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## RESEARCH

### O trabalho voluntário na pastoral da criança na terceira idade: repercussões pessoais

Voluntary work in pastoral da criança at the third age: a personal impact

Trabajo voluntario en la pastoral da criança en la tercera edad: impacto personal

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#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** analyzing the personal repercussions of volunteer work for the elderly in *Pastoral da Criança*. **Method:** a descriptive, exploratory study, with a qualitative approach. 12 elderly were interviewed between May to July 2014, with the aid of a semistructured script. The reports were transcribed and there was proceeded the thematic analysis of content. **Results:** after analysis there were formed the following thematic categories: The Pastoral da Criança is a learning environment for volunteers and families served; The volunteers have feelings of personal and social satisfaction; The Pastoral da Criança allows and encourages the social conviviality; Volunteer work resignifies the life and transforms the ageing process. **Conclusions:** the work at Pastoral da Criança is perceived by older people as very important, because it promotes an environment of social conviviality among all age groups. Nursing, especially in basic attention, must be open and attentive to the benefits of volunteering in the third age. **Descriptors:** Aged, Volunteers, Health promotion.

#### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** analisar as repercussões pessoais do trabalho voluntário de idosos na Pastoral da Criança. **Método:** estudo descritivo exploratório, com abordagem qualitativa. Foram entrevistadas 12 idosas, no período de maio a julho de 2014, com auxílio de roteiro semiestruturado. Os relatos foram transcritos e procedeu-se à análise temática de conteúdo. **Resultados:** após análise formaram-se as seguintes categorias temáticas: A Pastoral da Criança é um ambiente de aprendizado para voluntárias e famílias atendidas; As voluntárias possuem sentimentos de satisfação pessoal e social; A Pastoral da Criança permite e estimula o convívio social; O trabalho voluntário resignifica a vida e transforma o processo de envelhecimento. **Conclusões:** o trabalho na Pastoral da Criança é percebido pelos idosos como muito importante, pois promove um ambiente de convívio social entre todas as faixas etárias. A enfermagem, em especial a que atua na atenção básica, deve estar atenta e aberta aos benefícios do voluntariado à terceira idade. **Descritores:** Idoso, Voluntários, Promoção da saúde.

#### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** analizar las repercusiones personales del trabajo voluntario de ancianos en la Pastoral da Criança. **Método:** un estudio descriptivo, exploratorio, con un enfoque cualitativo. 12 ancianos fueron entrevistados, en el período comprendido entre mayo y julio de 2014, con la ayuda de la hoja de ruta semiestructurada. Los relatos fueron transcritos y procedió al análisis temático de contenido. **Resultados:** después del análisis ha formado las siguientes categorías temáticas: La Pastoral da Criança es un entorno de aprendizaje para los voluntarios y las familias servidas; Las voluntarias tienen sentimientos de satisfacción personal y social; La Pastoral da Criança permite y fomenta la convivencia social; El trabajo voluntario resignifica la vida y transforma el proceso de envejecimiento. **Conclusiones:** el trabajo de la Pastoral da Criança es percibido por las personas mayores como muy importante porque promueve un ambiente de convivencia social entre todos los grupos etarios. Enfermería, especialmente en la atención básica, debe estar abierta y atenta a los beneficios del voluntariado en la tercera edad. **Descriptor:** Anciano, Voluntarios, Promoción de la salud.

