Educational Groups and the Health of Patients Living with Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases

Grupos Educativos e a Saúde de Pessoas que Vivem com Doenças Crônicas Não Transmissíveis

Érika Monteiro da Silva¹
Vera Maria Sabóia²
Lina Márcia Miguéis Berardinelli³
Irma da Silva Brito⁴
Joziane Santos da Silva⁵

¹Enfermeira, Mestranda do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Especialista em Saúde Coletiva. E-mail: erika.rph@gmail.com
²Enfermeira, Pós-Doutora em Enfermagem, professora Titular da Disciplina de Fundamentos de Enfermagem da Escola de Enfermagem da Universidade Federal Fluminense. E-mail: verasaboia@uol.com.br
³Enfermeira, Pós-Doutora em Enfermagem, professora Associada do Departamento Enfermagem Médico Cirúrgico da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. E-mail: l.m.b@uol.com.br
⁴Enfermeira, Pós-Doutora em Enfermagem, professora Adjunta do Departamento de Enfermagem Saúde Pública, Familiar e Comunitária da Escola Superior de enfermagem de Coimbra. E-mail: irmabrito@esenfc.pt
⁵Enfermeira, Especialista em Saúde do Idoso, Residente em Saúde Coletiva na Universidade Federal Fluminense. E-mail: jozysilva78@gmail.com

Abstract
This study aims to explore publications on the educational activities of the groups of people living with Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and how they face the pathology. It is an integrative review based on data taken from BVS, PUBMED and MEDLINE. Research question: Which studies regarding the repercussion of educational groups focused on the healthcare of people who live with NCDs were published in scientific health journals between 2012 and 2016, aiming their practical applicability? Publications that can be found online were attached to this work’s database. The five selected articles were analyzed and divided in two categories: The promotion of healthcare education as a way of reorienting individuals’ lifestyles and the challenges in the pursuit of overcoming the biomedical model that is popular nowadays. The organization of educational groups for the purpose of promoting healthcare still needs to be improved. It is acknowledged that new interventions, concerning the autonomy of individuals with NCDs are more appropriate to their reality.

Keywords: Chronic diseases, healthcare education, healthcare promotion, group structure.

Introduction
The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) \(^1\) estimates that Brazil will have more than 32 million people aged 60 and over in 2025, representing 10.7% of the population. Thus, the Brazilian elderly population will be the sixth largest in the world.

With the demographic transition, there is also a change in the epidemiological field, that is, there is a rise of chronic noncommunicable diseases (CDNT), since the elderly population is more prone to the development of these diseases. In addition, factors such as low schooling, smoking, poor eating habits, lack of physical activity and alcohol consumption are associated with an increase in the number of people with CNCD. The latter are linked to the overweight and obesity epidemic and the high prevalence of hypertension and hypercholesterolemia \(^2\).

There is record that, in recent years, 63% of the world’s deaths have been a result of CNCD. In Brazil, these diseases are among the main causes of hospital admissions and lead to loss of quality of life, a high degree of limitation in work and leisure activities, an increase in the number of premature deaths, and economic impacts on families, the community, and society in general \(^2\).

Among the diseases that contribute to the current change in the morbidity and mortality profile of the Brazilian population, there are Systemic Arterial Hypertension (SAH), Diabetes Mellitus (DM), cancer and chronic respiratory diseases. In Brazil, NCDs are a public health problem, accounting for 72% of the causes of death. Of these, 31.3% are diseases of the circulatory system \(^3\).

Cardiovascular diseases accounted for only 12% of deaths in the 1930s. Currently, they are the main causes of death in all Brazilian regions. Coming in second, there are cancers, and third, deaths caused by accidents and violence \(^4\).
Arterial Hypertension and Diabetes Mellitus are closely linked to the statistics, since they belong to the group of diseases that cause irreversible, disabling injuries and death (5).

For many years, being healthy meant the absence of disease, one lived in a field of practice directed to the curative actions. Culturally, this is still embedded in the daily lives of the population and health professionals, where the demand for health services is to alleviate a momentary need for care, in a biomedical conception and shaped in the health-disease process (6).

There is a need for changes in strategies and actions to promote health in order to make the population more active in the process, stimulating adjustments and reorientation of behaviors and life habits. It is essential to carry out health education actions based on dialogue and the needs of the population group aiming at their autonomy (6).

