

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF STUDENTS ON HIV / AIDS: INTEGRATIVE REVIEW
REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS DE ESTUDANTES SOBRE O HIV/Aids: REVISÃO
INTEGRATIVA

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ABSTRACT

Aim: to analyze the scientific production about the Social Representations of students about HIV / AIDS. **Method:** this is an integrative literature review carried out in the LILASC, BDENF, SciELO, Google scholar and Index Psi Technical-Scientific Journals databases, guided by the question: how do students socially represent HIV / AIDS? **Results:** 6 articles were used within the years of 2002 to 2017. These revealed that social representations refer to a problem of society that plagues the world. These represent since their identification as disease and death, as well as the prejudice that people living with HIV / AIDS suffer, which can be associated with the lack of information on the part of those who practice it. It was possible to infer a possible change in the social representation of AIDS regarding its relation to homosexuality. **Conclusion:** it is necessary to strengthen the discussions on the theme. It is also necessary that the knowledge and discussions produced are appropriated by institutions and professionals, mainly in the prevention of the spread of the virus and disease, as well as through information, becoming agents that transform their realities.

Keywords: Social Representations; Students; HIV; Nursing.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar a produção científica acerca das Representações Sociais de estudantes sobre o HIV/AIDS. **Método:** trata-se de uma revisão integrativa da literatura realizada nas bases de dados LILASC, BDENF, SciELO, Google scholar e Index Psi Periódicos Técnico-Científicos, norteado pela questão: como os estudantes representam socialmente o HIV/Aids? **Resultados:** foram utilizados 6 artigos entre os anos 2002 e 2017. Estes revelaram que as representações sociais remetem-se a um problema da sociedade que assola o mundo. Estes representam desde sua identificação como doença e a morte, assim como o preconceito que as pessoas que vivem com HIV/Aids sofrem, podendo ser associado a falta de informação por parte de quem o pratica. Foi possível inferir uma possível mudança de representação social da AIDS quanto a sua relação a homossexualidade. **Conclusão:** faz-se necessário um fortalecimento das discussões sobre a temática. É preciso ainda que os conhecimentos e discussões produzidas sejam apropriados por instituições e profissionais, principalmente na prevenção da disseminação do vírus e da doença, bem como por meio da informação, tornando-se agentes transformadores de suas realidades.

Palavras-chave: Representações Sociais; Estudantes; HIV; Enfermagem.

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INTRODUCTION

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) are topics discussed worldwide. Since the early 1980s, the identification of HIV / AIDS has been a challenge for the global scientific community, being considered a public health problem, of great magnitude and pandemic character that involves several social actors, reaching individuals without social distinction, economic, racial, cultural or political⁽¹⁾.

From 2007 to June 2019, 300,496 cases of HIV infection in Brazil were reported in SINAN. With regard to AIDS, from 1980 to June 2019, 966,058 cases were identified. Brazil has registered an average of 39 thousand new AIDS cases annually in the last five years. It is also noteworthy that the highest concentration of cases of the disease in the country was observed in individuals aged between 25 and 39 years, in both genders. The cases in this age group correspond to 52.4% of males and, among females, to 48.4% of the total cases registered from 1980 to June 2019⁽²⁾.

Thus, the aforementioned condition brings significant challenges for the various social instances, as well as for people in their daily lives. In this perspective, to understand the meanings socially constructed in relation to HIV / AIDS, the Theory of Social Representations (TRS) is an important tool, considering its heuristic potential⁽³⁾. Social

Representations are understood as a system for interpreting reality based on a set of beliefs, information, opinions and attitudes towards a social object⁽⁴⁾.