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## INTRODUCTION

**C**are is seen as a relationship that combines distinct human beings, since each person represents an unimaginable universe and that does not repeat, guided by feelings, perceptions, thoughts, emotions and needs. Within nursing, Watson's Transpersonal Theory can be understood as a scientific discipline that unites rationality and sensibility, with holistic and aiming at completeness.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we find in this study the importance of volunteer work for the elderly and their impact on quality of life, using the theory of Watson as theoretical, not paying attention to the work itself, but rather on how nursing can understand this practice by the volunteers' perspective and thinking strategies they subsidize other ways to encourage active ageing. The choice of theoretical framework has support function that look sensible and the integral nursing.<sup>1</sup>

The elements used by older resemble at various points with the assistance of nursing practice, because acting before their own spiritual and Transpersonal practices to be, besides being open to others with sensitivity and compassion, applies to volunteering organized by *Pastoral da Criança*, as well as being present and giving support to the expression of positive and negative feelings with a deep connection to who takes care of another.<sup>1</sup>

The Pastoral da Criança, created by Dr. Zilda Arns, a doctor of Pediatrics, in partnership with the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB) in 1983, is a nonprofit and philanthropic nature that relies on the expertise of volunteers to carry out follow-up to needy families. Based on this performance in community organizing and training leaders volunteers who reside there and take on tasks such as: guiding and accompanying the neighboring families in basic actions of health, education, nutrition and citizenship, in order to achieve the integral development of children, including their families and communities without distinction, whether of race, color, profession, nationality, gender, religious creed or political.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, the pastoral acts in all States of Brazil, has about 197.945 volunteers, 88,2% being female and approximately 15,3% elderly (10,2% from 60 to 69 years old and 5,1% of 70 or over).<sup>2</sup>

The elder volunteering is associated with the religious feelings, occupation of spare time, helps to important causes, which ultimately contributes to a sense of psychological well-being of same. The option for this type of work is justified, therefore, the need to feel useful, by search of self-affirmation, improved self-esteem, more optimistic stance in the face of life and expansion of social contacts. Furthermore, such voluntary mode assists economically communities and Nations.<sup>3</sup>

Considering the importance of volunteer work in the life of elderly people and in view of the scarcity of studies addressing the subject, justified the present investigative proposition that aimed to analyzing the repercussions of volunteer work for the elderly in the Pastoral da Criança.

## METHOD

This was an exploratory, descriptive study, with a qualitative approach, conducted with 12 elderly volunteers working in the Pastoral da Criança.

The study took place in two municipalities in the State of Paraná: the municipality "A", located in the Northwest of the State of Paraná, with a total area of 47.052 Km<sup>2</sup> and population of 357.077 inhabitants; 4 and the municipality "B", located in the North region of the State of Paraná, with a total area of 208.470 Km<sup>2</sup> and population of 4.603 inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> The choice of both municipalities was intentional, in order to capture different realities of volunteering.

The selection process of the elderly occurred in different ways in the two localities: at the municipality "A", because it is in the municipality of large enterprises, the choice of participants was brokered for coordinating Pastoral da Criança, which indicated six parishes with greater expertise within the Organization, with participation of a volunteer per parish.

In the municipality "B", a small municipality and with a single parish, there were discussed all the elderly also totaling six participants.

Data collection occurred in the period from May to July 2014, through interviews using a semi-structured script, whose reports were recorded with the aid of a digital recorder and subsequently transcribed in their entirety, in order to preserve the accuracy of the information. To ensure the anonymity of the participants, these were identified with the letter E of 'interview' (in Portuguese) followed by Arabic numerals, in accordance with the sequence of realization of interviews.

The data were submitted to thematic content analysis, which consists of three phases: pre data analysis, exploration of the material and categorical training and treatment of acquired and interpretation categories. In pre data analysis there was performed the first contact with the material, phase in which we organize the raw data for formulation of initial ideas, and both proceeded to the realization of fluctuating readings, separating the information following the main rules proposed by the author of: completeness, representativeness, consistency and relevance. In phase two, material exploration and training categories, classified data, underlining with different colors like parts of the text, and subsequent to this, we group similar phrases in initial themes which would be discussed with other authors in the field. In the third and final phase of treatment obtained and interpretation categories, after the selection of the most significant

categories and representative to the study objectives, inferred and compared with the opinion of other relevant authors in the area.<sup>6</sup>

The research project was analyzed for its ethics by the Standing Committee of Ethics in Research Involving Human Beings of the State University of Maringa (COPEP/ EMU), and approved as opinion No 653.826 from 13<sup>rd</sup> May, 2014 (CAAE: 29326814.7.0000.0104). So all the ethical principles recommended by Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council (NSC) have been respected.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were collected in two municipalities, because at first the researchers had questions if there is discrepancy between the perceptions, to be dealing with municipalities with different ports. However, there was no divergence in the responses, so that these will be presented together.

