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PERCEPTION OF EDUCATORS ON SEXUAL GUIDANCE AT SCHOOL: A FLOOR THEY NEVER TREADED

PERCEPÇÃO DE EDUCADORES SOBRE A ORIENTAÇÃO SEXUAL NA ESCOLA: UM SOLO QUE NUNCA PISARAM

PERCEPCIÓN DE EDUCADORES SOBRE LA ORIENTACIÓN SEXUAL EN LA ESCUELA: UN SUELO QUE NUNCA PISARON

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to identify the perception of educators on the theme of sexual guidance at school. **Method:** a descriptive and exploratory study of a qualitative approach, with 15 teachers of a public school in the period of September-October 2014. The data were produced from semi-structured interviews and submitted to content analysis technique. **Results:** from the analysis emerged analytical category << The perception of sexual guidance in the school as a floor they never treaded >>. Educators mentioned that it was difficult to adapt to the theme of sexual guidance at school. **Conclusion:** joint initiatives in the areas of health and education are needed. This coordination is intended to allow spaces for collective discussion of sexual guidance in the school so as to minimize the doubts and anxieties arising from educators. **Descriptors:** Sex Education; Teachers; Nursing.

RESUMO

Objetivo: identificar a percepção dos educadores acerca da temática orientação sexual na escola. **Método:** estudo descritivo exploratório, de abordagem qualitativa, com 15 educadores de uma escola pública, no período de setembro a outubro de 2014. Os dados foram produzidos a partir de entrevistas semiestruturadas e submetidos à Técnica de Análise de Conteúdo. **Resultados:** a partir da análise, emergiu a categoria analítica << A percepção da orientação sexual na escola como um solo que nunca pisaram >>. Os educadores mencionaram que encontram dificuldades para se adaptarem com a temática orientação sexual na escola. **Conclusão:** são necessárias iniciativas conjuntas entre as áreas da saúde e da educação. Essa articulação tem o intuito de possibilitar espaços de discussão coletiva sobre a orientação sexual na escola de maneira a minimizar as dúvidas e anseios advindos dos educadores. **Descritores:** Educação sexual; Docentes; Enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: identificar la percepción de los educadores acerca de la temática orientación sexual en la escuela. **Método:** estudio descriptivo exploratorio, de enfoque cualitativo, con 15 educadores de una escuela pública, en el período de septiembre a octubre de 2014. Los datos fueron producidos a partir de entrevistas semi-estructuradas y sometidos a la Técnica de Análisis de Contenido. **Resultados:** a partir del análisis surgió la categoría analítica << La percepción de la orientación sexual en la escuela como un suelo que nunca pisaron >>. Los educadores mencionaron que encuentran dificultades para adaptarse con la temática orientación sexual en la escuela. **Conclusión:** son necesarias iniciativas conjuntas entre las áreas de la salud y de la educación. Esa articulación tiene el intuito de posibilitar espacios de discusión colectiva sobre la orientación sexual en la escuela de manera a minimizar las dudas y ansias de los educadores. **Palabras clave:** Educación sexual; Profesores; Enfermería.

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INTRODUCTION

From 1996, the Brazilian education shows the National Curricular Parameters (PCN), the cross-sectoral themes, which have the intention to insert in schools, from different perspectives, relevant issues, urgent and present in the everyday life of students. Among the relevant topics in the PCN, there is the sexual guidance, as a possibility of integration between the areas of health and education, to consider the school environment as an opportunity to build different interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches.¹

Sexual guidance helps to ensure that students can develop and exercise their sexuality with pleasure and responsibility. However, it is emphasized that it is the school's role to ensure basic rights to the student, such as health, information, and knowledge, elements considered essential to the formation of responsible citizens who are aware of their capabilities.² Thus, it is clear that the school is not only a place of theoretical learning, but also a living space, and processing, as well as a unique way of incorporating knowledge about health.³

The school is adequate space for developing care strategies that educators provide, interactively and dynamically, times to answer questions about sexual orientation. These actions will help to reduce health problems related to sexual and reproductive lives of the students, inserting the educator as a mediator in this process.⁴

The educator has the challenging task of working with this theme in a cross-sectoral way, not only from the biological perspective but also from issues about values, morals, ethics, feelings, culture, among others. He also prepares these young people for their sexuality in a responsible way to minimize their vulnerability.⁵

It is possible that schools are struggling with the theme of inclusion of sexual orientation in their daily life, often not allowing spaces to discuss reproductive health and sexuality of a continuous and cross-sectoral way. These difficulties are supported principally by the lack of qualified teachers to manage discussions and reflections on the subject.^{6,7} This problem may be linked to personal factors, lack of training and institutional problems moments. Moreover, public policies have been shown to be insufficient to support and maintain this subject in the school environment.⁸ Given the above, the study had the following guiding question: what is the perception of educators

on the theme of sexual guidance in the school context?

