ANALYSIS OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS ON NURSING CARE IN THE PREVENTION OF PRESSURE ULCERS

ABSTRACT
Objective: to characterize the dissertations and theses from the analysis of the Theses Database of Higher Education Personnel Training Coordination (CAPES) that deal with the nursing care and its use for the prevention of pressure ulcers. Methods: descriptive and exploratory study, of documentary research type, from analysis of dissertations and theses of the aforementioned Database, through the steps: choice of theme, definition of objectives, preparation of work plan, identification and location of sources to be searched, obtaining and reading the material identified, pointing this material through records, analysis, data interpretation and final draft of the study. Results: the final sample included eight studies. Data show that the content on the prevention of pressure ulcers in the dissertations and theses match the most discussed topics in the literature. Conclusion: the realization of this profile study enabled viewing the importance of nursing care in patient care for the prevention of pressure ulcers, realizing the patient by the view of their needs and their previous, current and future problems. Descriptors: Nursing; Nursing Care; Pressure Ulcer.

RESUMO
Objetivo: caracterizar as dissertações e teses a partir da análise do Banco de Teses da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) que abordam sobre a Assistência de Enfermagem e seu uso para a prevenção das úlceras por pressão. Método: estudo descritivo e exploratório, do tipo pesquisa documental, a partir de análise de dissertações e teses do referido Banco, mediante as etapas: escolha do tema, delimitação dos objetivos, elaboração do plano de trabalho, identificação e localização das fontes a serem pesquisadas, obtenção e leitura do material identificado, apontamento deste material por meio de fichas, análise, interpretação dos dados e redação final do estudo. Resultados: a amostra final foi de oito estudos. Os dados mostram que os conteúdos acerca da prevenção de úlceras por pressão nas dissertações e teses coincidem com os temas mais abordados na literatura. Conclusão: a realização deste estudo de perfil permitiu visualizar a importância da assistência de enfermagem no cuidado ao paciente para a prevenção da úlcera por pressão, percebendo o paciente pela visão de suas necessidades e de seus problemas anteriores, atuais e futuros. Descriptors: Enfermagem; Assistência de Enfermagem; Úlcera por Pressão.

ANÁLISE DAS DISSERTAÇÕES E TESES SOBRE A ASSISTÊNCIA DE ENFERMAGEM NA PREVENÇÃO DAS ÚLCERAS POR PRESSÃO

ANÁLISE DE LAS DISERTACIONES Y TESIS SOBRE LA ASISTENCIA DE ENFERMARÍA EN LA PREVENCIÓN DE LAS ÚLCERAS POR PRESIÓN

Patrícia Naiara Moreira¹, Camila Fernandes Pereira², Liva Guerra Fernandes³, Polyanna Fernandes Gurgel⁴, Francis Vieira Tourinho⁵

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INTRODUCTION

Pressure ulcer (PU), lesion with a localized area of tissue necrosis, is one of the most common skin tissue lesions. They are skin or soft tissue, resulting from tissue hypoxia, which occur upon pressure applied to the skin greater than the normal capillary pressure for a period of time (32 mmHg/arterioles and 12 mmHg/venules).2,4

For the onset of PU, it is necessary the compression of the soft tissue between a bony prominence and a hard surface for long periods. The most commonly affected areas are: sacral, ischia, trochanter, scapular regions, and the heels, knees, and elbows.4 In modern-day days, the PU are classified according to the depth of harm of the lesions, in stages I to IV. This staging was developed by the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP) and has been used since 1989.3

The PU is related and resulting from various factors. Regarding the factors intrinsic to the patient, it can be pointed out age, nutritional status, anemia, immobility, infection, skin sensitivity and incontinence. Then referring to the factors from the environment, it can be included: poor hygiene, humidity, shear sheet, no decubitus change, use of orthopedic instruments, probes closed improperly, misuse of physical/chemical agents, little drug administration rotation, inappropriate type of seats and mattresses.5,6

These injuries are a major challenge for health services due to the high degree of complications involving prevention and treatment in hospitalized patients, which ultimately result in more hospital stay and, consequently, expose inpatients to the risk of infections.7 Furthermore, independence and self-esteem suffer damage, culminating not only in physical but also emotional suffering.3 Importantly, most of the PU can be avoided.

