EDUCATION FOR NURSING STAFF OF LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY: EXPERIENCE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To report the health students’ experience of an extension project, in the planning and conduction of participatory actions of education for work, with a nursing team from a Long Term Care Facility for the Elderly.

Method: Descriptive experience report with the presentation of the first workshop and the 1st Nursing Week at the institution, held in the first semester of 2018.

Results and Discussion: A total of nine nursing workers participated in this educational workshop, based on the Magueruez Arch which enabled to identify the needs of the team, settle actions for the transformation of reality and implement some actions in the 1st Nursing Week.

Conclusion: Actions carried out in Long Term Care Facilities for the Elderly can strengthen workers, valuing them as producers of care. For extension project students, the project provided opportunities for knowledge exchange and thinking on theory and practice. In addition, the project supported the implementation of the principle of inseparability between teaching, research and extension in academic education.

Descriptors: Homes for the Aged; Occupational Health; Nursing Team; Education Continuing.
INTRODUCTION

Aging is part of every society and happens in a gradual and meaningful way. In the year 2050, it is estimated that near two billion people will reach the age of sixty or older and most of them live in developing countries[1].

The person aged 60 years and over is considered elderly, and in developed countries, this age is estimated at 65 years. In human aging, social, environmental, biological and psychological factors are involved, as well as cultural, economic and institutional changes. Thus, aging brings changes in family settings and the value system, which can accelerate or delay this process[2].

Specifically, in Brazil, changes in the demographic and epidemiological profile began in the 1970s, due to a decrease in mortality and birth rates, with a significant increase in the population aged 60 years and over[3]. As a process, aging occurs slowly, progressively and its impacts are inevitable in society.

With aging, the individual presents a decrease in physiological activity and, consequently, the rising of pathological processes. These disorders and the illnesses change the daily habits and routines of the elderly and their families, often resulting in the need for individualized care, which generates a demand for search for places such as Living Centers, Day Centers and Long Term Care Facilities for the Elderly (LTCFs) for their care[4].

Even in this significant context, the Brazilian government still has a small number of formal programs that provide assistance to the elderly who do not have family support and/or financial resources. Faced with this situation, institutionalization emerges as one of the main alternatives for family members and for the elderly themselves who need long-term care[5]. Thus, it is worth highlighting the considerable increase in LTCFs as a response of the aging population, but without the proper support and funding from government agencies.

The LTCFs fully attend elderly people, with or without family support, sheltering elderly people with different characteristics and in chronic/disabling health conditions[6].

According to the Resolution 283/2005 of the National Health Surveillance Agency plan, the LTCFs are governmental or non-governmental institutions, residential type, intended for the collective living of persons...
aged 60 years or over, with or without family support, in a condition of freedom, dignity and citizenship that offer housing, care and health services[7].

These locations are governed by a set of specifically established rules and laws and are characterized by multiprofessional care. For this, they have a team that meets the needs of health care, food, hygiene, rest and leisure of users, and develop other specific activities of living in a facility, presenting as a basis of gerontogeriatric care, the nursing staff[8-9].

Nursing develops its activities in order to observe the individual in its entirety, considering the biopsychosocial and spiritual experience aspects. Thus, in all health spaces and more specifically in LTCFs, the conception of humanized care becomes essential, considering the individualized and multidimensional health care, since the health condition and way of life of the elderly constantly changes. Therefore, the challenge is to provide affordable and quality healthcare to these clientele[10-11].

In this perspective, the Ministry of Health established the National Patient Safety Program (PNSP), aiming to institutionalize and improve the quality of care in all health establishments in the national territory, whether public or private. The implementation of PNSP relies on compliance with its set of rules and regulations that guide the operation of these sites, that is, basic conditions for the elaboration of quality and safety plans, with actions monitored by indicators, managed by a responsible team and by protocols and clinical guidelines specific to the routine of the health facility[12].

In this complex context, it is central to consider the relevance of permanent health education (EPS) for nursing workers, and can be understood as a transformation of work processes, guided by ways of thinking and doing, and based on new theoretical, methodological, scientific and technological contributions available. In this sense, EPS becomes a relevant tool in the work context, enabling change, transformation and overcoming, contributing to the construction of relationships and processes in teams, including interinstitutional and/or intersectoral practices[13].

In order to qualify the care process performed by the nursing staff, this study aimed to report the experience of health students in an extension project, in the planning and conduction of participatory actions of edu-
cation for work, in a nursing team of a Long Term Care Facility for the Elderly (LTCF).

**METHOD**

This is a descriptive experience report, involving the presentation of the first educational workshop held at the Institution and the implementation of the 1st Nursing Week of the LTCF.