From this, the objective is to identify the perception of educators on the theme of sexual guidance in school.

MÉTHOD

Exploratory, descriptive study with a qualitative approach, conducted in a public school in one municipality of the western region of Santa Catarina/SC. The production data was through a semi-structured interview, between the months of September and October 2014. The study included 15 educators who were included by teaching for elementary and/or high school, for students who were between 10 to 19 years old, according to the Ministry of Health considering the age group to demarcate the stage of adolescence. The exclusion criteria were educators that at the period of data collection were on vacation or in any kind of leave.

For the development of the interviews, a script was used to permeate the axles of their driving, containing the following questions: Do you know the National Curriculum Parameters and cross-sectoral issues; which cross-sectoral themes did work or are working in class, and sexual orientation enter these themes, and how it is worked; as the teacher sees sexual orientation in their daily school life. All interviews took place individually and were audio recorded on an MP3, and later transcribed.

Data were analyzed in accordance with Content Analysis.⁹ In this context, the development of analytical steps were followed: organization and reading data, identification codes and the results, preparation of categories, represented by the set of similar features and expressions, presentation and analysis of categories.

The research had approved its project by the Ethics Committee in Research of the Federal University of Fronteira Sul/Campus Chapecó (UFFS/SC) under the registration number 753432, on 20 August 2014. The project complied with the ethical principles of the resolution of number 466 of 2012, the National Health Council (CNS)/Ministry of Health that provides for guidelines and regulations of research involving the participation of human beings. In the results to maintain the confidentiality of the participants, educators were coded by the letter "E" of educators followed by the Arabic numeral, such as E1, E2, E3, successively.

RESULTS

For the exhibition of the results, there will be first presented to the characterization of educators, as shown in Figure 1 and the

following analytical category that emerged from the analysis: the perception of sexual orientation in the school as a floor they have never been there before.

| Code | Gender | Age | Area of knowledge | Level of education | Graduation time |
|------|--------|-----|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| E1 | F | 33 | Pedagogy | Post-Gradation | 03 years |
| E2 | F | 42 | Math | Pós-graduação lato sensu | - |
| E3 | F | 46 | English | Superior Incompleto | - |
| E4 | F | 28 | Biology | Post-Gradation | 03 years |
| E5 | M | 46 | Geography | Post-Gradation | 12 years |
| E6 | F | 38 | Pedagogy | Post-Gradation | 09 years |
| E7 | M | 34 | Brazilian literature | Post-Gradation | 03 years |
| E8 | F | 43 | Arts - Portuguese | Post-Gradation | 16 years |
| E9 | F | 38 | Arts - Portuguese | Master degree | 17 years |
| E10 | F | 26 | Social Sciences | Incomplete higher education | 03 years |
| E11 | M | 29 | Philosophy | Post-Gradation | 04 years |
| E12 | M | 39 | Math | Master degree | 16 years |
| E13 | M | 35 | Physical Education | Post-Gradation | 12 years |
| E14 | F | 48 | Pedagogy | Post-Gradation | 28 years |
| E15 | F | 33 | Educaction | Incomplete Master degree | 10 years |

Figure 1. Characterization of teachers of a public school in a municipality of the western region of Santa Catarina, SC, in 2014.

◆ Perception of sexual guidance in the school as a floor never treaded

Educators realize the cross-sectoral theme of sexual orientation as a ground never treaded since they do not feel prepared, and sometimes present difficulties in adapting to work with the subject in their disciplines.