Nursing is directly related to the prevention of PU, for its professionals monitor the evolution of the patient and are directly involved in the care process. Moreover, they are considered as outcome indicators for the quality of nursing care.3,8 To prevent the development of these lesions, nurses should adopt preventive measures, developing a care plan in order to reduce as much as possible the risk for their development. Always taking into account that the client should be seen as a holistic being, nursing can adopt various preventive methods, such as: skin care, through the use of appropriate hygiene techniques; mobilization protocol and the proper repositioning; use of moisturizing products; nutritional monitoring; water intake.2

Through the Systematization of Nursing Assistance (SNA) and the Nursing Process (NP) as tools, the occurrence of PU can be prevented, since nursing will develop an organized and individualized assistance, based on technical and scientific knowledge, determining a dynamic and participatory care process. From the service organization, we can obtain satisfactory results in order to meet the needs of the patients and their families.3,9

Faced with this situation of the importance of the use of nursing care in the prevention of PU, it was created a profile of what has been produced in recent years, under the graduate nursing programs, on this theme. To this end, the following question was elaborated: what are the features of dissertations and theses available in the Theses Database of Higher Education Personnel Training Coordination (CAPES) that deal with the nursing care to prevent PU? In order to answer this question, we designed the following objective:

- To characterize the dissertations and theses from the Theses Database of Higher Education Personnel Training Coordination that deal with the nursing care and its use for the prevention of pressure ulcers.

METHOD

This was a descriptive and exploratory study of documentary research type, from analysis of dissertations and theses. We chose for these types of studies because of their high methodological rigor and the possibility of progress in science.10 These scientific reports are considered important sources of knowledge, since they are results of original research or relevant literature reviews.11

The documentary research develops through stages that occur in a natural sequence and in a coordinated manner, described ahead: choice of theme, definition of objectives, preparation of work plan, identification and location of sources to search, obtaining and reading the material identified, pointing this material through records, analysis, data interpretation and final draft of the study.11

The study took place in the CAPES Journal Portal, more specifically, in the Theses Database of CAPES, which was created in 2001 and works as a search and consultation tool of dissertations and theses defended since 1987, throughout the country, facilitating access to information in these research reports.12

For methodological foundation and development of the study, we designed a structured protocol and validated by two
doctors professors. This research protocol was organized in the following steps: objective; guiding questions; search strategies (database and controlled descriptors); selection of studies (inclusion and exclusion criteria); strategy for data collection of studies; strategy for critical evaluation of the study; summary of the data.

After the protocol development, data collection was carried out in July 2013, in pairs, to give reliability to research and exhaust searches on CAPES theses database. To this end, we used the descriptors controlled by Descriptors of Health Sciences (DHSs), namely: “Nursing Care”, “Prevention”, “Pressure Ulcers,” in the search field “subject” through the option “all the words”.

In this study, we opted for the analysis of abstracts of dissertations and theses, as they already allow profiling the productions that deal with the nursing care and the prevention of PU. It is also appropriate, since the abstracts contain all of the relevant information that characterizes a research.

To select the studies found, we used pre-established criteria: 1) Inclusion criteria: abstract of dissertations and theses available electronically on the Theses Database of CAPES, that deal with the nursing care in the prevention of pressure ulcers and 2) Exclusion criteria: abstract of dissertations and theses that were not available electronically in full; dissertations and theses that do not address the relevant issue to the scope of the research; studies about healing pressure ulcers; and studies that deal with research in animals and abstracts of dissertations and theses duplicated.

Each selected study was systematically evaluated by standardized instrument with the following indicators: academic level (masters or doctorate); place of study development; year of publication; subarea of knowledge; methodological design; selected theme.

Regarding the indicator "methodological design" of theses and dissertations selected, it was analyzed through the characterization of the research according as the objectives as (exploratory and descriptive research), data collection procedures (documentary, experimental, methodological research and case studies) and information sources (literature searches).10

The results and the characterization of the selected studies were presented in tables and figures, thereby, facilitating the visualization and understanding of the final data.