In this way, the perspective of the construction of care centered on users and their needs is fundamental, and not a model that serves the interests of the market. Given the current scenario of epidemiological and demographic transition with the predominance of chronic noncommunicable diseases (CDNT) and the expansion of the elderly population, there is an increasing demand to aggregate technology, which makes it essential to rethink the assistance model that’s being used, prioritizing acts of care and the autonomy of the subjects (7).

Health Education Technologies (TESs) are important tools for educational work in the care process. Through health education groups, it is possible to promote participation as a way of guaranteeing the individual and the community the possibility to decide on their own destinies, and to enable these subjects to act to improve their health (8).

Thus, the question that guided this research was: What are the educational activities performed with groups of people living with Hypertension and Diabetes Mellitus to improve the health conditions of the participants, as well as their attitude towards the disease?

In order to stimulate other studies and motivate educational actions with groups in a participatory manner, the objective was to present the educational activities of the groups of people living with CNCD and how they face the pathology.

Method

This study is part of an international, multicenter project between Brazil and Portugal, proposed by the Faculty of Nursing of the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (ENF / UERJ), between the Aurora de Afonso Costa Nursing School, Fluminense Federal University (EEAAC / UFF) and the School of Nursing of Coimbra in Portugal (ESEC), with the theme: "Care in health and nursing: health practices and prevention of diseases in the city of Rio de Janeiro." The purpose of this partnership was to evaluate the usefulness of health promotion groups on chronic disease that aim to improve self-care and enhance interdisciplinarity in different settings. The actions developed in group and the practices of care were shared with the service nurses, teachers, and undergraduate students of the three Universities involved in the process of construction of the studies.

This is an Integrative Review (IR) study, characterized by the search for available researches in the databases LILACS, SCIELO, MEDLINE and PubMed in a scientific data base, with compatible analyses and discussions. It is part of a review of the master’s thesis on health care sciences of the EEAAC / UFF under the title "Interdisciplinarity in the act of care in the context of health promotion" of the year 2018. The IR allows the researcher to gather and synthesize studies about a certain theme, in order to provide support for reflection and understanding of what is being investigated, as well as its applicability in practice (9-10).

Six distinct stages are used to carry out the integrative review: elaboration of the guiding
question; search or sampling in the literature; data collection; analysis of the included studies; discussion of results; and presentation of the integrative review.

The inclusion criteria used were articles published fully in Portuguese, English or Spanish, indexed between the years 2012 to 2016 and that addressed the topic on educational activities carried out with groups of people living with CNCDs such as Hypertension and Diabetes Mellitus in health units. As a criterion of exclusion, articles were repeated in the virtual bases; articles in other languages; articles that did not address the theme in question; articles that were not available in full; and those whose approach did not contribute to the knowledge in the intended area.

We searched the virtual databases using the following descriptors: group structure; chronic disease; health education and health promotion. In order to obtain the largest number of articles on the theme chosen, search strategies were developed through combinations and use of the Boolean operator AND.

We first used the cross-referencing of chronic disease descriptors and education in health and health promotion. Thus, 434 studies were found, with 94 articles within the pre-established inclusion criteria. After reading the titles, 20 articles were selected, 2 of which were excluded by repetition, and after reading the abstracts, 4 articles were selected for reading in full.

Subsequently, the descriptors group structure AND health education were used, out of which 4 articles were found according to the criteria. After reading the titles and abstracts, 1 article was selected for full reading.