Currently, it is clear that the HIV / AIDS phenomenon has a very diverse history of representations and is characterized by strong affective investments, such as prejudices, fear, suffering, which makes the theme so rich when analyzed from the perspective of Social Representations, since the subjective content and the constructions of collective knowledge are valued. It is essential, therefore, to pay attention to the ways in which students “know” and “think” about this theme, which despite having the annual number of cases decreasing since 2013, is still a devastating disease and has serious implications for health of individuals associated mainly with the stigma and discrimination suffered by them⁽⁵⁻²⁾.

Given the above, the present study aimed to analyze the scientific production about the Social Representations of students about HIV / AIDS.

METHOD

It is an integrative literature review, defined as a specific review method that aims to provide a comprehensive view on a given topic and that is useful for practice⁽⁶⁾.

The conduct of this study went through the following steps: 1) elaboration of the research question; 2) search for primary studies; 3) The elaboration of the research question was based on the PICO strategy, in which "P" refers to the study population (students); "I" to the phenomenon of interest (Social Representations); "Co" to the context (HIV / AIDS)⁽⁷⁾. Thus, the guiding question for conducting this integrative review was: "how do students socially represent HIV / AIDS?"

The survey was carried out over the internet, using the following databases: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), Nursing Database (BDENF), Psychology Index - Technical and Scientific Journals, Scientific electronic Library Online (SciELO) and Google scholar. There was no time limit. As a search strategy, the structured vocabulary of Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) was used, through the following described and search operators: Social Representations, Students and HIV.

The inclusion criteria were: Complete articles available for free online; Articles available in Portuguese; Articles that addressed the proposed theme. The exclusion criteria for studies were: Monographs, Editorials; Letters to the editor; Review articles.

The search was performed through online access, using the descriptors in Portuguese, and the inclusion and exclusion

data extraction; 4) evaluation of primary studies; 5) synthesis of results; 6) presentation of the review⁽⁶⁾.

criteria. Initially in the search for associated descriptors, 9 articles were found in LILACS, in BDENF 2, Psychology Index - Technical-scientific journals 4, Google scholar 10 and SciELO 8, 33 studies in total. After meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the sample consisted of 6 articles. The search strategy was based on the Preferred Reporting Items for systematic reviews and meta-analyzes (PRISMA)⁽⁸⁾.

The search strategies used in the respective databases and the reasons for exclusion were presented in Figure 1, as recommended by the PRISMA group⁽⁸⁾.

In addition, the scientific accuracy of the studies was analyzed considering the research design of each study to identify the level of evidence, based on the evidence classification system that categorizes the studies hierarchically according to the methodological approach⁽⁹⁾. Thus, the articles were classified into: I - those that presented evidence from systematic reviews or meta-analysis of relevant clinical trials; II - evidence derived from at least one well-designed randomized controlled clinical trial; III - well-designed clinical trials without randomization; IV - well-designed cohort and case-control studies; V - systematic review of descriptive and qualitative studies; VI -

evidence derived from a single descriptive or qualitative study; VII - opinion of authorities or report of expert committees. It is noteworthy that the evidence of levels I and II are considered strong, levels III to V moderate and VI to VII weak ⁽⁹⁾.