[...] This is complicated like I told you, it is a floor I never treaded, got it? I do not know how I would deal with it [...]. I do not see me prepared to enter that land [laughs], [she sees the need] to be oriented to how to talk, how to do, how to lead them [...]. (E3)

[...] Often teachers are not prepared to work these issues in the classroom, or often leave only for the biology to work on only the sexual issue, biological, and we know that sexual orientation is not only linked biological questions. It would be a social construct, and sometimes it is pruned, it is not worked. Teachers will need to be trained for this. (E10)

[...] In part starting my career as a tenured professor recently, I feel a little inhibited also think sexuality ended up being very trivialized in our context, young people have lost the dimension of the real meaning of what would be the sexual act, is not all that purely mechanical, instinctive, I made it, and that's it, it has a number of consequences [...]. (E11)

It is noteworthy that educators realize the need to call other professionals to contribute to sexual orientation at school. This perception reflects the aspirations and concerns of educators working with the sexual guidance theme, pointing out the need to have specialized people to work on the subject to allow for better learning by the students.

[...] Bringing people to explain to teenagers, I think it should be more, because of all the information it has. So, I think they should have more to meet what they want to know. (E1)

[...] I find it interesting, because I'm in the classroom all day, then come someone different, a different person, even for they to ask, be more comfortable, I think it would be good [...], someone who bring all methods [contraception and prevention], for them to see, visualize. Also, like the female condom, which is used to explain to them, because I understand it a little, I am not that expert person, to get there and explain everything, right [...]. (E4)

I think people could come, to give lectures, most qualified people in the health field to answer questions [...]. (E8)

They perceive that sexual guidance is eventually worked, mostly, by the educators who teach the subjects of science and biology. This perception indicates some uncertainty and even knowledge on the subject, even being touted as a cross-sectoral. They refer not to master the subject and so it is better to delegate the discussion and activities in pairs that address the specific subjects mentioned above.

[...] There are things I do not command, I did not study science, I did not study biology, and then I look for the guidance of a biology teacher. (E1)

The teacher of biology that ends up working [sexual orientation]. I know what they do, have with the school coordination girls who are always working, but it is not a job that I follow. (E2)

[...] It is a cross-sectoral theme [sexual orientation], but like it or not it just up to the science and biology. (E4)

It is noteworthy that the educators when to realize sexual guidance at school, they show that needs to be incorporated the theme in its various contexts, which can be seen as a process of change in schools. They believe that working sexual orientation is critical to the growth and development of adolescents.

It is critical [sexual orientation], like everything in life, I believe that education is only a reflection, a complement of education, the student brings with him the family environment and the coexistence of society in general, with friends, work with everything else. (E11)

It is a topic that it is not possible to not work it, even because it is well latent, appearing this much. It is the most difficult of most people is to accept, understand, and from that, you can work on it. (E14)

[...] Today, we need to guide our students on issues of sexuality, because it is emerging increasingly early. It is surfacing at an earlier age and we have big problems with it. (E15)

It is possible to see that the educators experience difficulties and feel unprepared to address sexual orientation at school. However, they understand and explain the need and the importance of working with the theme. They point out that to work with the theme of lack of health workers collaboration and/or areas of educators that include sexual orientation in their disciplines, as the example of science and biology.

DISCUSSION

In 1996, the National Curriculum Parameters were implanted, and among the themes, sexual orientation was established as a cross-sectoral issue, which all educators should approach it in the classroom, regardless of their subject.¹⁰ However, many of them reported having difficulty and feel unprepared to address sexual orientation at school. They attribute this difficulty and unpreparedness to higher education institutions, for the most part, in the curriculum of undergraduate courses do not provide adequate training to work the issue.¹¹

Sexual orientation is emphasized by educators as a ground never treaded. As a consequence, the literature describes that educators prefer not to discuss this topic in the classroom since they are usually taken by the uncertainty as to the conduct of the questions that may emerge. This strategy can be understood as a refuge to keep control of

the situation, and not to be exposed to embarrassing situations.¹²

The fact that the educator does not work sexual orientation in the school context, it is often a reflection of the values built along his life.⁶ That is, these educators are already imbued with values, knowledge, experiences and livings that limit dialogue to certain subjects.⁷ As a result, the educator who has no knowledge about sexual orientation addresses it only when there is a demonstration by the students, being worked on in the next perspective to common sense, in a timely and not continuously. Thus, the teacher often ignores issues such as teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, among others that arise in everyday school life, which would need to be dialogued together with the students, reflecting as their doubts, fears and difficulties.¹³