The LTCF, scenario of the lived experience, is located in a municipality in central region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. It was founded on August 28, 1949, as a non-profit institution that acts, simultaneously, as a welfare entity and religious society. The purpose of the care facility is to provide comprehensive care to the elderly, with or without family support. There are currently 33 sheltered elderly people, of both genders, assisted in their needs for food, hygiene, clothing, accommodation, leisure and health.

To meet the patient’s needs, the facility’s work team is composed by 19 employees focused on the institution’s activities, and the nursing team has nine workers (one nurse and eight nursing technicians). The work contract of these workers is supported by the Labor Consolidation Law (CLT), covering 40 hours per week, divided in shifts, and the nursing staff provides uninterrupted assistance to institutionalized elderly.

The actions at the LTCF were supported by an extension project entitled “Education for work of a nursing team of Long Term Care Facility for the Elderly: actions to enhance humanization, patient safety and worker health”, directed especially for the nursing team that represents the central axis of care provided to the elderly, that is, workers directly involved in their care.

The project execute participatory actions of education for work, aiming at helping workers to think on attitudes and actions that enhance the safety of the elderly and the joint construction of a safer environment; the importance of humanizing care for institutionalized elderly; and reflections on their own physical and mental safety, aiming at the strengthening of a work process based on cooperation and appreciation of the worker.

The team responsible for planning and conducting continuing education activities for nursing staff was composed of three doctoral students and two master’s students from a Postgraduate Nursing Program of a
Higher Education Institution (HEI), in addition to four students from the Undergraduate Nursing Program and three Scientific Initiation Fellows, all previously trained and theoretically prepared, under the coordination of a permanent professor of the Undergraduate Course and the Postgraduate Program in Nursing of this HEI, coordinator of the extension project.

The extension actions at the LTCF consisted of educational workshops that began in March 2018 with pre-defined continuity until December 2020, being used for this report, the initial period through December 2019. Strategies such as the conversation circle were used, which enables the horizontal and democratic relationship between the participants; playful and dynamic group techniques that enable the reflection and sensitization of the workers; use of multimedia devices to reproduce videos, music, images and other technologies capable of mediating the process of education for work, among others[14-15].

It is noteworthy that the extension project is registered in the Project Office of the Higher Education Institution, as well as the actions developed are in accordance with the ethical precepts that include autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice and equity.

In this report will be presented the first workshop and the 1st Nursing Week. All nursing workers participated in the workshop, considering that two of them were on their work shift and, at times, had to return to care tasks.

Workers throughout the workshop were encouraged to freely express their feelings, opinions and perceptions, which they did easily. Because it is a moment for reflection on topics involving worker mental health, working conditions and humanization of work in nursing, a health professional working at the institution was contacted if psychological support was needed for the worker. The first workshop lasted about two hours and thirty minutes and the 1st Nursing Week took place in four days, each with a specific theme and lasting approximately two hours.
The purpose of this educational workshop was to identify the learning needs of the nursing staff, agreeing on some actions for the improvement of work, arising the planning and implementation of the institution’s 1st Nursing Week.

The university, which is inserted in different contexts of society, encourages teachers and students to implement actions based on the tripod teaching, research and extension. Starting from this premise, the beginning of the planning of this extension project came from a meeting between the extension project coordinator and the facility’s nurse, in which she shared the difficulties found in working with the elderly and, especially, the needs of learning manifested by nursing workers in the facility’s routine.

After this first meeting, the first educational workshop was planned as an extension action at LTCF, bringing together the group of students, the coordinator and the nursing workers.

The workshop was held on the elderly facility, in a comfortable room, ensuring the privacy of the nursing staff, and the time, agreed in advance, to allow the participation of all.

In the first moment, after introducing themselves, a dynamic was proposed to reflect on the relevance of interpersonal relationships, empathy and teamwork, especially exercising in group dynamics, self-confidence and trust in the other. After completing the activity, with all participants sitting in a circle, they were asked to express the perceptions and emotions arising from the experience of dynamics. For the workers, the reflection were on the relations between the dynamics and the experiences in the social and work life of this nursing team.

To continue the educational workshop, it was explained what would be done next, in special, principles about the Maguererez Arch and its use. The Maguererez Arch, which was implemented, involved the following steps: observation of reality; identification of key points; theorization; solution hypotheses survey; and application to reality, with a view to education for the work of the nursing team[16-17]. The workshop instructors prepared a poster in brown paper with the res-
pective steps of the arch, which were being filled from the reflections and conclusions of the workers group.