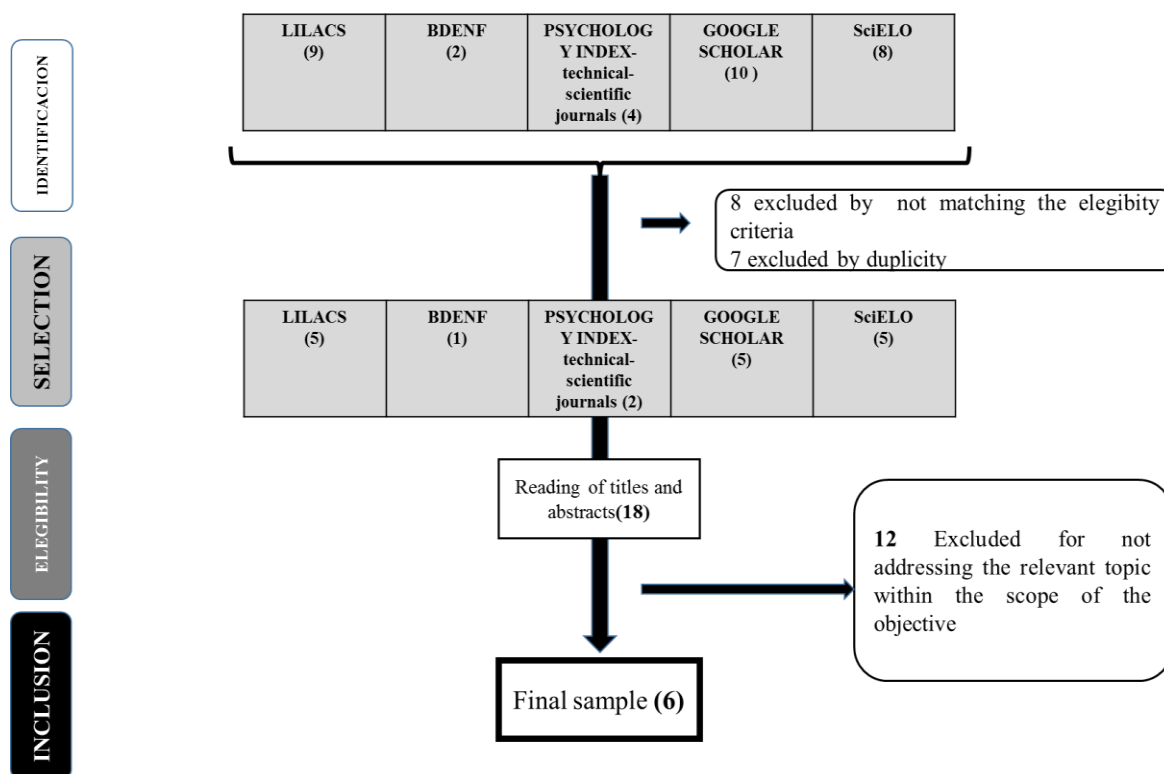
As this is a research with a focus on literature review, whose purpose was the secondary analysis of data, thus not involving human beings, there was no need for appreciation and / or approval by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP). In

addition, it should be noticed that the authenticity of the ideas, concept and definitions of the authors of the articles was maintained.

RESULTS

From the criteria established for integrative review, 6 studies were selected, published within the years of 2002 to 2017. The results found in the search are shown in the flowchart (Figure 1), adapted from PRISMA ⁽⁸⁾.

Figure 1: Flowchart for selecting the studies found.



Source: prepared by the authors (2020)

The characterization of the 6 selected articles is shown in Table 1, which presents

the list of articles selected for analysis according to the article code, title, author,

journal and objective (s) and level of evidence.

Chart 1: list of articles selected for analysis according to the article code, title, author, journal and aim (s)

ARTICLE CODE	TITLE AUTHOR	YEAR	JOURNAL	AIM(S)	LEVEL OF EVIDENCE
A1	Social representations about AIDS and perception of risk of infection among university students / Galinkin AL et al. (10)	2012	Tempus Actas de Saúde Coletiva	Identify the social representations that young university students develop about AIDS and the perception of risk in relation to HIV infection	VI
A2	Social representations of AIDS and otherness / Camargo BV, Bertoldo RB, Bárbara A (11)	2009	Psychology Studies and Research	Investigation of the social representations of AIDS among adolescents and their representations of what other young people in the same group think	VI
A3	Vulnerability of young people to HIV infection and the social representations of AIDS / Sousa JHM, Paiva MS (12)	2002	Revista Baiana de Enfermagem	Compare the field of social representations of AIDS of two groups of university students, one male and one female. Discuss sexuality and sexual practices based on the gender relations that surround HIV coping and which are determinants of	VI

