ABSTRACT

Objective: to investigate the knowledge of the Nursing team of a public hospital about human aging. Method: an exploratory, transversal, quantitative approach study with 168 workers. Data was collected, using a semi-structured questionnaire (socio-demographic and professional information) and Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire with 25 questions about aging (physical, cognitive, psychological and social domains). The data were analyzed by the Stata program, version 11, and the association between the variables by the Chi-square test / Fisher's test. Results: they present Lato sensu capacitación 12.50%, none in the area of Elderly Health. Participants who affirmed to have performed some course in Elderly Health were 12.59%; and 66.39% reported not having received in-service training. The success rate for questions about aging was 40%; (63.23%) for the physical domain, and the lowest (18.52%) for the social domain. Conclusion: the Nursing team has little knowledge about human aging. Descriptors: Health of the Elderly; Geriatric Nursing; Gerontology; Education in Health; Knowledge, Aptitudes and Practices in Health.

RESUMO

Objetivo: investigar o conhecimento da equipe de Enfermagem de um hospital público sobre o envelhecimento humano. Método: estudo exploratório, transversal, de abordagem quantitativa, com 168 trabalhadores. Na coleta de dados, foram utilizados questionário semiestruturado (informações sociodemográficas, profissionais) e questionário Palmore-Neri-Cachioni, com 25 questões, sobre envelhecimento (domíniros físico, cognitivo, psicológico e social). Os dados foram analisados pelo programa Stata, versão 11, e a associação entre as variáveis, pelo teste Qui-quadrado/Teste de Fisher. Resultados: apresentam capacitação Lato sensu 12,50%, nenhuma na área de Saúde do Idoso. Participantes que afirmaram ter realizado algum curso em Saúde do Idoso foram 12,59%; 66,39% informaram não ter recebido treinamento em serviço. O índice de acerto para questões sobre envelhecimento foi de 40%; maior assertiva (63,23%) para as de domínio físico e menor (18,52%), para o social. Conclusão: a equipe de Enfermagem possui pouco conhecimento sobre envelhecimento humano. Descriptors: Saúde do Idoso; Enfermagem Geriátrica; Gerontologia; Educação em Saúde; Conhecimentos, Atitudes e Práticas Em Saúde.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: investigar el conocimiento del personal de Enfermería de un hospital público sobre el envejecimiento humano. Método: estudio exploratorio, transversal, cuantitativo, con 168 empleados. Los datos, fueron utilizados con cuestionario semiestructurado (información sociodemográfica, profesionales) y cuestionario Palmore-Neri-Cachioni con 25 preguntas, sobre envejecimiento (dominios físicos, cognitivos, psicológicos y sociales). Los datos fueron analizados mediante el programa Stata, versión 11, y la asociación entre las variables, por prueba de Chi-cuadrado. Resultados: presentan capacitación Lato sensu 12,50%, ninguna en el área de salud de los ancianos. Los participantes que afirmaron haber realizado un curso sobre salud de los ancianos eran 12,59% y 66,39% reportó no haber recibido formación de entrenamiento en servicio. El índice de acierto a las preguntas sobre el envejecimiento fue del 40%; más assertiva (63,23%) para las de dominio físico y menor (18,52%), para el social. Conclusión: el personal de Enfermería tiene poco conocimiento sobre envejecimiento humano. Descriptores: Salud de la Tercera Edad; Enfermería Geriátrica; Gerontología; Educación en Salud; Conocimientos, Aptitudes y Prácticas En Salud.
INTRODUCTION

The elderly population has increased rapidly worldwide. In Brazil, data from the 2010 census, conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics/IBGE¹, show the decrease of the population of young people and the increase of the elderly. In addition, there is an increase in the relative participation of the population aged 65 and over, which was 4.8% (1991), 5.9% (2000) and reached 7.4% in 2010. The expectation is that, by 2025, the country will reach the sixth largest population of older people in the world.¹

Epidemiological data have shown a decline in mortality rate and decline in fecundity, which has led to changes in the profile of Brazilian health.² Modifications among the first causes of death of the population were identified; previously, they were related to infectious diseases and are caused by non-transmittable chronic diseases, mainly affecting the elderly.² This has contributed to the increase of functional disabilities and the increasing demand and complexity of health services, by the elderly population, at different levels of health care, and especially in the public sectors.²

