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Temas abordados nos grupos educativos de saúde sexual e reprodutiva: uma revisão integrativa

Themes addressed in educational groups of sexual and reproductive health: an integrative review

Temas abordados en los grupos educativos de salud sexual y reproductiva: una revisión integral¹

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to identify and analyze national scientific publications on sexual and reproductive health from the perspective of the educational group, according to the national guidelines that guide the practice. **Method:** this was an integrative review of scientific literature in the national data base of the Virtual Health Library in the period from July to August 2014, based on articles that focused on educational groups contraception. **Results:** among the 33 articles identified as inclusion and exclusion criteria, 10 were selected. The themes were diverse, as well as the population, however, few studies have focused on abortion, types of violence and gender, and other restricted to contraceptive methods and sexually transmitted diseases. **Conclusion:** there was a gap in the literature regarding the issues surrounding the topics covered in the educational practices of sexual and reproductive health and which is recommended by the directives, since such approaches disregard the needs of participants.

Descriptors: sexual and reproductive rights; health education; family planning.

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RESUMO

Objetivo: identificar e analisar as publicações científicas nacionais sobre saúde sexual e reprodutiva na perspectiva do grupo educativo, segundo as diretrizes nacionais que orientam tal prática. **Método:** realizou-se uma revisão integrativa da literatura científica nacional na base de dado da Biblioteca Virtual de Saúde no período de Julho a Agosto de 2014, tendo como base artigos que versavam sobre grupos educativos de contracepção.

Resultado: dentre os 33 artigos identificados, conforme critérios de inclusão e exclusão, foram selecionados 10. Os temas eram diversificados, assim como a população, porém alguns estudos enfocaram aborto, tipos de violência e gênero, sendo que outros restringiram-se a métodos contraceptivos e doenças sexualmente transmissíveis. **Conclusão:** verificou-se lacunas na literatura no que tange às questões que envolvem os temas abordados nas práticas educativas de saúde sexual e reprodutiva, e o que é preconizado pelas diretrizes, uma vez que tais abordagens desconsideram as necessidades dos participantes.

Descritores: direitos sexuais e reprodutivos; educação em saúde; planejamento familiar.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: identificar y analizar las publicaciones científicas nacionales sobre salud sexual y reproductiva desde la perspectiva del grupo de educación, de acuerdo con las directrices nacionales que guían la práctica.

Método: se realizó una revisión integradora de la literatura científica en la base nacional de datos de la Biblioteca Virtual en Salud en el periodo de julio a agosto de 2014, sobre la base de los artículos que se centraron en grupos educativos de anticoncepción. **Resultados:** entre los 33 artículos identificados de acuerdo con los criterios de inclusión y exclusión, 10 fueron seleccionados; los temas fueron diversos, así como la población, sin embargo, pocos estudios se han centrado en el aborto, los tipos de violencia y género, y otros restringidos a los métodos anticonceptivos y las enfermedades de transmisión sexual. **Conclusion:** existe un vacío en la literatura en relación con las cuestiones relacionadas con los temas tratados en las prácticas educativas de la salud sexual y reproductiva y que es recomendado por las directrices, ya que tales enfoques ignoran las necesidades de los participantes.

Descriptor: derechos sexuales y reproductivos; educación en salud; planificación familiar.

INTRODUCTION

In 1984, after the intervention of social and feminist movement, claiming changes and expansion of women's health policy, the Integral Assistance Program for Women's Health (PAISM) was prepared by the Ministry of Health (MS). This program, recognizing the health needs of women, proposed offering service to promote their health through educational activities in health services, so that women could have knowledge and autonomy about their body, their health, and their sexuality.¹ Thus, the PAISM enabled the redirection of attention to women's health, breaking the restricted assistance to mother and child and considering what we today know as sexual and reproductive human rights.²

The Unified Health System (SUS), developed in 1986, ensured health as a right provided in the Federal