				vulnerability. Identify the set of individual and social characteristics present in the daily lives of young people that make them more vulnerable to HIV infection	
A4	Social representations of public school students about people living with HIV / AIDS / Angelim RCM et al. (13)	2017	Saúde em Debate	Analyze the social representations of young people and adults about their experiences with the person with Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV / AIDS)	VI
A5	Social representations of AIDS for Psychology students / Leal SBL, Coêlho AEL (14)	2016	Factal: revista de psicologia	Analyze the representations of AIDS, health and disease for 20 Psychology students	VI
A6	Social representations, scientific knowledge and sources of information on AIDS / Natividade JC,	2011	Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto)	To verify the relationships between the symbolic values attributed to the elements that describe the social representation of AIDS, the level of scientific knowledge	VI

Camargo BV (15)			about HIV and AIDS, and the sources of obtaining information about AIDS for high school students in a public school. Identifying the symbolic value of the elements means verifying the degree of importance that the participants give to the elements as representative of the object under study.
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Source: prepared by the authors (2020).

In addition, chart 2 shows the characterization of the studies according to the article code and the main results / conclusions of the selected articles.

Chart 2: list of studies according to the article code and the main results / conclusions.

ARTICLE CODE	RESULTS/CONCLUSIONS
A1	The university students built a knowledge about AIDS anchored in medical-scientific knowledge about the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. Sex, death and illness were the most evoked words that, together with fear, constitute the probable organizing nucleus of representations about AIDS. Beliefs and prejudice related to stigmatized groups and behaviors considered deviant did not appear in the associations of university students. They perceive themselves as vulnerable to infection by identifying risk behaviors in the entire population, including the internal group.
A2	The representation of AIDS as a social, biomedical and intimacy-related problem. The representation of what other young people think about AIDS also focuses on the biomedical aspect, but it differs when relating HIV contamination to the lack of concern with prevention and irresponsibility.

	Adolescents project negative elements on others in their group that involve issues related to their own emotions and perception of risk in the face of the disease.
A3	<p>Social representations of sex for females denote patterns of subjectivity in which love and other feelings are predominant, whereas for males is seen in the perspective of sexual pleasure and satisfaction.</p> <p>Regarding the social representation of AIDS, for females, there is an association with death, condoms and prevention, however for males, these permeate the feelings of fear, drugs and illness.</p> <p>A sexually differentiated anchoring of representations is clear, indicating vulnerability among young people.</p>
A4	<p>The representation of the disease encompasses different aspects, with emphasis on the vulnerability of the virus carrier, the fears, feelings and experiences about the disease.</p> <p>The subjects re-present the condom and the multiplicity of partners as the main reason for contamination by the virus.</p> <p>It was noticed that the promotion of students' sexual health needs to integrate themes on social awareness and education and health: it is from there that health professionals must collaborate to demystify feelings and attitudes regarding the HIV / AIDS carrier.</p>
A5	<p>Knowledge about AIDS does not always result in safer behavior.</p> <p>The representations revealed prejudice and stereotypes, identifying AIDS as the disease of the other and making themselves present in the social imaginary, making social coexistence with people with HIV / AIDS difficult.</p> <p>These results suggest a reflection on educational and preventive campaigns.</p>
A6	<p>Significant relationships were identified among the elements, which found three factors as characterizing the social representation of AIDS: responsibility in the face of contagion; fear of the consequences of contagion; description of AIDS.</p> <p>Significant relationships were found between the symbolic valuation of six elements and four sources of data, which corroborated the importance of extra-group communication in the constitution of social representations.</p> <p>However, between the symbolic appreciation of the elements and the levels of scientific knowledge, the relationships were not significant.</p>

Source: prepared by the authors (2020)

DISCUSSION

Despite the small number of articles found from the search key and the included eligibility criteria, it was possible to observe important points with the designing of this study, as the SR has become a useful

In the study on social representations of AIDS and otherness⁽¹¹⁾, from the analyzes they presented 3 classes, the first - which later originated classes 1 and 3 - relates AIDS, as a problem, to the individual (class 3) and social spheres (class 1). The second - which constituted class 2 - presents concrete notions about the disease, its transmission and prevention.