It is important to emphasize the importance of maintaining the quality of life of the elderly population, both in terms of controlling chronic diseases and in preserving their autonomy and independence. Thus, some authors³ suggest that responsibility for the quality of life of the elderly should be shared among the family, government agencies and health professionals. Therefore, dealing with aging and its nuances has become a major challenge of the contemporary world, especially for health professionals and, especially for Nursing staff professionals. This justifies the requirement of professionals with specific knowledge in the areas of Gerontology and interdisciplinary attention, who can contemplate the real health needs of the elderly.³

The incorporation of knowledge about aging and the adoption of specific actions in this area is of paramount importance for training, professional qualification and continuing education, since they enable a greater approximation of the elderly, and can be determinant for a differentiated look both in the act of caring, as well as of being cared for.⁴ It is known today that the development of educational actions allow for a better understanding of the other, as well as the exchange of experiences between the parties involved.⁴

The understanding that health professionals have of the elderly may interfere with the way they are seen and treated. Thus, it is important to seek to understand and comprehend the reality of this clientele in particular, in an attempt to develop and promote more specific assistance programs, without, however, inhibiting the autonomy and independence of the elderly.⁵ Based on this knowledge and understanding, it is possible to promote training and capacity building for health professionals in the search for improvement of their training and attitudes and, thus, to allow the development of tools and strategies that enable a healthy aging.⁵

Erdman Palmore⁶ developed an instrument called Facts on Aging Quiz - FAQ containing 25 dichotomous questions of the true or false type, with the aim of presenting to the scientific community a succinct research instrument, based on factual affirmations, about human aging. The issues address the physical, cognitive, psychological and social aspects of aging. This instrument was translated, adapted and validated for the Portuguese language (Palmore-Neri-Cachioni-Questionnaire 2002), and it was applied to students and professionals in health and education.³,⁴,⁶

This study intends to investigate the existing knowledge among the professionals of the Nursing team about aging, based on factual statements involving physical, cognitive, psychological and social aspects. The identification of existing knowledge about human aging among Nursing staff may lead to the discussion of the topic in the work environment, contribute positively to paradigm shifts in relation to the elderly and, especially to the improvement of elderly Nursing care, leaving aside the purely biomedical model that generally prevails in health institutions.

The fact that this public teaching hospital has a Multi-professional Nursing Residency program, with an emphasis on elderly health, encouraged the identification of existing knowledge about human aging among Nursing staff professionals.

OBJECTIVE

● To investigate the knowledge of the Nursing team of a public hospital about human aging.

METHOD

Exploratory, transversal study, with a quantitative approach. The study site was a public teaching hospital, with 345 beds,
located in the northern region of the city of Belo Horizonte/MG. This hospital serves an average of 3892 elderly people per year. This institution performs 100% of the visits by the UHS, with scope in clinical and surgical urgency, traumatology and non-traumatology.

The population was composed of 156 nurses, 395 Nursing technicians and nine Nursing assistants who work in the hospital, in the morning, afternoon and evening shifts. The inclusion criteria for sample selection were: belong to one of the categories of Nursing (Nurse or Nursing Technician); working in shifts, morning and evening; carry out their activities in Medica Clinic (MC), Encephalic Vascular Accident (EVA), Surgical Clinic (SC) and Intensive Care Center (ICC), (these being the hours and sectors of activity of the researcher in the hospital); being in full exercise of its activities and available at the time of the interview. The Nursing assistants were excluded from the study, because in this hospital, they perform functions that are not related to the direct assistance with the patients.

The sample consisted of 168 professionals, 47 nurses and 121 Nursing technicians. Of these, 136 professionals (34 nurses and 102 Nursing technicians) participated in the study. Of the participants, 37 were in the MC; 14, in the EVA unit; 45, in the SC and 40, in the ICC. Therefore, 32 professionals (13 nurses and 19 Nursing technicians) were not able to participate in the study for different reasons (vacations, withdrawal from the service, unavailability at the time of data collection). With the consent of the participants, the interviews were carried out at the service units themselves, during the working hours and with the authorization of the immediate supervisor.

Two instruments were used to collect the data: a semi-structured questionnaire containing socio-demographic information (sex, age, schooling, academic qualification) and professionals (professional training, length of service), and open questions related to educational training on elderly health. The second instrument was a specific questionnaire, composed of 25 multiple choice items, which seeks to evaluate basic knowledge about old age, called the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni Questionnaire, adapted version of Palmore Aging Qiz, with a physical, cognitive, psychological domains and social approach. Participants in the study were instructed to single out only one option for each of the 25 questions.