There are numerous difficulties faced by educators in working with sexual orientation, from the lack of specific training, high workload, since many educators work in more than one school, lack of teaching materials and structure, acceptance of difficulty of the other educators working with the interdisciplinary theme, disinterest, fear of approaching this issue with teenagers and not know what to advise. Faced with these issues in numerous work sexual orientation at school it usually ends up promptly.¹⁰

The educator to address this issue should not hold only to what the school offers, but go beyond, to seek ways such as books, magazines, websites, experts in the field and always stay informed because the questions the students may come at any time. The educator must always be updated because the media is all the time bringing information to everyone.¹⁴

With the implementation of the theme of sexual guidance in the school curriculum, it is identified that there is a shortage of teaching materials to assist educators to address this issue in the classroom.¹⁵ The various teaching resources used are important to supplement the teaching of space learning constructive and enriching, stimulating the students creativity and ensuring their autonomy.¹⁶

Moreover, for the sexual orientation be addressed in full, it is necessary to think in the continuing education of educators, since it is a topic that constant search for knowledge demands.¹⁷ Since educators are considered the key to the development of thematic sexual orientation in the school context, it is necessary to engage in a broad and thorough training process. Both of contents, the methodology, to allow young people to have

better guidance on the myths surrounding sexual matters, information from the perspective of scientific knowledge and reconstruction of knowledge society, media and family printed in these adolescents.¹⁸

As a result, the formation of educators is important to overcome the perspective of common sense, allowing deeper and seeking basic and sufficient knowledge about sexual orientation to define objectives, contents and methodologies to address this issue in the classroom. Also to develop the sensitivity and address the key issues that permeate the students, helping to build a positive and responsible vision of educating about their sexuality. This construction of the educator should be focused on finding guidelines, constant exchanges of experiences between different segments of professionals, so they can get an overview of how the sexual orientation can be developed within the classroom.¹⁹

Also, for this training fulfills the needs of educators on the subject, it should involve professionals from different areas such as health, sexology, history and pedagogy, among others.²⁰ Many schools seek to support in psychologists or other professionals to give lectures, but it is known that the effectiveness of this work is limited, since it is not giving sequence and also because professionals do not know the reality of young people.

Another need reported by teachers is the inclusion of health professionals in schools, such as nurses, which could work in health education for adolescents and extended to their families and also assist educators in addressing the issue in the classroom.¹⁷ It is also suggested that there is the promotion of moments of discussion and reflection on the partnership of professionals prepared to work with sexual orientation, so that this issue is not merely to meet an imposed proposal, besides being addressed incorrectly.²¹

Sexual guidance as a cross-sectoral issue should be addressed in all subjects, not only being the exclusive responsibility of teachers of science and biology, and aims to inform and enlighten students about the different approaches to sexuality.²² Thus, it is noteworthy that the National Curriculum Guidelines have been established to ensure that sexual orientation is worked as a cross-sectoral theme in several areas of knowledge.²³

Some educators have expressed some resistance and are unprepared to work with sexual orientation in the classroom. This justification requires such responsibility to

teachers of science and biology minister the subject in their classes relieving them of their duties.¹⁹ Together with this, it is emphasized that in addition to requiring scientific knowledge, it is still necessary to build links that allow establishing respect and mutual trust between student and educator.²⁴ Also, educators need to overcome paradigms built in their day to day, arising from their culture and their daily lives. By working on sexual orientation in the classroom, they often encounter prejudices, fears, values, which may influence somehow, the construction of knowledge of adolescents on the topic.²⁵

FINAL REMARKS

The analytical category to the perception of sexual orientation in the school as a floor never treaded, points out that educators feel unprepared and have difficulties to address sexual guidance in the classroom. As educators, this unpreparedness is seen by the lack of preparation for the undergraduate course, lack of training and lack of an interdisciplinary context.

The school is a space that seeks to train individuals without prejudices and taboos. For this to happen, it is necessary that the educator has in his training context with cross-sectoral issues in specific sexual orientation, enabling the construction of new knowledge, in addition to working this theme openly in various everyday situations that may arise in the school context.

Sexual guidance may be part of the curriculum of undergraduate courses to allow training that would help future educators in the reconstruction of their sexuality, which can not only work restricted content its matter but rather themes today, bringing to class facts and experiences room. Also, there is the need for continuous sensitization and skills through a link between the areas of health and education. This joint can be strengthened by the professional nurse inserted in everyday school life, not only at specific times, such as preventive campaigns, but providing opportunities for discussion and collective reflections on the theme of the whole school community.

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