

87 - SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT AGING

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INTRODUCTION

Aging as a process is related to every living being including human transformations involving psychological, biological and social, as evidenced by significant loss constraints characterized on the one hand, the accumulated experience and knowledge, on the other, the difficulties imposed by old age.

The concept of old age is difficult to define and ends in any case, multiple dimensions that must be addressed if we as a starting point a historical and cross-cultural perspective, when you realize that the concept of old age has changed and consequently have been assigned the elderly fairly different roles in nature. Thus, it is easy to find examples and even memories of a time when older people occupied a central place and respect, whether in family or community.

The combination of these factors has led to a steady demographic change, with particular emphasis in the developed countries. According to the studies of the United Nations (ONU) (2002) on demographic change, it is estimated that at the beginning of the century, all the elderly people in the world is about 600 million. This corresponds to three times more than 50 years ago, and by 2050, older people should be about 2 billion, which corresponds again to a multiplication by 3 in 50 years. Thus, within twenty-five years Brazil has the sixth largest elderly population in the world, with more than 32 million individuals aged sixty and over, representing about 15% of the total population (OMS, 2003).

Subjective aspects of aging are outlined in the social imaginary and representations of aging seniors about mobilizing feelings and concepts that are intertwined with biological, social, ethical, moral, cultural, political and economic, can turn strongly held views that are triggered where older people will talk about aging. In this sense this study has the objective of understand the social representations of aging.

METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory research within the subsidized social representations of aging studies exploring cross-cultural, multi-center, intra-institutional and international to be developed in primary health care.

The study looked at elderly of both sexes, living in the city of João Pessoa, Brasil considered the third city with the largest number of older people who are projected from IBGE (2007) the total number of elderly would reach 61,281.

The process of sampling was probabilistic, two-stage conglomerate, composed of 240 elderly volunteers participate in compliance with Resolution 196 (BRASIL, 1996).

The data were collected through an interview made by Test Free Word Association using the inductive stimulus "aging" in a corpus consisting of 240 interviews then preceded to semantic analysis with the help of the Alceste software version 2010.

RESULTS AND COMMENTS

The elderly participants in this study have ages ranging from 60 to 98 years, with more focus on ages ranging between 60 and 65 years and 66 to 70 years mostly women, 127 elderly are married.

The results of analysis of Alceste outlined five themes on aging.

- **Old Pictures** - includes semantic contexts formed by old images of positive and negative in the context of social relations. The dimensions of this class semantic content to psychosocial stress diversified positive (retirement, good experience, deserves respect and recognition attached) and negative (abandoned, negative, punishment and old). For those seniors aging is a positive development for the elderly is the experience and respect, negative is that people do not see the old welcome.

Such negative feelings about the content of the aging process have an impact on quality of life of the elderly represented by loneliness, abandonment caused by retirement and isolation. Leisure and well-being are directly related to the quality of their lives, interfering in solving these problems and balance of each (DAVIM, et al., 2003).

- **Aging as gains and losses** - explores one facet ambivalent about aging fruit of a relationship of opposition and opposition that is made by hand by an appreciation of the elderly and others, the difficulties facing the aging process be difficult to express the relationship of recognition and appreciation to the death, that often the family (child, grandchild) who is who should receive mistreated in the old house. These contents refer to the gains brought about aging and the elderly who have had losses based on the feeling of not being valued, getting old, being beaten and being excluded by the family.

Martins, et. al. (2007) saying that reinforce the urban environment, is less or no amount of emotional bonds between people and the network of neighbors, and there may be a tendency to social isolation, with the arrival of retirement and the loss of friends.

In this respect, Neri (2008) warns of the existence of a structural discontinuity during aging, because society is unable to ensure social roles that allow older people to remain healthy and active socially engaged or have access to social opportunities and rewards available to other age groups. Even if the losses are social (feelings of worthlessness), psychological (abandonment) and biological (dies) are the biggest problems of aging.

It's not just the elderly that has a negative image of himself, but society has also contributed to this view from the moment that does not respect the rights of the elderly as the simplest possible use of waves of elderly in malls, supermarkets; not offer seating for the elderly on buses and public transportation, among others.

- **Social Support and Family**, focuses on dimensions that older people associate social support (friend, walk, talk, home, peace) and family (friend, family, child, mother, father) to the quality of life (happiness, good health, work, eat, life). The dimensions of this class emphasize the importance of family for quality of life that result from aging as a stage of life. The elderly

are reported at the time of youth with joy they feel nostalgia for the past which is a cause of loneliness due to retirement. Life for them is reinforced by the sight of aging losses and surrounded by memories.

According to Mendes, et. al. (2005) studies show that retirement, is commonly generated a crisis in the individual. The exclusion from the competition, self-esteem and sense of being useful can be reduced. At the beginning most seniors feel satisfied, because it seems too good to rest. Gradually, they discover life became ruefully useless.

The absence of papers is the real problem of the pensioner, their anguish, their exclusion, and often their isolation from the world. With the realization that no one needs it the elderly are isolated and excluded from society, leaving the distressed, making it difficult to fit in their social group. Coupled with these factors in retirement, the elderly also faces a reduction in the level of income which, in turn, affects the quality of life and health (MENDES, et al, 2005; NERI 2008).

