



**NURSING CONSULTATIONS FOR THE ELDERLY IN PRIMARY CARE IN
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE: EXPERIENCE REPORT**
**CONSULTAS DE ENFERMAGEM AOS IDOSOS EM ASSISTÊNCIA BÁSICA NO INTERCÂMBIO
ESTUDANTIL INTERNACIONAL: RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA**
**CONSULTAS DE ENFERMERÍA A LOS ANCIANOS EN ASISTENCIA BÁSICA EN EL INTERCAMBIO
ESTUDIANTIL INTERNACIONAL: RELATO DE EXPERIENCIA**

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RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever a experiência discente sobre as consultas de enfermagem à população idosa durante o intercâmbio estudantil internacional. **Método:** estudo descritivo, tipo relato de experiência, realizado com base nas consultas de Enfermagem executadas no estágio discente no Ensino Clínico na área opcional do idoso da Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra durante intercâmbio estudantil internacional em Portugal. **Resultados:** a experiência vivida na realização das consultas de enfermagem possibilitou a aquisição de novos conhecimentos e o desenvolvimento de competências votadas à enfermagem do idoso, bem como melhoria da qualidade da assistência em saúde à população em foco. **Conclusão:** as consultas de enfermagem foram de grande importância, tanto para a melhoria da qualidade de vida dos idosos atendidos quanto para os acadêmicos envolvidos, já que favoreceu o desenvolvimento do saber crítico-reflexivo sobre a profissão. **Descritores:** Assistência de Enfermagem; Saúde do Idoso; Intercâmbio Educacional Internacional; Estudantes de Enfermagem; Ensino.

ABSTRACT

Objective: to describe the student experience on nursing visits to the elderly population during the international student exchange. **Method:** a descriptive study, of experience report type, conducted based on nursing consultations performed in the student internship in Clinical Teaching in the optional area of the elderly of Coimbra Nursing School during international student exchange in Portugal. **Results:** the experience in performing nursing consultations enabled the acquisition of new knowledge and the development of skills focused on elderly nursing, as well as the improvement of the quality of health care to the targeted population. **Conclusion:** nursing consultations were of great importance, both to improve the quality of life of the assisted elderly and for the academics involved, since it favored the development of critical and reflective knowledge about the profession. **Descriptors:** Nursing Care; Elderly Health; International Educational Exchange; Nursing Students; Teaching.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir la experiencia discente sobre las consultas de enfermería a la población anciana durante el intercambio estudiantil internacional. **Método:** estudio descriptivo, tipo relato de experiencia, realizado con base en las consultas de Enfermería ejecutadas en la pasantía discente en la Enseñanza Clínica en el área opcional del anciano de la Escuela Superior de Enfermería de Coimbra durante intercambio estudiantil internacional en Portugal. **Resultados:** la experiencia vivida en la realización de las consultas de enfermería posibilitó la adquisición de nuevos conocimientos y el desarrollo de competencias dirigidas a la enfermería del anciano, así como mejoría de la calidad de la asistencia en salud a la población en foco. **Conclusión:** las consultas de enfermería fueron de grande importancia, tanto para la mejoría de la calidad de vida de los ancianos atendidos como para los académicos envueltos, ya que favoreció el desarrollo del saber crítico-reflexivo sobre la profesión. **Descriptor:** Atención de Enfermería; Salud del Anciano; Intercambio Internacional de la Educación; Estudiantes de Enfermería; Enseñanza.