Constitution of 1988, changed the essence of relationships between the sectors of society, and elected autonomy and the development of citizenship among its guiding principles to popular participation.³ Therefore, with the implementation of SUS, health education became an important strategy for achieving social transformation, because it was related to intrinsically social demonstrations, which were also the subject of the health team for the reorientation of health practices mediated by the every day and knowledge of health.⁴

In 1994, the implementation of the Family Health Strategy (ESF) in Primary Health Care Units, proposed by the MS, aimed to guide the actions to promote health through educational practices, which, when integrated into the social practice context were called popular education in health.⁵

On 12 January 1996, the National Congress approved Law 9263, reaffirming the right of citizens to get family planning, defined in its Article 2 as "the set of fertility regulation actions that ensures equal rights of constitution, limitation or increasing the offspring by women, men or couples".⁶ Therefore, this legislation besides supporting the actions of professionals, guides surgical fertilization and other determinants related to the topic, involving the woman, man and the couple as protagonists in the promotion of sexual and reproductive health.

Sexual health includes the right to "express their sexuality freely in a safe and healthy manner, without any coercion", but it also regards access to sex education throughout life.⁷ Reproductive health considers the autonomy of the couple to decide on birth control and reproductive planning, as well as the right to free and informed choice about methods of contraception and conception, being considered as a constitutional right.⁷

The MS prepared the Assistance Technical Manual on Family Planning to facilitate the development of actions related to sexual and reproductive health, which includes a chapter on the work of health professionals in assistance to contraception to contemplate this order: educational activity, counseling and clinical activity.⁸

The educational activity is carried out through educational groups. Counseling is an individual time with the woman, man or both, when the health professional should guide them in the use of contraceptive methods and meet the needs that were not met in the educational group. Finally, in clinical practice, the professional must pay attention to the health characteristics of the integral way, order laboratory tests, referrals, advice on the implementation of anti-HIV testing, gynecological, mammography and other needs related to health in general and contraception or conception. At this stage of care, professionals supply the user method and the schedules of the next appointments to assess their adherence to the chosen method.⁸

Thus, the educational activities proposed by PAISM is ensured by the policy of family planning to offer informations and answer questions in a problematical way

regarding the exercise of sexuality, reproductive physiology, fertility regulation, the issues related to gender, the use of contraceptives and contraceptive methods, the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the risk of abortion, among other issues that go to the agreement of the needs of the participants -who must “provide the questioning and reflection on related topics with the practice of contraception, including sexuality”⁸⁻¹¹

However, even with the proposed educational activities for the care and the promotion of sexual and reproductive health, studies show that educational groups of sexual and reproductive rights are currently being reduced to informative approaches about contraception. Such approaches does not address important issues relating to social implications of “class, race/ethnicity, gender, generation, in which the relationship between the everyday and the global context is rescued”³⁻⁶⁻⁷⁻⁹

The manual prepared by the Ministry of Health, entitled “Family Planning: manual for the manager”, but also the “Basic Care Notebook number 26” which focus on sexual and reproductive health, consider that the professionals who coordinate the group of sexual and reproductive rights must address in a clear and reflexive way the following topics: beliefs and values about sexuality and family planning (myths, taboos, prejudices); concept of family planning; basic knowledge of anatomy and physiology of reproduction; presentation and characterization of contraceptive methods; offer information on cervical cancer, STD/HIV and early detection of breast cancer. The professional must enhance the interests and needs of the participants so that they have assistance in relation to infertility, but also expressing their feelings.^{8,10}

Despite its importance, the literature indicates that the coordinators of educational groups follow the instructions of these manuals. However, it cannot be said that is a reality common to all services, since it's still evident a reduction in the approach of the educational group to the physiology and reproductive issues and distribution of contraceptive methods.¹¹

Besides that, it is necessary to consider issues such as the sexuality, gender, and reproductive issues that are constantly changing as they are temporal and cultural reflexes of a population.¹² Thus, by technological evolution, cultural aspects and new forms of social construction, it is pertinent to reflect on what matters are being discussed regarding sexual and reproductive health in educational groups offered in health services. Also, it's of paramount importance to consider those proposed by the mentioned manuals, but also to welcome questions and proposals for topics posed by the participants of these groups, so that the knowledge built has the potential to stimulate self-care and thus create opportunities for improvement in health conditions.¹²

The objectives of this study were to identify and analyze national scientific publications on sexual and reproductive

health in the context of the educational group, according to the national guidelines that govern the practice.