- **Practices Socio-affective** - semantic contexts focuses primarily related to the socio-affective practices (abandonment, help, joy, friendship, love, support, attention, care, rest, happiness, peace, serenity, tranquility and travel).

Is possible to identify this thematic representations associated with aging, where the quality of life is not always seen as good, because it often runs through difficulties that aging leads to the elderly can refer to it as poor or very poor.

In the study of Joia, Ruiz and Donalísio (2005) most seniors say they are satisfied with the life in which the authors indicate health, presence of family and income as determinants of quality of life.

- **Effects of Aging** - includes semantic content that address the effects of aging, the entire negative slant in which the elderly represent aging as a health problem with aging and high blood pressure and bad back are diseases that come with the years.

In the mind of Victor, et. al. (2008) whatever the health indicator studied, elderly always present higher rates of morbidity and a higher proportion of injuries and medical procedures, when compared to other age groups, because in general, the elderly are chronic diseases, multiple require constant monitoring and continued use of medication.

Knowing the main theme or contexts that define the dimensions of the social representations of aging is important to know how those classes or categories of meaning and its contents relate most characteristic.

CONCLUSIONS

The study sought to identify the social representations built on aging for the elderly. The elderly represent aging as a stage that has many health problems, such as osteoporosis, high blood pressure, rheumatism and back problems, as positive and negative dimensions is associated with aging: experience, appreciation, respect, peace, peace, and retirement.

Social representations have a decisive role in the construction of consensual realities, because they have social-cognitive function, which includes little-known events or things and guide communications and conduct in relation to these innovations, so that the media as well as participate in the construction, also involved the dissemination of social representations (JODELET, 2001).

It is considered that the social representations of elders about aging can support health professionals in understanding the adherence preventive of the elderly and strengthening policy was directed at the elderly.

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SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT AGING ABSTRACT

This study has the objective of understand the social representations of aging. This is an exploratory study with 240 elderly an interview answered composed by Test Free Word Association using the inductive stimulus "aging." From the data collected we carried out a semantic analysis with the help of the software Alceste who indicated five classes or themes: images of old, aging as gains and losses, social and family support, socio-emotional and practical effects of aging. The elderly represent aging as a stage that has many health problems, such as osteoporosis, high blood pressure, rheumatism and back problems, as positive and negative dimensions is associated with aging: experience, appreciation, respect, peace, peace, and retirement.

KEY WORDS: Health, Aging, Social Representations.

RÉSUMÉ

Présente étude vise à comprendre les représentations sociales du vieillissement. Ceci est une étude exploratoire avec 240 personnes âgées qui ont répondu à une interview faite par l'Association Parole d'essai gratuit utilisant le stimulus inducteur «vieillesse». D'après les données recueillies nous avons effectué une analyse sémantique avec l'aide de l'Alceste de logiciels qui ont indiqué cinq classes ou thèmes: les images d'autrefois, le vieillissement comme les gains et pertes, le soutien social et familial, socio-affectif et les effets pratiques du vieillissement. Les personnes âgées représentent le vieillissement comme une étape qui a de nombreux problèmes de santé, telles que l'ostéoporose, l'hypertension artérielle, les rhumatismes et les problèmes de dos, comme des dimensions positives et négatives est associée au vieillissement: l'expérience, l'appréciation, le respect, la paix, la paix et la retraite.

MOTS-CLES: Santé, Vieillesse, Représentations sociales.

RESUMEN

Este estudio tiene como objetivo entender las representaciones sociales del envejecimiento. Este es un estudio exploratorio con 240 ancianos que respondieron a una entrevista compuesta por la Asociación Libre de la Palabra con el estímulo inductivo "envejecimiento". De los datos recogidos se realizó un análisis semántico, con la ayuda del software Alceste que indicaron cinco clases o temas: las imágenes de edad, el envejecimiento, como las ganancias y pérdidas, el apoyo social y familiar, socio-emocional y los efectos prácticos de la vejez. Los ancianos representan el envejecimiento como una etapa que tiene muchos problemas de salud, como la osteoporosis, la hipertensión, el reumatismo y problemas de espalda, como las dimensiones positivas y negativas asociadas con el envejecimiento: la experiencia, el aprecio, el respeto, la paz, la paz y jubilación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Salud, Envejecimiento, Representaciones social

REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS SOBRE ENVELHECIMENTO.**RESUMO**

Este estudo tem o objetivo de conhecer as representações sociais sobre envelhecimento. Trata-se de uma pesquisa exploratória com 240 idosos que responderam uma entrevista composta pelo Teste da Associação Livre de Palavras utilizando o estímulo indutor «envelhecimento». Dos dados coletados procedeu-se uma análise semântica com o auxílio do programa informático Alceste que apontou cinco eixos temáticos ou classes: imagens de velho; envelhecimento como ganhos e perdas; suporte social e familiar; práticas socio-afetivas e efeitos do envelhecimento. Os idosos representam envelhecimento como uma fase que se tem muitos problemas de saúde, como: osteoporose; pressão alta; reumatismo e problemas na coluna, como dimensões negativas e positivas o envelhecimento é associado à: experiência, valorização, respeito, tranquilidade, paz, e aposentadoria.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Saúde; Envelhecimento; Representações Sociais.