RESULTS

As cited in the methods, we designed a structured protocol to guide the development of this study. After searching in the theses database of CAPES, using the aforementioned descriptors, it was possible to select 16 reports in absolute numbers, among theses and dissertations. After reading the abstracts and meeting the inclusion/exclusion criteria, the final sample was reduced to a number of ten studies (Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor*</th>
<th>Research result**</th>
<th>Studies selected according to inclusion criteria ***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursing care</td>
<td>16 dissertations/theses</td>
<td>10 dissertations/theses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Documentary research about the SNA in the prevention of pressure ulcers in the dissertations and theses available in CAPES theses database. Natal/RN, 2013.
* Search done in the search field “subject” by using the “exact expression”.
** In absolute numbers.
***Abstracts of dissertations and theses available electronically at the Theses Database addressing nursing care in the prevention of pressure ulcers.

Regarding the indicator "academic level (Masters/PhD)", the majority of studies found refer to the academic master, corresponding to 70% of the selected studies. Thus, two reports were theses for obtaining doctorate and one dissertation was result of the professional master.

Regarding the indicator "place of study development", all selected theses and dissertations were carried out under the graduate programs in nursing in Brazil. It is noticed that most of the dissertations and theses was held in the Southeast region: a thesis in São Paulo/SP (10%), a vocational dissertation in São Paulo (10%), three academic dissertations in Ribeirão Preto/SP (30%) and two academic dissertations in Rio de Janeiro (20%). We also found three reports in the Northeast region: a thesis in Fortaleza/CE, a dissertation in Teresina/PI and a dissertation in Natal/RN, totaling (30%) of the selected studies. The distribution of these reports, regarding the origin of educational institutions, is shown in Figure 2.
Regarding the “year of publication” of dissertations: one was published in 2000, one in 2003, one in 2009, one in 2010, three in 2011 and one in 2012; regarding the theses, they were published in 2011 and 2012. Thus, it can be noted that these are current research reports.

As regards the “field of knowledge”, the selected studies were characterized in terms of sub-areas: PU and nursing care (3-30%); PU, evidence-based nursing and safety management (2-20%); PU, evidence-based medicine and nursing team (1-10%); foundations and management practices in nursing and health (1-10%) and PU, nursing assessment and protocols (1-10%); Nursing in health promotion (1-10%) and Nursing, health and society (10%).

The indicator “methodological design” is characterized by various designs, which are distributed in the dissertations: three descriptive and exploratory studies with a quantitative approach (30%); a longitudinal study, the panel type (10%); a theoretical work - literature review (10%); a prospective, descriptive and exploratory study (10%); an evaluation study (10%); a cross-sectional study (10%); and two quantitative studies with intervention design (20%).

As for the “selected theme” in the reports, we can elucidate: the prevention of PU and measures adopted; analysis of the PU in the ICU and prevention; PU and nursing care; PU as a quality indicator; new perspectives of nursing care in the prevention and treatment of PU; prevention assessment of PU from adoption of a protocol by the nursing team; educational intervention from an information and communication technology on prevention and treatment of PU; and educational action by the nursing team in the PU prevention. The approach in two reports of the thematic assessment of nursing knowledge on the prevention of PU deserves highlight.

## DISCUSSION

Referring to the indicator “academic level (Masters/doctorate)” and according to abstracts of selected reports, we found the prevalence of the number of dissertations in relation to theses and academic dissertations in relation to professional, which corroborates Brazilian reality on graduation. In Brazil, the academic master is the fastest growing level entitling professionals, being the professional master still insufficient.12

In the Brazilian scenario, we can see an expansion process in the research and consequently in graduate courses. Research that have been conducted indicate a growth in health field, especially for some courses, such as nursing.13

Regarding the Stricto Sensu graduate programs of public universities, these were structured in Brazil, in the early 70s, being grounded by Maciel-Sucupira Opinion (1965), No. 977/1965, of the Federal Council of Education formulated by Newton Sucupira.14

Despite the growing ease of Brazil in the production of knowledge in the last decade, including at the international level, the number, in quantitative terms, is still less than expected for the large Brazilian population and its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).14

Given this context of high scientific production and bringing to the field of nursing, performing this profile enables us to view the importance of nursing care in patient care for the prevention of pressure ulcers. It is noteworthy that, it is essential that this assistance is performed based on the holistic model of care, seeing the human being through an approach of their real needs and of their former, current and future problems.15