The professionals were contacted in advance and informed about the day, time and place (own dossier and work area), for the application of the questionnaires. They also received, clarifications on the objectives of the research, the format of the instruments, how to complete them and clarification of doubts. The selection of the participants for the research was by voluntary manifestation of the professional in participating in it and by the availability to answer the questionnaires.

Data collection was carried out from August to October 2015, after approval by the competent agencies. The questionnaires were applied to the Nursing technicians, in the evening shift, because it is a time when the assistance activities are calmer, since they are on duty for 12 hours. As for the nurses, who practice activities of six to eight hours, the questionnaires were applied in the respective shifts on duty (morning or afternoon).

The collected data was transferred to a database (Epi Info program, version 3.5.4) and analyzed using descriptive statistics using the Statistical Software for Professional program (Stata, version 11). To evaluate the association between the quantitative variables, the Chi-Square test and the Fisher’s test were used, considering a 5% level of significance. The results were grouped in tables and graph and, later, discussed in light of the scientific literature.

The study had the research project approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Minas Gerais / UFMG, under the opinion CAAE No. 46486715.1.000.5149, dated August 6, 2015. The research complied with Council Resolution 466/2012 National Health, protecting the anonymity of the participants; The interviewees signed the Informed Consent Term.

**RESULTS**

- Socio-demographic, professional and health knowledge characterization of the elderly of the study participants.

In the evaluation of the socio-demographic profile, the study participants were, mostly, (87.22%), female. Regarding age, the mean was 33 years, regardless of gender. The lowest and highest age was 19 and 59 years, respectively.

Regarding the educational level of the participants, 9.55% of Nursing technicians have incomplete higher education in the areas of knowledge [Nursing(4), Physiotherapy (2), Biomedicine (1), Pharmacy (1), Languages (1), Social Work (1), Technologist in Systems Analysis and Development (1) and Production Engineering (1)] and one did not specify the
course. With higher education, in addition to a Nursing degree, a nurse also presents, a degree in Biology and two Nursing technicians in Psychology. About academic qualifications, 12.50% (17) of the professionals have a specialist degree (post-graduate Lato sensu). The prevalence of specialist nurses is in the areas of intensive care 22,22% (4), urgency and emergency 16,69% (3), followed by other areas of knowledge, each with 5.55% (1), such as: Emergency, Emergency and Trauma; Cardiovascular Nursing; Nursing work; Hospital Nursing and Auditing; Project management; Health Management; Skin Lesions; Family Health; Public health; Intensive Therapy and Trauma; Intensive Therapy and Urgency and Emergency. The highest degree of verification was that of a nurse, who, besides being an intensive care specialist, holds a master's degree in the area of Diabetes Education. Thus, it has as a result that no professional has specialized training in Geriatric and Gerontological Nursing. Other data is in table 1.

Regarding the accomplishment of professional training with participation in courses in the Elderly Health knowledge area, 12.59% of the participants stated that they had taken some kind of course, the most mentioned being the “Elderly Caregiver” (4, 41%); 2.94% of participants did not specify the nature of the course. As for the duration of these courses, this ranged from one month to one year, with an average time of 2.5 months. It was also observed that in the last two years there was no mention, by professionals, courses, seminars, congresses, symposia, with a view to updating and qualifying their professional practice. Most courses took place between 2004 and 2013.

When questioned about the performance of specific refresher courses, also, in this area of knowledge, 87.41% of the professionals, regardless of the professional category, mentioned not having participated. Other information is presented in table 2.

In relation to the experience of working with the elderly population in the work environment, 89.71% of the participants stated that they worked or had worked with this clientele at some point. In the current professional practice, 64.41% of the participants mentioned exercising care for the elderly, in the hospital context. Professional experience in caring for the elderly population ranged from one month to 15 years, with an average of three years. When asked about specific training or training, in the work environment, aiming to meet the needs and directed care for the hospitalized elderly, 66.39% reported not having received it. Regarding the organization of training or training, 78.95% of the participants who received training reported that these were promoted and given by nurses. The data is summarized in table 2.

