66 - ORAL HEALTH DURING OLD AGE: PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELDERLY IN CAMPINA GRANDE-PB

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1 INTRODUCTION

The aging population has become a global process, being a Brazilian reality and focusing on the most diverse areas, mainly on health, establishing the need to restructure health care models. And in relation to oral health the picture is not very different. Reflecting on the oral health in this stage of life shows that the development of researches that portray a diagnosis of the reality in the elderly oral health conditions, in those who were not accompanied by an increase in the proportion of this universe, showing that there is a lack of data on this theme, being the primary outcome of new studies (COLUSSI; FREITAS, 2002).

This adds to the above, the lack of care, with loss dental being pointed out as one of the main problems faced by the senile, because it changes the homeostasis of the stomatognathic system, interfering in the interfering in the functions; masticatory, swallowing and speech (CAVALCANTI; BIANCHINI, 2008; CAMARGO; SOUSA, 2006). Therefore, this picture has motivated the development of this research, which aimed to identify the perceptions of the senile Living Center for the elderly, in Campina Grande, Paraíba, Brazil on the oral health.

This research shows that it is appropriate to allow a diagnosis to come from the target population on the oral health of this universe, since few studies which consider their own perceptions of the subjects regarding their health and wellbeing limiting itself mostly to clinical indicators of the disease (LOCKER; JOKOVIC, 1997). At most, the survey results can be analyzed by health professionals, especially nurses, dental surgeons and doctors, which must nowadays adopt the dichotomy between prevention and health promotion of the population in their daily practices.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study was characterized as an exploratory-descriptive cross-sectional outline with a quantitative approach, being performed with the subjects, patrons of the Municipal Living Center for the elderly in Campina Grande, Paraíba, Brazil whose goal is to promote the integration and effective participation of the elderly in society, being welcomed by professionals from many specialties. Soon, the universe of this research was composed of 80 elderly patrons of the activities at the Center at least three times weekly. Characterizing the sample, the majority are female, 60 to 75 years of age, widowed, with little education and low income.

Data collection took place from Monday to Friday until 12:00, days and hours of operation with the implementation of a form previously validated from July 29 to 31, 2009, based on the selection of 40 elderly people. The objective of the validation checks the understanding, clarity and objectivity of the instrument. The establishment of a separate instrument was opted for, with objective questions, due to the specificities of the studied target population.

The material´s treatment was done by the use of descriptive statistics. The data were processed using Microsoft Excel Software. It highlighted that the research only began after the approval of the project by the Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Paraíba, under protocol Nº. CAEE 0275.0.133.000 -09.

3 RESULTS

Table 1: Oral conditions according to the studied elderly

VARIABLE	CATEGORY	n	%
Tooth Loss	Yes	80	100.0
Causes of tooth loss	Lack of dental surgeon	4	4.8
	Lack of financial conditions	10	11.9
	Lack of self-care	10	11.9
	Presence of pain	29	34.5
	Other oral problems (pyorrhea, periodontitis)	13	15.5
	Lack of guidance	3	3.6
	Other reasons	10	11.9
	Indication from the dental surgeon	5	6.0
Uses dental prosthesis	Yes	68	85.0
	No	12	15.0
Type of dental prosthesis	Removable total prosthesis (RTP) superior	61	55.9
	TPR inferior	40	36.7
	Partial prosthesis removable (PPR) superior	4	3.7
	PPR inferior	4	3.7
Discomfort by the use of the prosthesis	Never	30	44.1
	Sometimes	24	35.3
	Always	14	20.6
Perceptions about the Smile	Nice	15	18.8
	Good	41	51.3
	Regular	12	15.0
	Bad	5	6.1
	Very bad	7	8.8
Oral Health on the general health	Never	48	60.0
	Sometimes	10	12.5
	Always	22	27.5
Functions of the teeth	None	1	0.9
	Chewing	74	63.2
	Phonation	33	28.2
	Aesthetics	9	7.7
Limitations of contact	Never	62	77.5
	Sometimes	13	16.3
	Always	5	6.2

SOURCE: Research Data, 2009.
Note: Some questions conceded more than one response

Referring to the general perceptions of the elderly on their oral health, the collected data showed that 52.5% (n= 42) of the sample considered as good, 21.3 % (n=17) as regular and 16.2% (n= 13) as optimal. The statements about the situation being bad or very bad obtained 5.0% (n=4), each.

4 DISCUSSION

On the perceptions of oral health among the elderly population, studies on this theme can still be considered restricted in Brazil, however their results show worrying data regarding the requirement mentioned above and the actual clinical condition in which the senile are, once again that there is a higher proportion of proof between this universe, there is also a greater predominance among them regarding the satisfactoriness with their oral conditions.