### Table: Distribution of dissertations and theses regarding the origin of educational institutions, data in absolute numbers. Natal/RN, 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic level</th>
<th>Place of development</th>
<th>Educational institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Master</td>
<td>São Paulo/SP</td>
<td>Federal University of São Paulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master</td>
<td>Ribeirão Preto/SP</td>
<td>University of São Paulo / Ribeirão Preto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master</td>
<td>Teresina/PI</td>
<td>Federal University of Piauí Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master</td>
<td>Natal/RN</td>
<td>Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master</td>
<td>Ribeirão Preto/SP</td>
<td>University of São Paulo / Ribeirão Preto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master</td>
<td>São Paulo/SP</td>
<td>Federal University of São Paulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>São Paulo/SP</td>
<td>Federal University São Paulo Cesgranrio Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro/RJ</td>
<td>Federal University of Ceará</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>Fortaleza/CE</td>
<td>State University of Rio de Janeiro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Master</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>Federal University of São Paulo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.
also contributes to the work process of the nursing team, for this to be done with quality. Thus, it is required constant updating and training of professionals.

Regarding the indicator “place of study development”, there was a predominance of studies in the Southeast region universities, especially the institutions of the state of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. This fact is consistent with the literature that says the research is, in modern-day days, responsible for a large part of the Science productions of public institutions, arising mainly from South and Southeast.14

When we direct attention to the aspect “year of publication” of dissertations, we note that nursing, as a science, is required to be in continuous updating of knowledge, which requires studies in various areas of knowledge, which are divided into sub-areas to support assistance. Thus, the nurse needs to be constantly updated, in order to gain knowledge regarding nursing care and its essential tasks in the pursuit of improving the care provided in relation to the prevention of PU.3 In this study, we could observe this fact, in which many sub-areas were addressed, all focusing on PU and its prevention.

The content on the pressure ulcer prevention brought by theses and dissertations found match the most discussed topics in the literature. A review article published in 2009, for example, concluded that such content focused on issues related to preventive measures commonly used by nurses, knowledge of the use of prevention programs, with emphasis on the nursing interventions, the cost-benefit ratio and the way health professionals deal with customers; demonstrating the concern of nurses to seek new knowledge and technologies and increasing their decision-making and monitoring of patients at risk of developing pressure ulcers.15

Corroborating another study, it appears that today the Brazilian nursing besides working in direct patient care, still directs its attention to studies related to economic aspects linked to this care, as a way to negotiate and defend the necessary resources to provide safe care.16

It was noted that, concerning the indicator “methodological design”, there is a predominance of descriptive and exploratory studies with quantitative approach. No theses and dissertations were identified with designs of the experimental type, which, in the scientific field, have the highest level of evidence. This reality, especially in Brazil, is possibly due to ignorance by nurses as to the power and multiplicity of use of fundamental and/or experimental research in the design of their research, making the focus of research in nursing little turn to these types of study.17

Referring to the “selected theme,” as evidenced in the results, two of the studies found addressed the knowledge of nursing professionals on the prevention of PU, which leads to a reflection on continuing education. The good professional performance requires continuing education of workers employed in health services. However, it is necessary to think about the strength of such educational processes to improve and qualify the health care in hospitals which have adverse conditions with regard to staffing, supervision and continuing education.

Proposals for permanent education in health services need to work together with changes in the physical structure, working conditions, in the nursing management and health management, in order to ensure quality in the care processes and greater commitment with patient care.18

The systematization of nursing care, thus, becomes an effective action in preventing PU, and it is a way to make this assistance really effective, offering to the patient what the essence of the profession is: care for others when they cannot do it or need help as supervision and guidance. The SNA provides a constant reflection on the choice of interventions for the prevention of PU, causing the nurses to develop their ability to make better decisions with increasing autonomy.3

From the magnitude of the problem involving the PU, it is essential for the patient, for their family and for the health institution that nurses overcome the still predominant curative model.

**FINAL REMARKS**

From the development of this work, it was possible to give an overview of what has been produced on the theme that involves nursing care in preventing PU in the Brazilian scene, featuring the professional field that is developing such studies.

We showed that nowadays there is a good scientific production in nursing about the subject that involves PU. Furthermore, it was possible to discern that a factor that is closely related to the subject is nursing care in patient care, as a way to prevent pressure ulcer and the methods used for this purpose, with emphasis on measures for relationship...
cost-benefit ratio and search for new knowledge and technologies.

Since this is an important theme for direct nursing care to patients, we believe that this study contributes to the systematization of the work performed, as a way to use measures to prevent complications, since the incidence of PU is considered a poor indicator of care.

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