METHODS

This study is characterized as an integrative literature review, about themes in educational groups that seek to promote sexually and reproductive health of women and men. A systematic review of the literature is used to find a consensus on a particular topic and synthesize its knowledge¹³

The six methodological steps described were followed carefully to elaborate the integrative review. The first step made the subject election that leads to the development of the guiding question. The second step, defined by the selection of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, carried an exhaustive search of the databases to sort the items. In the third stage, the information found in the articles were organized and the elaboration of the software instrument with the variables to be analyzed in the research was prescribed. In the fourth step, a critical and observant evaluation of articles was performed - when there were the selection and disposal of the articles according to the objectives of the study. In the fifth stage, the articles were interpreted by the researcher, and based on theoretical reading theme concerned; they were classified according to the level of evidence. At this point, it is possible to make proposals for future research and disprove results. In the sixth and final stage, there was the actual review was presented, which corresponds to the preparation of the document describing the steps taken and the results found.^{14,15,16}

The first stage started with the following guiding research question: What are the themes in educational groups on sexual and reproductive health in national publications? Considering the above question, the following keywords were selected regarding Health Sciences (DeCS), according to health terminology in the Virtual Health Library (VHL): sexual and reproductive rights; health education and family planning. It was chosen to use the following scheme of Boolean operators to systematize and optimize the search: “family planning” AND “health education”; “Sexual and reproductive rights” AND “health education”; “sexual and reproductive rights” AND “Family Planning”.

In the second stage, with the chosen keywords, the selection of articles published in the VHL began in the period between July and August of 2014. At this stage, the following inclusion criteria were used: national publications available with the full text, since reading the entire article contributes to achieving the research objective with greater precision; and studies targeting the population of health services users, since the educational groups are offered to this public. National databases have been chosen, once the theme is inserted into a national policy, as well as studies published after 1984, based on the implementation of educational activities proposed by PAISM, being delimited such period

until 2014. Finally, the articles that were not associated with the theme “sexual and reproductive health” and were present in more than one media - published in more than one database - were excluded.

The collected data were exposed, first by statistical percentage through the Excel computer program (2007), when the classification of studies was performed according to the seven levels of evidence rating system. That provides the following levels of evidence : 1 - controlled and randomized studies; 2 - randomized and controlled clinical trial; 3 - controlled and nonrandomized trials; 4 - case-control or cohort study; 5 - qualitative or descriptive studies; 6 - descriptive and qualitative studies; 7 - studies from expert opinion.^{15,16}

The integrative review is currently the most used method in evidence-based practice, as it stimulates the use of research results in health care, in addition to enabling the implementation of evidence in clinical practice.¹⁷

There were 30 articles and three complete dissertations available in the found VHL database, corresponding to the keywords “Sexual and Reproductive Rights” and “Health Education”. After reading the abstract and employing the inclusion and exclusion criteria, only 5 were selected. Because the 28 studies did not meet the sexual and reproductive health from the perspective of the educational group.

With keywords “Family Planning” and “Health Education”, there were 31 complete articles found, twenty-three of them had no relation to the purpose of the study and two were repeated, and the other two were excluded because they were about research in Spanish cities - and the questions of this research involve a national policy. Thus, 27 articles were excluded corresponding to these keywords. Thus, the final sample with these keywords was composed of four articles.

Using the “Family Planning with Sexual and Reproductive Rights”, three articles were found, and two discarded - one for not being available and one for being a book. With such keywords, only one article was selected.