Participated in this study 12 elderly, all female, with ages ranging between 60 and 79 years old (average of 68), six of which were between the ages of 60 to 64 years old. In relation to marital status, seven old ladies were married, four widows and a single. Regarding education, only one had complete elementary school, the other participants have incomplete elementary school, with three to four years of study.

With regard to the profession, all respondents were retired, and only one worked at home as a bakery. The monthly family income ranged between a minimum wage up to three minimum wages (average of R\$ 1.349,29), being seven volunteers with monthly household income of two minimum wages.

The interviewed, with the exception of the single, had children and grandchildren being on average three children and five grandchildren. The residences have between five and eight rooms (average of six rooms). Only three were made of wood, a mixed and other masonry. Most of the volunteers lived with her husband, three by themselves and two with the children.

The elderly reported having known the pastoral care through the invitation of the Catholic Church, Coordinator of the Pastoral da Criança or voluntary. Only one met the Pastoral da Criança when its children were small and was accompanied by the same. In relation to the time dedicated to the Pastoral, and considering the activities described by the volunteers, one can infer the allocation of at least between one and three hours a week per participant to this work.

According to the pastoral care fronts include the work done by the volunteers is very diverse. The activities involve weighing of children, visits to families, preparation of nutrients and of home remedies, elaboration of breads and cookies that are sold to help in

the Pastoral da Criança and coordination activities. Eight of the volunteers have more than one activity.

The reports led to the setting of the following thematic categories:

- 1) The Pastoral da Criança is a learning environment for volunteers and families met
- 2) The volunteers have feelings of personal and social satisfaction
- 3) The Pastoral da Criança allows and encourages the social conviviality
- 4) Volunteer work resignifies life and transforms the aging process

- 1) The Pastoral is a learning environment for volunteers and families served

The elderly reported that volunteer work promotes learning and this, when offered to families or community brings feelings of gratification:

*I like, because I learned a lot at work developed by Pastoral. Learning to talk to mothers; including those who give a lot of attention to our work. (E1)*

*I spoke about the vaccine (refers to HPV vaccine) and nobody knew yet. (E10)*

Volunteering, is considered as an activity of high positive impact because of the learning process that comes with their educational activities, once it works along with the participation of family members and other people in the community by generating true transformations, in addition to being a source of self-realization.<sup>7</sup>

The fact that there is a training process to become active in the pastoral values the work carried out, since it makes it clear that the Organization has a lot of seriousness in carrying out the activities and monitoring carried out presents itself, as well as systematic theoretical and scientific basis.

Care is a way in which the subjects are committed and devoted themselves to practical experiences of teaching and learning.<sup>1</sup> This can be related to feelings that emerge lines of volunteers, to report the importance of their work, both in terms of their personal perceptions but also on other people's vision.

Care, commitment and dedication required to pastoral, end by acquiring vital character, both for those who care, but mainly for those who care. For the nursing profession marked by its proximity to the careful, that must be considered. The nurse should utilize its look and realize that the elderly of pastoral care form exert a unique and at the same time are cared for by volunteer work, because this brings physical influences, social, psychic and affecting the being of elderly in the community and consequently in their process of self-care.