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INTRODUCTION

The student exchange has been important cultural and knowledge value in teaching and research since the past. From the historical context, during the eighteenth century, the Grand Tour spurred the quest for knowledge of new cultures, mainly due to the acceleration of European development aiming at personal improvement.¹

Nowadays, there has been an era of partnerships between countries, in which individuals of different nationalities work in cooperation for businesses companies and enterprises, which brings monetary benefits to the involved parties. Among these, there are the University Institutions, which have been improving the awareness that the Academic Exchange promotes students' growth.²

This interaction and agreements between institutions has been responsible for valuing the quality of the institution, since we live in a world with flexible borders. The traffic of ideas and values, people, goods and information circulate quickly, generating considerable implications for the higher education on quality, forms of learning, research and knowledge production, access, intellectual property, diversity and funding. Agreements between institutions generate mobility of teachers and students, positively contributing to academic cooperation and resulting in benefits for the various areas of science.²

In this context, there is highlight for nursing, which is a profession focused on improving health care, in the pursuit of knowledge that act as a tool in the systematization and organization of its practice and its care process. This has favored the exercise of care, based not only on the biological dimension of the human being, but also in understanding the citizen as a social subject, both in hospitals and in community health.³

The nursing consultation is a technological strategy of paramount importance in this process as it has a resolute character, supported by law, and is privative of nurses. It also is a facilitator of actions that promote health, aimed at early diagnosis and treatment.³ It must be detailed, respecting the privacy and individuality of the elderly, taking into consideration their beliefs, myths and taboos, as well as the contextualization, housing, economic conditions and relationships with family.⁴

During the consultation, especially those directed at the elderly, the peculiarities

arising from the aging process or some associated pathologies must be strictly considered, such as, difficulties in hearing, which results in loss of communication, visual acuity and deficit in memory. These factors are crucial for the efficient development of consultation and efficiency of care.⁴

It is noteworthy that the nursing consultation is of paramount importance in the health services, as it contributes to the multidisciplinary work and to the development of inter-sector practices and especially in interpersonal relationships with clients and families in the exercise of care based on science.⁵

Given the above, the objective of this report is to describe the experience of two students in performing nursing consultations during the academic international mobility in an exchange program between Brazil and Portugal, conducted between February and September 2013. There was the implementation of practical activities in the clinical education in the optional area of the elderly, which justifies the study.

METHOD

Descriptive study of experience report type conducted based on nursing consultations performed in the student internship in Clinical Teaching, in the optional area of the elderly of Coimbra Nursing School, during international student exchange in Portugal.

The internship in question was held in the Parish Council of Sao Martinho de Arvore, municipality of the district of Coimbra. The site has 1033 inhabitants in an area of 4.6 km², having a population density of 217.82 inhabitants/km². Every month, approximately 200 Nursing consultations were carried out, averaging a total of 117 patients participating in this activity, predominantly aged between 65 and 69 years, i.e., elderly patients with chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.

In this study, it is highlighted the implementation and development of nursing consultations in primary care level, aimed at the elderly population of the municipality during the months of April and June 2013. The space allocated for the development of nursing activities was not a typical health center, equipped and furnished, as it was dependent on the city hall. Thus, in a previous meeting it was conducted a technical visit to meet the environment, providing the construction of managerial strategies to adapt the space for primary care nursing.

Thus, nursing offices were built through the management thinking of the student team with materials provided by the municipal council in order to provide a warm, safe and health-promoter environment.

With the nursing consultations, it was possible to highlight the greatest needs of that clientele, favoring the development of a concise and effective care plan. In addition, it enabled to identify the areas with most need to focus attention on primary health care, namely, education regarding therapeutic adherence (food, drug therapy and physical exercise) as well as the prevention of falls in the elderly.

It is worth mentioning that it was not necessary to submit the study to the Research Ethics Committee because it is an experience report of students. However, researchers remained the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experience occurred during the student exchange of two academics of the Aurora de Afonso Costa Nursing School (EEAAC) with the Coimbra Nursing School (ESENFC) in the first half of 2013, between the months February to July, by the International Mobility program of Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF).

