep and resting preserved and recreation moments, that are activities that promote physical and mental well being.

Measures interventions implementations for mental health promotion is essential for proportionate to the students the needed support for dealing with psycho emotional problems who might be awoken or intensified at graduation. The publications of the implemented interventions and the obtained results at universities are essentials for demonstrating not only what is been done for promoting not only what is being done pro promoting mental health for the students, but also for exposing what strategies used show themselves efficient and positives at prevention and/or accompanying os psychic suffer. Beyond recognizing the benefit and the influence that some activities represent for university students.

Therefore, the mental health theme at the university ambit is extremely relevant of being discussed. Although, there are few studies published in Brazil that describe the strategies implemented at universities and its results.

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