It is necessary to increase and preserve activities that foster the participation of older persons in education and training actions, since the preservation of the autonomy and physical mobility are conditions that contribute to the active life of the elderly. With the maintenance of physical and mental autonomy the elderly have good prospects for life and can develop very relevant roles in society.<sup>8</sup>

To be close to the community, the nurse who works in the basic attention has access to various forms of voluntary work being one of the Pastoral da Criança, and other

institutions that perform activities to encourage healthy aging. Volunteering and other activities are strategies to effect the promotion, maintenance and development of skills, often being easily accessible to the elderly, since the actions taking place around their residence.

Aging as well as education, are vital processes and must occur in a healthy way, active, free of functional dependencies and prejudices, which consequently requires health promotion in all ages.<sup>9</sup> The stimulus and aid to these activities contributes in the organization of self-care and decrease, and even delay dependency.

Thinking about the perspective of nursing, while subjects active in health promotion and prevention of diseases we can realize that volunteering is something that generates positive repercussions and that exerts influence in the life of the elderly. By acting against these goals, we highlight the need to remain attentive to improvements caused by these activities and to promote increasingly encounters in which the elderly can develop skills and exercise their active voice within the given group.

The nurse has a great social responsibility by working together with social organizations, whose actions resonate strongly within the community, as is the case with the Pastoral da Criança; therefore, we stress the importance of health professionals form bond with these organizations and develop partnerships with the basic units, integrating the services and strengthening them.

## 2) The volunteers have feelings of personal and social satisfaction

Constant learning and the gratification of the relatives met, expressed by behavior changes, together with the resolution of the cases and the feeling that helped the child and the family in practice, provide to elderly feelings of satisfaction.

*Pastoral activities are very good, because you have a child who needs help. Have families who are not able to properly care [...] we serve children with serious problems and we were able to improve their health. So, all this is very good! Is very good we see the result of our work. (E6)*

*[...] I think many mothers change the form of care [...] mainly mothers who participate with frequency of activities [...]. (E1)*

*[...] For us, volunteers develop a job where we devote [...] for families, I believe, it's rewarding, because they participate in activities often and like the same, they are always present on the day of weigh-ins, especially mothers. In these moments we talked about [...] we exchanged experiences and opinions [...] the mothers respect and value our work, it is very pleasurable (E5)*

*[...] Some families are too needy, needing support. We work together with them and we can identify changes and improvements, such as: changes in the structure of the family, mothers can [...] cope better with children [...] So we feel grateful and satisfied because we understand the effectiveness of our work [...] All these activities change too, a bit of our lives, I feel happier by helping a person [...] I believe that work in the pastoral changed a lot my life for the better (E6)*

The volunteers understand and incorporate the importance of their work, because they identify the results achieved in practice with the same, when referring to the families and children who have improved physically and structurally with the pastoral care.

Work in our society is fundamental to the subject as it is from him that the individual is recognized as useful and productive within society. Retirement brings feelings of depression, distress and helplessness to the elderly, which sometimes continue working, but informally, in home activities and in the care for the relatives.

Due to the necessary preparation for such activity, within the framework of practical and theoretical expertise mobilized, and in view of the opportunity to teach, learn and grow together, the relationship ceases to stick the mere transfer of information becoming a space marked by feelings of affection and appreciation of the context of the individual, in order to ensure the educational learning process. In this perspective, the volunteer will be your own teacher and subject, as well as a source of learning that enriches itself and that is reflected in the care others.<sup>1</sup>

Active ageing and longevity helps in the preservation of cognitive ability and intelligence, psychological factors that can be naturally diminished by the natural process of aging. The elderly cognitive decline has several causes; however, the motivation, valuation and social gratification, in addition to the cognitive and social stimulus provided by volunteer work are protective for active and healthy ageing.<sup>3</sup>

Altruism is one of the strands to try to explain the intrinsic motivation present in volunteer work, being directly related to the concern of the welfare of the community and society as a whole.<sup>10</sup> Volunteers feel motivated to donate their time because of the perception that other people in the community need your help to solve your problems.

The old ladies who work at the Pastoral da Criança understand the importance of the visits, weighing, the nutrients, of home remedies and the monitoring of children. Realize that despite the work be focused on child development, generates repercussions within familiar.