Table 1. Distribution of socio-demographic variables of study participants. Belo Horizonte (MG), Brazil, 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (by age group)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-38</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>44.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-48</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-59</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and academic qualifications</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete elementary school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete elementary school</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete high school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete high school</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>52.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete higher education</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Higher Education</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialization</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialization and Masters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Percentage valid only for respondent participants.
Knowledge of participants in the study on human aging - Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire

The Palmore-Neri-Cachioni is a questionnaire composed of 25 multiple-choice items and its purpose is to evaluate the basic knowledge about old age, from the physical, cognitive, psychological and social domains.3,6,7

The average of answers to the questionnaire questions was 40% (10.4 hits per person). Of the participants in the study, 69.12% answered ten or more questions, and 30.88% obtained a score of less than ten. The highest number of answers to the questions was 18 and was obtained by a Nursing technician who has completed higher education, in an area of knowledge that is not Nursing. However, this professional does not present training through courses in the specific area of Elderly Health, but said that he/she has carried out in-service training on care for the elderly population. The lowest score was three points and was obtained by two participants, a Nursing technician and a nurse. From the evaluation of the questionnaire, it can be inferred that the participants obtained a low income, in front of the questions presented about basic knowledge about human aging.

The three questions that obtained the highest hit rates were, in descending order, questions six (89.71%), 14 (80.30%) and three (73.08%). Question six addresses, the issue, of physical strength in healthy older people. Question 14 questions the reaction rate of people 60 to 70 years old compared to young people. Question three refers to sexuality in old age.

Among the questions with the highest percentage of error are those of numbers seven (9.56%), 20 (10.77%) and 25 (12.88%).

Knowledge of the nursing team of a…
Question seven deals with the proportion of Brazilians over 65 residing in Nursing homes and rest homes. Question 20, on the priority of treatment of the elderly in the public health system compared to the young. Question 25 makes comparison of the educational level between the old generations and the next generations of the elderly.

In the analysis of the physical, social, psychological and cognitive domains, the questions with the greatest number of correct answers were related to the physical aspects of aging, followed by those related to the cognitive aspects. The issues related to the social domain presented the lowest success rate, suggesting lesser knowledge of the participants in matters related to this area of knowledge. A greater distribution of the assertions, according to the domains, is shown in figure 1.

When analyzing the association between the dichotomized variable number of hits greater than or equal to ten questions in the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire and the variables of the socio-demographic questionnaire that could influence the knowledge regarding human aging: “Course conducted in the area of knowledge Health of the Elderly”, “Experience of working with the elderly”, “Training/qualification to work with the elderly “and” Education and academic qualification “, there was no significant association.

This study sought to investigate, through the application of the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire, existing knowledge about human aging among the Nursing teams of a public hospital. The average number of correct answers for the 25 questions was 40%. The questions with the highest scores were related to the physical and cognitive aspects of aging, and social issues were the ones with the lowest success rate.

Care for the elderly population goes far beyond the family environment and, its capabilities, and in this dimension, it is necessary the participation of health professionals, especially nurses trained and prepared to approach those clients.6

In this scenario, the Brazilian government, through the National Policy on Health Care of the Elderly10, established important guidelines regarding the valuation of knowledge about the elderly population. With regard to the training and retraining of human resources, in the areas of Geriatrics and Gerontology, as well as in the provision of services, mechanisms have been established to promote the dissemination of educational information on the bio-psychosocial aspects of aging and to support studies and research on Issues.

In this study, regarding professional qualification, it is observed that the greatest demand for nurses is through specialization courses (12.50%), that is, by the Lato sensu postgraduate course in several areas of knowledge. However, there was no mention, by the participants, of qualification in the areas of geriatrics, gerontology or the like. The lack of choice for qualification in this area of knowledge is related to the little approach that the student, still in the undergraduate, has with themes related to the teaching of geronto-geriatry. This theme has been more present in undergraduate and postgraduate courses.11

**DISCUSSION**

This study sought to investigate, through the application of the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire, existing knowledge about human aging among the Nursing teams of a public hospital. The average number of correct answers for the 25 questions was 40%. The questions with the highest scores were related to the physical and cognitive aspects of aging, and social issues were the ones with the lowest success rate.

Care for the elderly population goes far beyond the family environment and, its capabilities, and in this dimension, it is necessary the participation of health professionals, especially nurses trained and prepared to approach those clients. This study sought to investigate, through the application of the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire, existing knowledge about human aging among the Nursing teams of a public hospital. The average number of correct answers for the 25 questions was 40%. The questions with the highest scores were related to the physical and cognitive aspects of aging, and social issues were the ones with the lowest success rate.