At the end of the screening of studies based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 10 scientific publications was selected regarding the topics covered in the educational groups of sexual and reproductive health. Such publications were analyzed by the full reading, being applied the description of the following variables selected for analysis in the study: article title, journal title, status, year of publication, type of study, subject of sexual health and reproductive addressed and level of evidence, according to the study design. These variables were organized into an instrument created by the authors, based on disclosed instruments by researchers who are reference in the use of this methodology.¹⁵

RESULTS

After gathering the information provided in national databases that discuss sexually and reproductive health

from the perspective of health education, ten articles were enrolled in the study. Of them, 30% were published in 2007 and 2012; subsequently, two articles in 2009 (20%); and the rest in 2011 and 2013, not being found publications on the theme in 2014. Most articles (80%) were published in journals of Nursing, and two articles in journals of psychology, which can be explained by the fact that nursing is more active about educational practices. However, a study found that social workers are the most involved, conducting educational practices among health professionals - a phenomenon that suggests the need for a reorganization of educational practices, so such practices can be carried out by all professionals.¹⁸

As for the origin of the research, despite diverse, the states of the Southeast (40%), South (30%) and Midwest (20%) were the main publication sites (Table 1). Regarding the methodology of the studies, it was observed that most of the articles (80%) reported experiences corresponding to the level 5 of evidence, and only two studies were descriptive and qualitative, equivalent to the sixth level of evidence.

Table 1: distribution of the percentage of articles related to the topics discussed in educational groups on sexual and reproductive health, according to the year of publication, study site, the area of knowledge, methodology and level of evidence.

Variable	Number of articles	Percentage %
Year of publication		
2007	3	30
2009	2	20
2011	1	10
2012	3	30
2013	1	10
Total	10	100
Study site		
Southeast	4	40
South	3	30
Midwest	2	20
Northeast	1	10
Total	10	100
Area of knowledge		
Nursing	8	80
Psychology	2	20
Total	10	100
Methodology		
Descriptive study, with qualitative approach	2	20
Experience report	4	40
Qualitative research	4	40

Variable	Number of articles	Percentage %
Level of evidence		
5	8	80
6	2	20

Regarding the topics discussed in educational groups that deal with sexual and reproductive health, among ten articles only three (30%) dealt with the explanation of the anatomy and physiology of the male and female reproductive organs; eight (80%) addressed contraception, sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS); five (60%) focused on the theme of sexuality; three highlighted the sexual and reproductive rights; four highlighted family planning. Only one study did not classify emergency contraception within the contraception. The target audience of studies with more representativity was composed by women, adolescents and health professionals (Table 2). Literature indicates that the existence of the risk of exposure to STDs and AIDS in the context of marital relationships, the lack of dialogue between the couple, unshared and insecure reproductive health, makes this theme not deeply discussed in the family.¹⁸ Thus, there are issues that deserve attention in groups, either through individual or collective approach, as it seeks the prevention of problems.¹⁰

It is noteworthy that the topics covered in the two groups - aimed at adolescents and described in the number articles 3 and 4 - include a wider range of relevant issues on sexuality, gender, sexual orientation and orgasm. However, there is no dialogue on the tests to detect breast and uterus cancer. In the educational groups that target women, only article 10 highlights the approach to sexuality.

It is observed that the article number 8 showed the HIV testing prescription; studies 1 and 6 addressed sexual violence and abortion; and articles 1, 3, 4 and 6 involved gender issues. Only articles 1, 3 and 6 described topics relevant to the promotion of sexual and reproductive health that were beyond the proposed by the Ministry of Health Manual, referred above (Table 2).

Table 2: distribution of national articles results related to the topics discussed in educational groups on sexual and reproductive health and target audience, according to the works published in the Virtual Health Library in the 1989-2014 period.