Being able to practice and maintain a deep system of beliefs, in addition to practice love, kindness, and consistency within a context of conscious care, be present and be authentic in their practices, is the foundation of a good relationship I-you, within the context of caution. We can see several of these values in the relation that the volunteers remain with their mothers. Without the belief that it is important and without the love of his practice, relationships and the fruits from the same I would develop.

To start the process of care, within the numerous ways in which it occurs, it is necessary to reflect on the culture of care, whereas the beliefs and values that permeate relations and the environment in which care occurs. Anthropology, science that studies the man and mankind, can be a relevant way that assists the nursing to develop possibilities and expand your knowledge about each other and about the culture of care.<sup>11</sup>

### 3) The Pastoral da Criança allows and encourages the social conviviality

Voluntary work in Pastoral da Criança promotes the elderly the conviviality and social interaction with people from different cycles of life, in which act actively, providing



child care guidelines. The monitoring starts even during pregnancy, and extends to the six years of age of the child. When you start your work in the Pastoral, the volunteers attend a training course of 50 hours, in addition to other activities offered at the institution, added to the practical experience acquired from of motherhood and their own experiences.

In addition to the creation of bonds of friendship and support with the other volunteers, all report a lot of happiness and pleasure in participating in activities.

*Participating in the pastoral care is very good, because it is a time to get out of the House, chat and meet people. Is very good, very good! (E10)*

*I am alone; I like to go in the pastoral, got to spend some time together with various people, with her friends. It's very good. I always liked to go, I feel happy to participate in the activities. (E3)*

*Glad to participate, I like very [...] I am very happy to interact with the kids, with the affection that they treat me. And I love the friendships I made with several ladies, participating in the pastoral (E9)*

*It's very good! We're going on pastoral care for help and that makes me excited to [...] I really like to go, I try not to miss [...] Participate and make friendships, for me, it was good, thank God. (E11)*

The joy of participating in a group where it is possible to have interaction and Exchange is very beneficial to health, at any age. The recognition and affection received by families and children are motivators for volunteers and helps in well-being and sense of self appreciation on the part of the elderly.

Communication, interaction and knowledge of another are necessary elements in the process of care. The interpersonal relationship and their tools as techniques, protocols, forms of organization and anything that can support the activity, are part of this process and are essential to a good completion of volunteer work.<sup>1</sup>

When we think of these elements in the voluntary activities of the Ministry and in the practice of nursing, we realize that many are present, especially the interaction and communication, factors much reported and meaningful for the elderly, in addition to the practice of the profession of nurse, because it promotes the bond and the best assistance to these elderly people.

Aging is part of the cycle of life and you need to be prepared for this to be a successful phase. In this context, the groups appear as a strategy for older people to build new relationships with individuals of the same age and carrying out the same activities as well as acquire new knowledge and meet other social practices.<sup>12</sup>

Besides the joy in participating in group activities, voluntary work seems to promote the replacement of the feeling of uselessness and loss of motivation front to life by a sense of discovery of new meaning in life, translated into feelings of pride, happiness and recognition.

*[...] I'm glad to hear it, which is something that is helping people, which is something so good, so important, everybody is happy. (E2)*

*[...] look, my kids are created [...] I have no problem of depression ... There's no time (laughs) [...] you're busy ... doing quite well ... Ours! How does! ... Very well, indeed. We are always active. (E4)*

*[...] My grandson started going to school and [...] it seems that I was so kind of useless ... I always sewed, but after he was born, I stopped just to watch him and the House. But I felt like this, I felt like I was missing something, I needed to do anything else. Then, after I started working in the Pastoral I feel like this more useful for myself. I don't know, I guess my life has improved. (E6)*

*[...] Ah means I'm like that, as I speak ... Oh I don't know ... I'm being useful for something, so, for help. (E1)*