The two academics had different motivations for entering the mobility program. One of them had keen interest in participating in the mobility during the 7th period of the Bachelor Course and Degree in Nursing by UFF. The motivation was based on the fact that the academic exchange, as a multiplier in cultural, social and intellectual concept, would generate opportunity for enhancing knowledge, scientific and technical skills as well as the construction of a distinguished professional with broad and critical view. For the other academic, the interest arouse after entering into the Institutional Program for Scientific Initiation Scholarships (PIBIC), in which, through the development of research, she was observed that science and technology are circulating among institutions around the world, and the exchange would be an aggregator vehicle of knowledge.⁶

The development of nursing consultations occurred during the practices proposed by the Clinical Teaching discipline in the optional area of the elderly, in the mandatory internship field of the 8th period of the nursing course degree of ESENFC. This field was the Parish Council of Sao Martinho de Arvore, where the activities were performed

in the period from April, 09 to June, 21, 2013. In this environment, educational strategies aimed at adults and the elderly were applied. These patients had chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, osteoarthritis and cancer.

The choice of Parish Council of Sao Martinho de Arvore for the performance of educational activities was carried out by the internship counselor, considering that the place was in need of nursing care through consultations and educational activities in health, since at the time there was no health institution to meet the local population. This fact was challenging and demanded, above all, scientific, technical and management knowledge to meet that population in need of health care.

The physical space was made available, but the local dynamics was created by the students, under the guidance of the supervising teacher. They had available two nursing offices and a reception area where the consultations were scheduled. The site's aesthetic was planned and arranged in warm manner, with images that encouraged healthy eating and regular exercise.

In a small, rural, illiterate and Catholic environment, the disclosure shall come from an intimate environment of the population. So, in the Sunday before the start of clinical teaching, the students participated in the Mass, in which, with the presence of the guiding teacher, they were properly introduced and the work to be developed in the community was explained. The reception was positive and the elderly population showed interest in joining the initiative.

The nurse's skills were widely developed, and their initiative has been improved, since they expressed availability and interest in carrying out consultations and nursing procedures, taking advantage of all opportunities offered. Associated with this capability, their confidence and ability of problem-solving were also greatly enhanced. The group had to be autonomous and guide the dynamics of the strategies implemented, while developing a sense of organization. Although they were located only in nursing services, they had the concern to advise people to look for other areas of health in order to obtain a more complete care, always taking the acquired information to other professionals so that they could give continuity to health care.

It is still extremely important to highlight the interest of the group in self-training and research. Once they were alone in carrying out nursing consultations, it was important to

have recent knowledge of various themes to provide correct information. The research carried out by the group came to fill certain gaps, particularly in active aging, prevention of falls, performance of physical exercise in the elderly and treatment adherence. Thus, all the doubts that arose were overcome by bibliographic research in books, scientific articles on reliable databases and by questioning the advisor teacher. The ability to theoretically support interventions through research continues to take on a particular importance. It is the body of knowledge that defines the nursing profession and as such, it is of utmost importance to be up to date on the scientific knowledge.

The abilities of data collection, identification of problems/needs, using essentially the verbal/nonverbal communication, and setting priorities, using as support database Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, were developed and improved.

The nursing consultations were carried out in three stages: first, the patients went through the screening sector, composed of two nursing students for welcoming, checking vital signs and blood glucose screening for identification of diseases and personalized advice. In this context, all data relating to patients were promptly recorded in a software system to monitor the evolution or involution of the pathological condition of the customers during the follow-up period. This could also assist in decision-making in individualized nursing in every situation.

Then, the patients were directed to the nursing offices where it was held the active search of the past history of the patient and physical examination. In the case of elderly patients, nurses performed the verification on their independence and dependence, occurrence of chronic diseases and the onset of cognitive deficit. In case of cognitive deficit, they recommended the presence of a companion or family member for the guidance of health information.

Moreover, it was performed thorough analysis in relation to the basic needs of patients, for example, personal achievement, esteem, social relationships, safety (home and local) and physiological needs. After the assessment of needs, it was performed the survey of nursing diagnoses according to the International Classification for Nursing practice (ICNP®).

Thus, nurses built a care plan geared to the particular needs of each individual. As most of the served population was illiterate, nursing students have developed illustrative and ludic care plans for better understanding.

In the third phase, patients were forwarded to the ward screening, for scheduling the next consultation, verification and enhancement of the information transmitted during nursing consultations. Those who were decompensated were directed to the nearest hospital for specialized care.