Number and Title of the Articles	Target audience of the educational activity	Topic approached
1. Adherence in educational groups in contraception in a program area of Rio de Janeiro	Health professionals	Anatomy; Physiology of male and female reproductive systems; Contraceptive methods; STDs; sexuality; sexual and reproductive rights; Legal aspects of family planning; Sexual abuse; Breast and preventive cancer; Highlights of the discussion of social awareness of gender equality, mutual respect between men and women and the participation of men with regard to family responsibility and family planning.
2. Male participation in educational groups contraception: the perspective of nursing	Nurses	Physiology of male and female reproductive systems; contraceptive methods; STD.
3. Sexual and reproductive rights at school: qualitative evaluation of a pilot study	Adolescents, Teachers, and Family linked to a school.	First sexual experience; Virginity and sex; Orgasm and masturbation; Homosexuality; Teenage pregnancy; contraceptive methods; abortion; AIDS and STDs; Self-knowledge; Diversity and difference; Project of life and gender; Sexism and heterosexism; sexual and reproductive rights and social skills assertive in gender relationships.
4. Interpersonal skills program and sexual and reproductive rights for adolescents: an experience report	Adolescents	Identity and Resilience, Social Skills; Management of emotions; Gender; Sexuality; Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

Number and Title of the Articles	Target audience of the educational activity	Topic approached
5. Prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and search for emergency contraception in pharmacies in São Paulo.	Professionals who work in pharmacies	STD; Contraceptive methods; Design emergency; Condom use.
6. The facts and acts related to the (difficult) exercise of sexual and reproductive rights: clippings, the processes of life of a group of poor women	Women and mothers	Democracy; Citizenship; Gender equality; Inequality between maternal and paternal role; Gender violence; sexual violence; Abortion practiced issue.
7. Experience of Community Health Agents in Sexually Transmitted Diseases	Community Health Agents	Sexuality; Anatomy and physiology of male and female sexual organs; STD and AIDS; Family planning; Contraceptive methods.
8. Educational practices in the prevention of HIV/AIDS in health basic network users in Rio de Janeiro / Brazil	Women	Family planning; barrier contraceptive methods; AIDS and STDs; Counseling HIV testing.
9. Nursing and health education in primary care: an experience in Mãe Luiza neighborhood, Natal - RN /	Adolescents and Young people	Sexuality in adolescence; prevention of unwanted pregnancies; STD; Contraceptive methods; Family planning.

Number and Title of the Articles	Target audience of the educational activity	Topic approached
10. Process (re) construction of a family planning group: a proposal for popular education in health	Women	Women's health; STD; Prevention of cervical cancer; Contraceptive methods; Sexuality; Family health; marital relationship; children care; limits in children education; self-love and self-esteem; Issues are decided jointly emerging from the needs, curiosities and questions of the group.

Diversities and similarities of themes and target audience of these educational groups of sexual and reproductive health can occur in the absence of a specific document to guide and direct the practice since the manuals expose a simplified manner of the meaning of educative activity.¹¹

DISCUSSION

The educational practice of sexual and reproductive health should equip the participants of educational groups, offering them assistance for the free exercise of their right to sexual and reproductive health.^{10,18} For this achievement, it is necessary a forum for exchanging experience, appreciation, empathy, confidentiality and care in the educational approach. This care is not equivalent to reducing the meeting to an informative time on contraception, although this practice is one of the main reasons that lead users to seek this assistance.¹⁸

Therefore, it is necessary to expand the subjects that correspond to the universe of sexual and reproductive health to enable the discussions in group activities, valuing the particularities and needs of the target audience.^{10,12,19} It is noteworthy that the studies found in the research dictate new rules that change this reality, with the incorporation of other issues such as human relationships, autonomy, friendship, family, citizenship, virginity, sexually transmitted diseases, types of violence, health concept, worldview, body, sexual orientation, self-knowledge, breast and uterus cancer, family planning, parenting, drugs, sex, gender inequality, wanted or unwanted pregnancy, in addition to feelings of love, prejudice, self-esteem, among other issues covering the needs of participants.^{8,10}

Regarding the issue of abortion, it is little discussed in educational assistance, although the subject is exposed to other sexual health and reproductive policies.^{8,10,20} Educational practice in this context aims to enable reflection on sexuality and reproductive life to reduce the damage caused by an unsafe act. The scientific literature states that most cases of unsafe abortion can occur due to lack of information on contraceptive methods and their effects, difficulties of access methods, failures in its use due to lack of follow-up method for health services and the lack of male participation in the couple reproductive life.¹²