How seniors perceive and deal with the situations of life and with the transformations of aging determines, in large part, an old age healthy or pathological. Many elderly aged and still get older with lack of resources and lack of specific care and it influences directly the way he perceives this process.<sup>9</sup>

Attending the human needs in a conscious way enhances the junction between body mind and spirit. Moreover, the fact that you're open to spirituality and the size of your own life helps create a protective environment in all levels of care. When the volunteer undertakes genuine manner and is willing to embark on an experience of practice, teaching, and learning how the performance of pastoral new plateau reaches a personal satisfaction, realizing a new way of being, in all areas of knowledge as well as in nursing, where in this context and to achieve this level, the performance of the nurse becomes holistic and humane.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4) Volunteer work resignifies the life and transforms the aging process

The feelings involved in the realization of voluntary work, expressed in the lines of the elderly involve generosity, dedication, commitment and above all happiness. The last two feelings arising from the fact of the volunteers believe and feel enough motivation to perform their work in the best possible way. To see in practice the results that this work brings, not only to them, but also to families and children served, the ladies believe that make the difference and that reflects positively on their lives.

*Pastoral da Criança's work is very good, as it does not help only children but us also (excited). Always work with joy [...] with a smile. For me, it's really nice to develop these activities. (E8)*

*[...] We work with will ... I am 15 years ago, leader without will and motivation do not continue doing so long [...]. (E7)*

*I feel very happy. Is very good! Honestly, I feel very happy, really happy! Not simply for asking, but I consider the pastoral as a blessing in my life. (E2)*

*[...]Consider the pastoral care as a part of my family, because I can't go on any longer without working in pastoral [...]. (E5)*

*It is very gratifying. In my life, I think, the work that develops in the Pastoral is everything. (E12)*

The group activities, the feeling of being welcomed with joy felt during the implementation of activities is something that yields moments of wellness and gratification. Realize that your work is well regarded in the eyes of others, and you are key piece in a situation, it is something that regenerates and makes the commitment to persist. The elderly believe that if work takes the positive repercussions, therefore, feel motivated to keep it.

With the increase of the quantity of people in the third age, it is important to stick to the needs of this particular group. The transition of the functionality of the elderly as a socially and economically active for the loss and/or decreased ability to produce is something worrisome and should be perceived as a delicate process, because when bad experienced can perpetuate the culture of elderly merely retired and with sense of pointlessness, unfortunately behavior yet crystallized in Brazilian culture.<sup>8</sup>

By being an activity based on the donation, but that affects directly in other people's lives and involves activities outside of its context, family volunteering, causes the elderly change the perception of himself and sees himself as a very productive and still be able to help and take care of the next. This is noticeable in the lines of the elderly and on happiness in fact ruled to be useful and help. In this case, the elderly volunteers met in a pastoral sense and something I truly believe and dedicate them completely.

## CONCLUSION

Voluntary work in Pastoral da Criança is very important to the elderly, since it represents a convivial environment with multiple age groups that encourage interaction and appreciation of older persons. The fact that the institution replaces the activities according to the limitations of the elderly makes possible their assiduous presence in the group and stimulates the sense of importance for the same.

The participants in the study were all female due to female affinity with the function of care. Generally speaking, the voluntaries include women. Thus, we highlight the need to involve seniors male through activities in groups geared to your desires, aspirations and abilities.

The use of a nursing theory to subsidize practices helps to reorient the view of professional nurse, mainly regarding the motivation to have to take care of each other, as well as reported on lines reported by volunteers. Consider the individual in its context and meet its provisions provides a holistic and integral, humanized.

Nursing, especially one that operates in the basic attention, must be aware of the benefits of volunteering in the third age and society, supporting the achievement of close groups of the elderly, seeking to interact with these institutions, and enabling new volunteer activities, attitude that assists in the work of the institution and in the promotion

of active seniors, extending the benefits to the whole community and the health service itself.

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