Care for the elderly population goes far beyond the family environment and, its capabilities, and in this dimension, it is necessary the participation of health professionals, especially nurses trained and prepared to approach those clients. This study sought to investigate, through the application of the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire, existing knowledge about human aging among the Nursing teams of a public hospital. The average number of correct answers for the 25 questions was 40%. The questions with the highest scores were related to the physical and cognitive aspects of aging, and social issues were the ones with the lowest success rate.

Care for the elderly population goes far beyond the family environment and, its capabilities, and in this dimension, it is necessary the participation of health professionals, especially nurses trained and prepared to approach those clients. This study sought to investigate, through the application of the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire, existing knowledge about human aging among the Nursing teams of a public hospital. The average number of correct answers for the 25 questions was 40%. The questions with the highest scores were related to the physical and cognitive aspects of aging, and social issues were the ones with the lowest success rate.

Care for the elderly population goes far beyond the family environment and, its capabilities, and in this dimension, it is necessary the participation of health professionals, especially nurses trained and prepared to approach those clients. This study sought to investigate, through the application of the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire, existing knowledge about human aging among the Nursing teams of a public hospital. The average number of correct answers for the 25 questions was 40%. The questions with the highest scores were related to the physical and cognitive aspects of aging, and social issues were the ones with the lowest success rate.

Care for the elderly population goes far beyond the family environment and, its capabilities, and in this dimension, it is necessary the participation of health professionals, especially nurses trained and prepared to approach those clients. This study sought to investigate, through the application of the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire, existing knowledge about human aging among the Nursing teams of a public hospital. The average number of correct answers for the 25 questions was 40%. The questions with the highest scores were related to the physical and cognitive aspects of aging, and social issues were the ones with the lowest success rate.
Knowledge and care practices about specific teaching in the area of Elderly Health were questioned for 75 nurses, technicians and Nursing assistants, who work in Brazilian hospitals. Of these, 75.7% reported not having such content in their academic training. Only 24.3% had some information about human aging and, of these, 10.8%, reported that this teaching was seen in disciplines such as collective health, adult health, community health and clinical-surgical nursing, but none of the survey participants mentioned knowledge in specific discipline in the care of the elderly population.¹¹

In the literature, the idea of qualification aims to offer the professional an update, whether it is focused on technological innovations in the area of performance, need to incorporate a new activity among those developed in the organization or for the employee's poor performance.¹¹ In this study, it is an uncommon activity, in the order of 12.59%, and the average duration of the courses is 2.5 months. Results similar to this study were verified in a survey involving professionals of the Nursing team of the hospital network of the 17th Regional Health Coordination of Rio Grande do Sul. In this study, the authors found that 54.1% of the participants answered negatively about the courses and that 43.2% had participated in some qualification or update, and this was not specific to the area of Nursing. Of those who took courses of improvement, only 2.7% were in the area of gerontogeriatry or human aging.¹¹

When questioned about specific training or training, in the work environment, aimed at meeting the needs and directed care for hospitalized elderly, 66.39% of the participants of the present study reported not having received it. In a survey carried out in Portugal, the authors affirm that many nurses did not have training in gerontogeriatric care at undergraduate level or even in specialization, and also, mentioned, that such professionals do not perceive the real need for such knowledge. Caring for elderly people is an occupation that is assigned low social status, so nurses have preferred to invest in courses and activities related to the care of children and young people. In this study, the authors suggest that nurses do not have technical and scientific attributes to address the complexity and specificity of care for the elderly.¹¹

In a qualitative study, elaborated with the purpose of analyzing the construction of meanings from the process of social interaction between the Nursing team and hospitalized elderly, the authors affirmed that it was possible to identify meanings that demonstrate the lack of specialized professional preparation. They conclude, in this study, that Nursing professionals process the care of hospitalized elderly patients, as the phenomenon presents in their social life and stated that, given the lack of qualification of the team, in gerontogeriatrics, they did not have to observe the specialized professional relationship in the construction of significant interactions of health care for the hospitalized elderly.