In the “Reality Observation” stage, participants were encouraged to identify the critical points related to their daily work, establishing the reality transformation needs. The main themes that emerged from the discussions involved the safety of the elderly, especially regarding falls; the change in the illness profile of the elderly; difficulties in interpersonal relationships and communication failures among workers. Also, muscle pain in workers facing the difficulty of moving the elderly in bed; and the absence of some families to accompany the institutionalized elderly.

Given these critical points, they reflected on which aspects were related to workers’ governance, those related to management and that needed referrals, and also those that could be resolved in the short, medium and long term.

In the “Identification of key points” workers were encouraged to identify one of the critical points to be addressed immediately, as well as the possible factors that contribute to this problem. Thus, they elected the safety of the elderly, relating it to changes in their profile, currently with more clinical impairment. In this item, they identified as factors related to the safety of the elderly aspects such as: the permanence of only one nursing worker in the night shift; the increase in the number of elderly with reduced autonomy to bathe, walk, feed, which requires more care and the increase in the number of falls of the elderly, especially at night.

The next step, the “Theorization”, took place after reading the work context, identifying the problems and critical points, in which the patient safety aspects were brought up, which corroborates the guidelines for health care of quality and safety of the patient/elderly in the LSIE.

The “Solution Hypothesis Survey” occurred from the identification of the possibilities of reality transformation, with simpler or more complex actions, in search of possible ways to solve the problems and meet the demands. This process included the elaboration of possible solution alternatives by the participants, in a participatory and autonomous movement, and the students were the mediators of the whole reflective process. Among the hypotheses of solution, the importance of more meetings between nursing workers to discuss the difficulties of...
everyday life is highlighted; the review of nursing records which can facilitate communication between team members and the need to develop protocols for preventing falls of the elderly.

At last, in the “Application to reality” stage, the co-responsibilities between the members of the nursing team were established, also identifying the requests to be forwarded to the institution’s management. Therefore, applicable strategies were established, so that workers returned to their daily work life, with the expectation that some changes could happen and enable a resolute and safe nursing care.

In the discussions between workers and workshop instructors, themes were suggested to be worked on in the group, and the idea of holding the “1st Week of Nursing” at LTCF, with a view to the development of workshops, which would allow the deepening of the themes, as well as performing some practices in the workplace.

Regarding the 1st Nursing Week of LTCF, it was held in the last week of May 2018, with the theme: “Nursing and commitment to care for the elderly”. The implementation of the activity at the LTCF provided a deep discussion on topics related to the health of the institutionalized elderly and the quality of the work process of the nursing team, based on the sharing of knowledge and experiences among the facility’s workers, extensionists and the health professionals invited.

The event’s first day preceded the official opening by the vice present of LTCF and a workshop was developed entitled: “Care of the elderly with wounds” by a nurse of the Neurological Intensive Care Unit of a hospital in the city. At this time, it was reflected on the specificities of the elderly such as the situation of institutionalization, psychological and physical aspects and the relationship of these factors with the integrity of the skin and greater propensity to wounds, as well as basic care in certain situations, according to reality experienced by the service.

The second day presented as an approach the "First Aid to the Elderly", mediated by a nurse from the Mobile Emergency Care Service (SAMU) of the municipality. The topics included choking and cardiopulmonary arrest, with practical training of maneuvers on dummies, simulating situations of care practice, in view of the progressive difficulty in swallowing and the possible occurrence of these events in the daily life of the elderly in the institution.
On the third day, the workshop addressed the relevance of hand hygiene in the care environment, mediated and conducted by a master nurse and project extensionist. In this activity, the hand hygiene technique was oriented, as usual, with water and liquid soap, followed by alcohol 70% with the luminol substance. After hygiene, the workers were instructed to place their hands in the “magic box” to verify the hygiene technique, in which the luminol, in contrast to the black light of the box, showed if there was still dirt in them.

The finding led the participants to repeat the hand hygiene technique, followed by reflections on the approach and clarification of doubts.

On the fourth and final day of the meeting, a workshop entitled “Most Common Diseases in the Elderly” was held by a doctor from the State Department of Health. With a brief approach, we presented statistical data on population aging, focusing on the five major geriatric syndromes: postural instability, urinary incontinence, cognitive insufficiency, iatrogeny and immobilism. The workshop was mediated by discussions and reflections sharing experiences of the family context and the work environment, as well as clarifying doubts. On the same day, the event was closed, in which there were giveaways of giveaways aimed at valuing the participation of workers in the event.
DISCUSSION

At the same time, modern work dynamics require permanent qualification, configuring the work environment itself as an educational space. It is understood that the learning process can be performed anywhere, so that education goes through the various scenarios of individuals’ lives[18].

In the context of the nursing team, education for work becomes essential, as care techniques are often improved and light, light-hard and hard technologies are developed. Therefore, it is emphasized that quality work education activities directed at nursing teams promote worker improvement and improve care, corroborating the Nursing Code of Ethics which emphasizes responsibility and duty in stimulating, facilitating and promoting the development of teaching activities at work[19].