Therefore, it is possible to point out that educational actions towards reproductive planning could address in their groups such themes as abortion, sexual violence and issues covering health integrally. Therefore, more than preventing abortion, men and women must take ownership of their body and know their needs and limitations.^{18,21}

It is also worth noting that much of the target audience of educational practice is still mostly composed by females and young people, a fact proven by another study.^{2,11,18} Thus, it is necessary to develop strategies to demystify the idea that the group is made only for women because men must learn about the female body and his own body, in addition to contraceptive methods - considering that reproductive rights are both for men and the women.^{24,10} In this sense, training of community health agents may constitute strategy for qualifying assistance to sexual and reproductive health.²⁹

It is recognized that in the found studies no educational group, with the exception of groups of health professionals, had the participation of men, which poses the need to expand the approach also for the male population. Such expansion could promote their effective involvement in the actions, considering and valuing their responsibility in issues related to sexual health and reproductive health.^{22,24} Studies confirm this matter, which suggests that there is little adherence to family planning, posing fertility control and planning as an exclusive prerogative of women.^{21,24}

Therefore, it is pertinent to include topics that address the reproductive health of men, such as sexual dysfunction myths and truths, prevention and control of prostate cancer and penis, access to vasectomy, among others. Also, debates on concepts towards equality between men and women must be promoted, meeting the assumptions ordered by the country.^{3,10,20} In selected studies, none of these issues was mentioned, which corresponds to a man's need and, therefore, the couple.³²

Other issues that were not described in the studies regard infertility and conception techniques, because in addition to the family planning policy, the manuals also recommend the service to provide pregnancy.^{3,10,20} Recent research indicates that 72.9 of Brazilian municipalities do not perform assistance in cases of infertility, which is necessary to reformulate the educational practices for inclusion of this issue to facilitate assistance to couples who opt for pregnancy and have health problems - and other factors that prevent

gestation.²³ Therefore, these necessary changes towards promoting sexual and reproductive health depend on how professionals and staff build their practices in the context of primary care.³²

Given this context, it is worth highlighting the value of the innovative actions of education in family planning for users of SUS, and the development of research aimed at learning the perception of the user facing the educational practice in which he/she participates, in addition to expanding the locations that offer this assistance because some actions were carried out in schools, as seen in the studies.^{7,25,26} It is noteworthy that the educational practice can be offered when there are people interested in it, regardless of the place or the name that it receives, because the educational group mentioned in the study above was carried out with women in a poor community in Curitiba (PR), receiving the name of "Citizenship Cycle".²⁸

Considering the importance of the topics discussed in educational groups related to sexual and reproductive health in the life of users of the health units, it is necessary that professionals value the autonomy of these users, recognizing their experiences, opinions, fears, desires and anxieties about such themes.⁷ Thus, among the items depicted, only number 10 raised this premise, respecting the active participation of users in the choice of topics to be addressed in the group.³²

Still regarding the educational group, no article brought explanation about the evaluation of the group, which leads to the inference that evaluation is not carried out for participants, hindering the feedback between what is offered and what was effective, according to the sexual and reproductive needs presented by users.²⁴

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate the need for further scientific research on sexual and reproductive health of men and women through four perspectives: (1) studies that include the development of strategies to promote male participation in educational groups regarding sexual and reproductive health; (2) evaluative study on the educational activities of sexual and reproductive health; (3) study on sexual and reproductive needs of users, to be met by the actions of reproductive planning; and (4) studies aiming at groups for contraception addressing issues related to infertility.

The scarcity of publications on the educational practices of sexual and reproductive health allows inquiring about how this assistance is being offered to the population. Thus, it should be encouraged the discussion of the issue, in order to promote further researches on this issue - which permeates all stages of the individual's life, figuring as an integral part of their health.

Thus, the educational activities on sexual and reproductive health can and should be developed beyond the physical boundaries of health services; that is in social spaces such as schools, clubs, associations and others. They should

also have a greater scope about the target public, which is composed of men, women, adolescents, adults or elderly, considering their needs and singularities to promote a shared reproductive responsibility, with a safe and healthy culture.

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