In this sense, other authors point out that the education process of professionals needs to be permanent and not only focused on “training”, but, rather, directed to the development of professional skills. In this context, the permanent education of professionals assumes a relevant role and, to carry it out, two aspects are fundamental. One must always take into account the current trends in training at various levels of education and still, be based not only on “information transmission” and “technical training” but on the development of the multiple dimensions of professional competence. The other aspect relates to the need to know the local reality, regarding the search for the characteristics of the population and the definition of what care is offered to the elderly.¹⁴

There is a consensus among the authors that the major barrier to the transformation of attitudes and behavior towards old age is related to the lack of scientific knowledge among health and education professionals as well as the lack of The characteristics and potential of aging.¹⁵

The training of health professionals enables the elderly to be valued as a citizen, with the result that, a professional who knows the social and health situation of the elderly population, as well as other relevant topics, such as specific public policies, resources and devices available in the community, new technologies and instruments for the specific practice of health actions.¹⁶

Although conceived more than thirty years ago, the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire has been used, in many countries to evaluate the level of information of health professionals and students about human To enable and stimulate discussions, to measure and compare general levels of information among different groups, but, under different realities and cultures.³,⁶,⁷

However, there are no records, in the scientific literature of its use in studies involving the Nursing team at the different levels of health care of the elderly. However, other researches that also used this
questionnaire to evaluate students, professionals in the area of education and health, present results similar to those found by this study.

Regarding the responses of the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire, the data obtained reveal that the knowledge about aging by the participants of this study, is deficient, and the income presented low, in front of the presented questions. The average of the 25 questions that make up the questionnaire was 40%, obtaining a minimum of three, and a maximum of 18 correct answers. The same percentage of correct answers (40%) was verified by other authors, in a study carried out with Community Health Agents (CHA), in the city of Marilia / SP. In this study, the CHA obtained a minimum of one and a maximum of 17 correct answers and the median was equal to 11. The CHA trained in aging answered a greater number of questions (33% more), as well as those who worked in areas with greater population (38% more). 3

The four most pertinent questions, in descending order, addressed the themes: physical strength in the elderly, valorization of old-age friendships; work efficiency and speed of reaction among the elderly. Three questions concerned the physical aspects of aging. Psychological and social themes were the least known. Most CHAs agreed on the physical decline in aging. 2 In this study, the questions with the highest hit rate were related to the physical and cognitive aspects of aging, and social issues were the ones with the lowest success rate.

A study conducted at the University of Michigan, in which the gerontogeriatric knowledge questionnaire was applied, the scores obtained indicated that students were correct in only 37% of the statements submitted to them. 17

In a survey, which also applied the questionnaire for undergraduate students in Pedagogy, Physical Education, Medicine and Nursing, the percentages of correct answers were low. The average score was 41% and the maximum score was 68%. The questions with the lowest hit rate were related to the social domain. The physical domain was the one that presented questions with the highest success rate. These authors emphasized the importance of formal studies for the development of specific knowledge about old age. Those students who had theoretical and practical disciplines on this topic demonstrated to know more about the physical, psychological and social aspects of aging than those who did not have access to these disciplines and stages. 15

In another study, a mapping of the competencies of technical and higher level professionals, who work in the Health Care Line of the Elderly, at the Federal University of São Carlos, was carried out. The results revealed that the physical / cognitive and psychological / social domains were the ones that obtained the highest number of correct answers, and the social one, the fewer hits. The highest percentage of hits was 57%, which indicates the need for investment of actions in this aspect. 18

In order to raise the educational and professional profile of the teaching staff of the Third Age Universities, a survey showed that two questions were answered by more than 78% of the sample, six and 14, dealing with the physical aspects of aging. In comparison with this study, these questions were also the most correct. Looking at the content of the questions, it can be noted that the physical and cognitive domains are the most well-known and the psychological and social domains are less known by the group.

The analysis of the data makes us reflect on how the knowledge about human aging is incipient, even for the professionals of the Nursing team who deal daily with this part of the population.

CONCLUSION

The relevance of this research lies in the fact that this is the first study using the Palmore-Neri-Cachioni questionnaire in order to investigate the knowledge about human aging among Nursing staff professionals. The results of the study point to the need to work, in the service environment, issues and issues related to the health of the elderly.

Therefore, the training of these professionals should be the focus of attention of this hospital institution, aiming at improving care for the elderly population. It is understood that the search for the improvement of the training, and the updating of health professionals, through continuing education, should be agreed upon, among those responsible for human resources training, and professionals who practice their daily practice with the elderly.

REFERENCES

ument?code=vtis000297483
ces/2013/06/jun_14_publicada_resolucao.html