Results

After the research, the final sample of 5 articles found were read in full in a critical and reflective manner, and separated according to the following information: Title; Data base; Periodical (year and country); Study design / instruments; Results and Conclusion (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N°</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Database/ Periodical</th>
<th>Study design / instrument</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Perceção do estado ativo sobre a atividade desenvolvida em hospitais</td>
<td>Neto, Maria, C. da Silveira, R. Bezerra, C. de Souza, M. S. dos Santos, C. Aparecida.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>LILACS</td>
<td>Qualitative approach</td>
<td>Educational activities are valued; Associates consultations and medicines for educational activities;</td>
<td>The elderly who participate in the educational activities developed at HOSPITALS by the family health strategy team perceive the educational actions as a source of guidance and information about their health, modifying the change of habits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis of the official discourse</td>
<td>Silva, L.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>LILACS</td>
<td>Field research</td>
<td>The general characteristics of official speeches are suitable for the development of awareness.</td>
<td>The analysis of the official discourse made possible the critical understanding and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Health education for diabetic patients in Brazil</td>
<td>Ferreira, E.</td>
<td></td>
<td>SCIELO</td>
<td>Systematic review</td>
<td>Discussed the objectives of educational actions for diabetic patients; the themes addressed in these actions; the technical and moral imperative governing the promotion of educational practices; and the parameters for evaluation and follow-up of the patients.</td>
<td>The analysis of the official discourse made possible the critical understanding and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Group teaching of insulin self-care application processes</td>
<td>Solda, E., de Souza, M. S. dos Santos, C. Aparecida, C. de Souza, M. S. dos Santos, E. Ferreira.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>LILACS</td>
<td>Quantitative survey</td>
<td>The results showed that most people had doubts at almost every stage of the insulin delivery process, not performing some essential steps or performing them in the wrong way.</td>
<td>After the educational intervention, there was an increase in the right answers, evidencing that the activity contributed to self-care of patients undergoing insulin therapy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the first half of the last century, due to advances in medicine and enhancement of curative culture, the approach to health education was not seen as a responsibility of health professionals or as a form of prevention. At that time, it was thought that this educational practice should belong to the educators, who were considered the only ones responsible for the reorientation of individual and collective behaviors.

From the 1990s, changes in the structure of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) marked the beginning of a new era for Public Healthcare. With the creation of the Family Health Strategy, a new paradigm emerged, placing the individual and their social context at the center of health actions.
Thus, health education groups, aiming to improve quality and increase the life expectancy of people living with NCDs, have become more prominent in the model of family-oriented care. Thus, they have a greater understanding of dialogue as a strategy for transforming reality, providing instruments to achieve autonomy and make decisions about aspects of life \(^{(11-17,18)}\).

After exhaustive reading of the selected articles and critical analysis regarding the theme, methodology and results of the studies, 02 (two) categories emerged: Health education as a way of reorienting life habits and Challenges to overcome the biomedical model. Of the 05 (five) articles, 03 (three) were allocated in the first category and 02 (two) in the second category.

**Health education as a way of reorienting life habits**

The need to use health education groups as a way of reorienting people living with CNCDs is undeniable. The 05 researched articles addressed the practices of group health education as a way of sharing knowledge and stimulating self-care.

In a study carried out in an educational group of people undergoing treatment with insulin, it was noticed that after the groups were performed, storage and administration errors decreased, contributing to health promotion and treatment efficiency. Such an educational activity was used as a way of getting to know the problems related to self-application, and through participation to solve such difficulties, promoting self-care \(^{(11)}\).

The valorization of the group is based on the guidelines received, on the increase of knowledge, and relevance of common knowledge \(^{(11)}\). Educational groups are used as a space for discussion about the reality of each individual and the valorization of common knowledge instrumented by dialogue, making the participant the protagonist of the process of self-care \(^{(18)}\).

Participatory methods of health education are encouraged by the Ministry of Health. It is believed that the valorization of knowledge and practices based on dialogue strengthens the patients’ connection with the professionals, who should play the role of a facilitator in building knowledge around DCNTs \(^{(3,5-20,21)}\).

Health professionals should seek new ways to change the reality of the individuals, there is no more space for a health education focused on discourse about the disease, and there should be participation of those involved in the construction of educational practice. Educational actions can be used as a way to promote the real value of health in the individual, instigating them to be co-responsible for the health-disease process \(^{(15-22)}\).

About the weaknesses in the development of the meetings, we can identify that 02 articles (40%) address this theme. Difficulty in locomotion and access to health facilities restricts the possibility of adherence to treatment. Often these users arrive exhausted at meetings and are not motivated to participate \(^{(12-23)}\).

The probable failure of educational actions arises from the discursive practices used in the meetings, which often inhibit participants and do not value common knowledge \(^{(6)}\).

In order to succeed in educational groups, there are some principles on which these practices should be based: dialogue (listening to the other); take as a starting point of the pedagogical process the people’s previous knowledge, believing that everyone has a knowledge from their experiences and experiences; exchange of experiences and construction of knowledge between technical knowledge and popular knowledge, assuming that the different knowledges are only different, not hierarchical and that experience is as valid as theory \(^{(24)}\).