It is noteworthy that nursing students conducted independent nursing care in the area of health promotion and prevention and dressings, and they have also used materials in a rational manner. In this sphere they could essentially recognize the autonomous areas of nursing intervention. It is also noteworthy that patients with mobility limitations received home visits. For this, the responsible students conducted prior planning of the visit, focusing on the potential needs that the patient and their family could have. Moreover, this fact was of great value to the student team, because it enabled to observe and get closer to the reality in which the patient lives.

The home visit is of paramount importance in health care, because it enables assessing the environmental and physical conditions in which the individual and their families live, seeking to assist, monitor their work, collect data on housing conditions and sanitation, apply control measures in both communicable and parasitic diseases and in the context of health education.⁷

Empowering people to take care of their own health is of utmost importance. In this sense, it is crucial that the practice is directed to this aspect. In the elderly, in general, there is a great variability in the decline of vital functions.

It is not only about preventing disease, but adopting positive levels of health. Over the weeks of clinical education, the adopted priority was to invest in health education either for the individual or in groups, as a way to provide tools to the population. The team has also sought to involve the elderly and their family in nursing care, bearing in mind their family, cultural and social context and together with them, they defined the best strategies to achieve the best level of autonomy and independence.

In the teaching and learning process of individuals to effective care in health, the active involvement of family and community in promoting adherence is extremely important, as well as continuous and mutual cooperation between health professionals, researchers and parties involved in the proceedings related to care.⁸

The group has enhanced the ability to ensure continuity of care for the elderly,

especially to those with hypertension, diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, obesity and patients with wounds, allowing following the evolution of their health status, with emphasis the nursing process.

The nursing process can be defined as a specific professional job that requires a sequence of dynamic and combined actions to its implementation. The adoption of a particular form or way of doing the Systematization of Nursing Care is based on a set of values and moral beliefs and in the technical-scientific knowledge of nursing area.⁹

For the development of activities, it was important to build a trust relationship. This is a basic foundation in the nursing profession and the group considered to have achieved it, for all the success of the care process is rooted in an effective trust relationship. The nurse does not make decisions for the patient, nor should replace them in their participation in the action. And to help, they must have a thorough knowledge about themselves.

Due to the demand of care observed by the students, it was planned, with the aid of the internship advisor, the Healthy Weekend. In this event, various health actions were made available for free, such as blood donation, using the elderly simulator, health education sessions, obesity, hypertension and diabetes screening. Moreover, there was the performance of tests (electrocardiogram, eye examination and cholesterol level).

The well applied aid relationship provides to the care effectiveness and a human quality that gives it a professional character and better visibility of the nurse's actions. It has improved the ability to communicate with people from different cultures, social classes and different educational qualifications, which requires different approaches and speeches.

CONCLUSION

With the experience acquired in clinical education, it was possible to see Nursing from another viewpoint, as we had contact with different people, with different needs. It was clearly visible the heterogeneity of the aging process. The elderly are endowed with different life stories, family, social and economic conditions, personalities and needs.

The importance of developing nursing visits was evidenced, because it favored the identification of the potential needs of patients and enabled the development of an effective care plan for health promotion and prevention.

The nursing consultations are beneficial to patients also generate benefits for professionals who perform them, due to the improvement of critical and reflective thinking, the development of skills for the nursing process, of communication skills and perception of verbal and non-verbal, the promotion of multidisciplinary health care, the establishment of a bond, the trust relationship between professional and patient, the contribution to the professional development, among other numerous benefits.

In addition, the educational activities on the prevention of falls, healthy eating, therapeutic adherence and exercise, which were the needs identified during the consultations, proved to be an essential ally in health education with positive results in adherence to healthy habits.

The essence of Nursing is in looking at the person, not forgetting any of their dimensions, looking at them and realize exactly what they need as a person and what their definition of health is; then, seeing them inserted in the environment and realize whether this is favoring or damaging their autonomy so that a quality nursing care is actually provided. These precautions aim to satisfy the needs of the person so that they can reach a sense of total well-being and autonomy.

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