Specifically, in the scenario of active aging of individuals, which increases considerably, the relevance of studies for the establishment of good practices in the context of care for this population has been emphasized in Brazil. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), currently the number of people aged 60 and over exceeds 29 million[1].

A comparative study conducted in 2013 pointed out that in southern Brazil, 83.8% of the elderly are between 60 and 79 years old. In LTCF, 52.5% of institutionalized elderly are 80 years or older. This study also showed that the average age of the elderly in Rio Grande do Sul is 71.23 years, of the institutionalized, the average is 76.5 years, emphasizing that the highest concentration of the elderly aged 80 or older was in facilities. This scenario is similar in Iran, where 85% of the community’s elderly are between 65 and 79 years old and the average age among the community’s elderly was lower than among the institutionalized. Another example cited in the study was Canada, a country that has been facing the aging process for a longer time, the elderly of the LTCF were, on average, 10 years more than those of the community[20].

It is known that Brazilian laws ensure the rights of the elderly to stay with their family and community, however, many will depend on care in LTCF, due to cultural factors, fragility in family arrangement and availability of alternative services. Therefore, edu-
cation for work becomes essential, because with each advanced decade, the risk of functional disability of these elderly doubles, as well as the development of chronic diseases, requiring from nursing workers, a greater emphasis on health care attention and may result in occupational illness.

In general, the higher the level of functional dependence of the elderly, the greater the physical demands of workers on some tasks. Nursing work activities are performed on a continuous basis, requiring constant attention, physical effort, inappropriate positions, repetitive movements, weight lifting, favoring exposure to various occupational risk factors. The relationship with work becomes an emerging concern, mainly due to illness caused by work[21].

In this aspect, it can be inferred that a set of actions aimed at promoting the health of nursing workers, associated with patient safety in LTCF is emerging, representing the strengthening of the resoluteness of the service and, in addition, the appreciation of all actors that make up this scenario. Thus, in the process of “Theorization”, aspects related to the National Patient Safety Program (PNSP) emerged during the discussion[12].

In addition to the Program, we used as reference the Ordinance MS/GM n. 529/2013 which establishes a set of basic protocols, defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), to be prepared and implemented in health facilities. Among them, the practice of hand hygiene; safe surgery; safety in the prescription, use and administration of medicines; patient identification; communication in the health environment; fall prevention; pressure ulcers; patient transfer between points of care; and safe use of equipment and materials[22].

In accordance with the proposal of Maguerez Arch, the educational workshop had a participatory feature, in which the workers’ speech was valued at all times, emphasizing the possibilities of adaptations in the work process, through the workers’ perception. It is based on the premise that the subjects inserted in the practice are able to reflect on their reality and lead the changes in this situation, with the participation of extensionists mediation. Therefore, dialogue and the exchange of experiences between the involved parties are valued[16].

Ressalta-se que na retomada das oficinas educativas, os trabalhadores serão estimulados a socializar com os extensio-
nistas quais mudanças têm ocorrido, as dificuldades encontradas e os resultados, objetivando avaliar constantemente das ações realizadas[16].

CONCLUSION

The set of actions proposed in this extension project for the 1 nursing team through LTCF participatory actions of education for work, contributed to the transformation of the work process, valuing the subjects involved and enhancing practices and knowledge that culminate in quality of the assistance provided.

Thus, it can be said that successful experiences in extension activities should be stimulated and disseminated in scientific environments, promoting new studies that encompass the health of workers who work in LTCF and the establishment of adequate working conditions, aiming at the quality of life and work care, as well as the safety and well-being of the institutionalized elderly.

The relevance of the evaluation of the extension actions, among them, the first educational workshop and the 1st Nursing Week, in which the nursing workers expressed their satisfaction in participating in meetings in which they discussed the proposed themes and sought the possibility of improvement in their professional practice. Workers reported feeling comfortable expressing their feelings and opinions, as well as sharing their life and work experiences.
For the students, the experience of planning and conducting the extension actions provided the approach with a real scenario of practice, acquisition of scientific knowledge, as well as the action on organization, communication, teamwork, negotiation, stimulating reflection and discussion, among others. It is worth highlighting the relevance of extension experience in academic education, given that these opportunities enable experimentation and intervention in reality, contributing to critical-reflexive action, considering interdisciplinarity and humanistic issues.

It is also noteworthy that the accomplishment of the educational workshop, as an innovation in the process of permanent education, can promote the change of attitude of the nursing staff, motivating the search for knowledge and the leading role of transformations in nursing/health care routine.

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