In this way, AIDS is represented in this context as a problem of the society that spreads the world and, in order to protect itself, it is necessary to know the preventive methods. This context links cognitions about AIDS to the social sphere, always making the association between the behavior of young people and public policies that could promote prevention. In addition, it was possible to refer to emotions and the intimate relationship with the individual's sexual partner in face of risk and his life, which includes the fear of the disease, the sadness of receiving a positive HIV exam result and the damage to life⁽¹¹⁾.

In the study on vulnerabilities of young people to HIV infection and the Social Representations of AIDS⁽¹¹⁾ it was possible to identify gender differences in the

theoretical tool to understand how different social segments rebuild their social reality and guide their social practices, thus learning, in this study, what students “know” and “think” about HIV / AIDS, that is, their representations about this phenomenon.

representations. For females, there was an association among AIDS and death, condoms and prevention. For males, these pervade feelings of fear, drugs and illness, as well as the prejudice that the individual suffers from being HIV positive⁽¹²⁾.

In a category about the experiences and feelings of young people and adults to people with HIV / AIDS⁽¹³⁾, the experiences lived by the research actors, and the feelings exposed by them in the interviews made reference to sadness, depression, compassion and friendship as a crucial welcome for the resumption of bonds for the sociability of the bearer, who found that these representations are integrated with a social value, associated with negative affective and moral repercussions, linked to the fact of being sick.

In the study on Social Representations about AIDS and perception of risk of infection among university students⁽¹⁰⁾, pathology was strongly associated with death by students. It should also be noticed that the meaning that university students attribute to death is not only physical or biological death, but also means social and psychological death. In this way, it is possible to perceive

that a representation persists that has been in force since the beginning of the epidemic in the 1980s, when there was still no treatment to control the consequences of HIV infection that led to death.

However, other findings are similar to this, since some authors⁽¹⁵⁾, in their findings presented from items on the symbolic value of the elements ranging from 1 to 4 points and that the closer to 4, the greater symbolic value had the factor, had the elements like disease and fear, the ones that had higher averages.

For psychology students⁽¹⁴⁾, AIDS is understood as a sexually transmitted and infectious disease. Thus, suggesting that the knowledge of these students is still very much related to sexual transmission, which warns of the possibility that other risk situations may be ignored. In another study⁽¹¹⁾, AIDS is presented from a biomedical perspective, also as a sexually transmitted disease that can be disseminated through sexual intercourse, but brings complementary elements such as, through the sharing of contaminated syringes and blood transfusions, caused by a virus that attacks the immune system.

One of the representations that is strongly presented in the Social Representations of AIDS is related to prejudice. When observing the dimensions and complexities observed by students with people with HIV / AIDS⁽¹³⁾, the subjects reported the prejudices experienced, diseases associated with sadness and that, thus, the

feeling of prejudice and discrimination against people living with HIV / AIDS.

AIDS was also related to suffering, related to prejudice directed at people diagnosed with AIDS. And that from the reports, it became evident that despite all the knowledge available today about the ways of transmission, people with HIV / AIDS are still very discriminated against and isolated from social life, as the reports revealed⁽¹³⁾.

Although, other findings show that the prejudice associated with the population's lack of knowledge about the disease, thus it has implications for the risk of infection due to lack of knowledge and may also imply the exclusion of HIV-positive people⁽¹⁰⁾.

Another important aspect is related to prevention. As previously mentioned, in one of the studies⁽¹²⁾ on the differentiation of representations associated with gender, in this aspect of prevention, there was a consensus, both male and female, about prevention. Therefore, they cite the condom as one of the main methods. Nevertheless, the study on Social Representations, scientific knowledge and sources of information on AIDS⁽¹⁵⁾, the elements of preservation and prevention showed high averages, respectively 3.36 and 3.30, which had a maximum value of 4, so as closer to this value, the greater symbolic value of the element in relation to the object in question (AIDS).