Two of the selected articles emphasize that the educational practice developed in the CNCD groups should be performed in a way that the patient participates in the meetings and reorientation of the lifestyle that he / she has. As a
space for the exchange of knowledges and qualified listening, the educational group should use methods to minimize cravings, being effective in order to contribute to access and treatment \(^{(10,17)}\).

Three authors bring a concept about a method called "health coaching", which consists of the training of techniques and approaches on the disease, the patient is "trained" to practice self-care. The use of this method makes us reflect on the real situation of the patients who will be "trained", contributing or not to decision making in relation to their health \(^{(13)}\).

It is noted that only 1 article (20%) used the group as a form to acquire knowledge in a participatory way. There is an interaction between the researcher and the researched group, seeking a horizontality in actions and relationships, aiming at the social transformation seen as totality.

**Challenges to overcome the biomedical model**

From the totality of the articles researched, 2 articles addressed the discussion about the fact that research on CNCD has focused on the investigation of the individual in a biomedical conception of the health-disease process.

Currently, publications have been focusing on pathophysiology, clinical therapeutics and prevalence of CNCDs, to the detriment of health promotion actions \(^{(25)}\).

The use of educational groups as a form of bargaining services offered at health facilities does not stimulate changes and barely the patients’ life looking to promote health. Insofar as group activities are used for the convenience of the patient, welfare measures, through exchange of revenues, speed of appointment making and release of medications, the objective of the educational group as a modifier of reality is obsolete and makes is ineffective \(^{(10)}\).

The prioritization of clinical care is still present in public health units, that is, consultations and drug prescriptions act as the main form of intervention \(^{(22)}\).

In studying the discursive practices in the health education process, the strategies used are aimed at promoting patient compliance, aiming at their autonomy, but using the power of convincing \(^{(6)}\).

The presentation of lectures as the only form of information to the participants of the group is not very motivating. The use of non-participatory methodologies does not stimulate critical thinking, transforming group participants into information repositories \(^{(20)}\).

Professionals seldom find other ways of doing health education without being imposing and punitive, because they are rooted in the hegemonic work process and thus reproduce in practice the prescriptive model \(^{(6-26)}\).

There is a need for prior planning to carry out educational groups, the themes should be approached according to the need and context of the people involved \(^{(27)}\). Nurse practitioners have a fundamental participation in the therapeutic process. They are able to involve the user with the use of techniques in order to obtain adequate treatment \(^{(28-29)}\). They need to know the limitations and potentiality of their assisted population. They must seek to develop actions that stimulate self-care, "in order to develop this, which should not only be considered as an additional activity to be carried out in the health services, but mainly as a practice that underpins and redirects all Primary Health Care \(^{(30)}\).

Freire (31), in his book "Education and Change", reflects on the education process and social changes. Knowledge must be constructed between the educator and the learner, in a participatory and dialogical way, and not with the imposition of knowledge or practices.

**Conclusion**

From this research, we can view online publications in the form of scientific articles, from 2012 to 2016, on the activities of health education groups with people living with CNCD and how the participants...
face the diseases. It was perceived the necessity of carrying out activities that foment the discussion on this subject with educational groups.

We can mention as limiting in the preparation of this study the scarcity of references about the repercussion of these educational groups on the self-care of people living with CNCD and the nurse’s performance in the implementation of this strategy of health education as a way of promoting health.

The other day-to-day work assignments of health professionals end up transforming the groups into information deposits. There is a need to carry out these activities, but with adequate planning and the use of new strategies. The repercussion of educational groups should be more discussed among nurses and people living with CNCDs.

The construction of knowledge occurs in a unilateral and authoritarian way, although the articles address the importance of the realization of educational groups in health as a way of promoting health. The group is also responsible for performing technical procedures, such as blood pressure measurement, capillary glucose monitoring, revalidation of medical prescriptions, medication distribution, and medical or nursing consultation. This makes the patients frequent the groups subjecting themselves to the imposing and authoritarian positions of professionals, affecting their health.

Health education groups are fundamental in the process of reorienting the life habits of people living with CNCD. However, it is necessary to carry out ongoing education activities among professionals, so that new methodologies and health teaching strategies are used.

We hope that this study will contribute to the professionals’ reflection on the educational practices provided to people with CNCD in order to provide instruments for the improvement of health education strategies with the objective of promoting health and strengthening the structure of primary care. The present integrative review provided an overview of the productions on the topic addressed, which will bring to the academy knowledge building subsidies which altogether can bring advances to health promotion policies.

References