In addition, there were representations about being a disease of irresponsible

people⁽¹⁴⁾, as well as associations with carelessness, promiscuity, irresponsibility⁽¹⁰⁾. Thus, it is important to emphasize that the first representations of the disease referred to the sexual promiscuity of determined risk groups, which reinforced prejudice and strongly stigmatized some people based on their sexual practices, behaviors and attitudes⁽¹⁴⁾. Also, in this case, there is a criticism or condemnation of the behavior of appearance and emotional, the association of the disease with prejudice and the idea of death by HIV is linked to deviant sexual practices that compromise social rules. In this sense, sexual practices considered deviant allow the presentation of negative thoughts regarding those who have the virus. The judgment of people with HIV / AIDS refers to guilt for contamination, not using condoms and the multiplicity of partners as causes of contamination⁽¹³⁾.

Ultimately, it is worth noticing that in the study on social representations about AIDS and perception of risk of infection among university students⁽⁹⁾, they show that there is a change in social representations about the disease, this was evidenced once the word homosexuality appears in the far surroundings, this one, which expresses more individual ideas and beliefs, apparently, is not shared by most respondents, as indicated by its low frequency.

Thus, the study still offers two possibilities of hypothesis due to this low

those who are exposed or exposed to infection, blaming them for their current condition⁽¹⁰⁾.

These findings were also present in another study⁽¹³⁾, in this, an aspect identified in the subclass on Vulnerability of people with HIV due to virus infection, shows that although AIDS is considered a chronic disease that allows the infected individual to improve their physical evocation. In the first hypothesis, there may be greater tolerance for this sexual orientation. Prejudice and the ideas that prevailed in the 1980s, which associated AIDS with homosexuals, and did not appear in the students' associations of this research, may be indicating their weakening, thus, it can be learned that everyone is bound to infection. And the second hypothesis is that there may be a silent zone, which would explain the low frequency of the association between AIDS and homosexuality. The silent zone refers to elements of the representations that are not verbalized because they have a counter-normative character, that is, to attribute to homosexuals the responsibility for the spread of the epidemic, currently, it would indicate prejudice, a “politically incorrect” position, which can failing a group of university-level people⁽¹⁰⁾.

As study limitations, the low number of studies that addressed the theme stands out. In addition, articles have been used only in Portuguese, but despite that, the study

represents the Social Representations of Brazilian students about HIV / AIDS.

This study contributes to the strengthening of discussions on HIV / AIDS, especially with students. Thus, it is necessary that the knowledge and discussions produced are appropriated by institutions and professionals, in this journey, the issue in question has important implications for the field of nursing, for health promotion practices, specifically for preventing the spread of the virus and disease, as well as demystifying the theme, in order to guarantee a better quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Social Representations of students about people living with HIV / AIDS refer to a problem of society that spreads the world. Also, aspects that they represent socially persist since their identification in the 1980's, such as the relationship between the disease and death. It is understood as a sexually transmitted infection that is transmitted sexually, blood transfusion and use of syringes.

The representations were evidenced in the association of the disease with promiscuity, carelessness, several partners. It calls attention that it was possible to identify a possible change in the social representation of AIDS, since its identification, it has been associated with homosexuality, thus, this

change may contribute to an advance in facing the epidemic.

The representation of the prejudice that people with HIV / AIDS suffer was emphasized and this was associated with the lack of data on the part of those who practice it, bringing the reflection that although modernity has been presented by new ways and means of mass communication, allowing a large part of the population access, the democratization of information, the space for new social actors and the expansion of the psychosocial process of knowledge, it did not necessarily result in an effective appropriation of this knowledge, so widespread in the media.

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