Therefore, in this approach the data concerning the general health and oral health perceptions were emphasized with the senile in the Elderly Municipal Living Center. The data collection results were initiated with the questioning on the tooth loss and the data relating to the inquiry were of great concern, because the entire sample had already lost part or all of their teeth.

Many studies have already showed the relationship between the elderly and tooth loss. For example, a survey conducted with the population above 60 years of age in the city of Aracatuba/SP, Brazil aiming to observe the oral situation of this age segment, presented results in which more than 80.0% of the elderly were edentulous (MONTI et al. , 2006). Leal (2001), in a study conducted in the state of Pernambuco found that 65.0% of senile presented edentulism. The national survey on oral health in 2002-2003 also corroborated this reality, because 30.96% needed dental prosthesis, upper and 54.52% lower this establishes the tooth loss (BRAZIL, 2004).

Although the literature data highlight a high tooth loss rate, none of the studies presented as high degree of edentulism as in this study. This can be justified by the lack of professional dental surgeons in the Living Center, establishing that actions in favor of oral health in establishment need to be developed, in the prerogative of guiding its elderly people and those that are aging, minimizing the risks and impacts. Still, it should be emphasized that measures aiming at oral health throughout the municipality of Campina Grande/PB, Brazil still needs to be adopted, because Silva; Pagani; Jorge (2001) justify the importance of maintaining natural teeth because of the role that they play in the correct formation of the bolus, essential to general health.

Furthermore, she asserts that the dental loss is one of the worst contributors to the oral health of the subjects, generating social and economic problems (BARBATO et al., 2007) and is superimposed on the them bringing consequences for speech, swallowing and chewing, compromising digestion, intake of nutrients, appetite, communication and self-esteem, and may cause the need for a pureed diet and, sometimes, cariogenic (BRAZIL, 2008). Therefore, maintaining the teeth healthy and reducing their losses is not easy.

In relation to the causes for the tooth loss, according to the elderly in this investigation, predominantly, cited the presence of pain (34.5%), other oral problems (pyorrhea, periodontal disease and other) (15.5%), lack of financial conditions to pay the dental surgeons for a restorative treatment (11.9%) or the lack of self-care (11.9%).

Low economic level is established as one of the factors for natural dentition loss, an aggravating factor to the oral health levels (MONTI et al., 2006; MOREIRA et al., 2005). Another element that deserves mention is the lack of self-care, perhaps this item is related to the low level of schooling, because as the cited researchers claim, it also operates on the general and oral health conditions.

Regarding the use of dental prostheses, 85.0% of the senile in this study use them. Leal (2001), with senile Pernambuco residents, also found that 88.5% of the senile studied used dental prosthetics. In Ceará with a group of the same age, Alves (2004) found that 71.0% also used dental prosthetics. In the study of Benedetti; Mello; Goncalves (2007) the use was established in 75.1% of elderly using dental prosthesis. The data of such studies show, like this, the prevalence of dental prosthetics users between the subjects with sixty years of age or older.

The results were expected, given the high prevalence of edentulousness between senile Brazilians (BRAZIL, 2004) and also between foreigners (GOUARNALUSSES, 1999), culminating in need for dental prosthesis, in favor of improvements of the stomatognathic system, aesthetic and self-esteem (CAVALCANTI; BIANCHINI, 2008).

He adds that among the elderly dental prosthesis users in this research, 55.9 % use the PTR superior and 36.7 % the PTR inferior. As soon as, in a systematic review (COLUSSI; FREITAS, 2002), it can be noted results correlated with the total prosthesis, because the authors have identified that there is greater use of total dental prosthesis, and the most used the greater arc. Still, as national survey, among the senile dental prosthesis users, 57.91 % used PTR superior and 34.18 % wore PTR inferior (BRAZIL, 2004).

As for the discomfort in relation to the use of dental prosthesis element on the subject of the third age users, there was the prevalence of never feeling discomfort (41.1%). Although, such a statement is conceived, one study reported the presence of injuries related to the use of the dental prosthesis in the majority of those involved in the study, which possibly causes discomfort in its use (ROSA et al., 1992). In addition to the deficiency in masticatory performance, the complaints are persistent among the dental prostheses users, especially regarding the accumulation of food and by the lack of stability, in case of use of both (OW et al., 1997).

Regarding the perceptions of the senile for their own smile, 51.4% consider it as good. Henriques et al. (2007) on the self-perception of oral health conditions in elderly people in the municipality of Araraquara/SP, Brazil, found in 78.7% the affirmative are happy with the smile (appearance of their teeth or prosthesis) and Cavalcante (2005) also found that subjects with sixty or more years of age were satisfied with the appearance of their smile. It is believed, therefore, that satisfactoriness regarding their own smile might be related with the prosthetic rehabilitation, as previously noted, the majority of the senile in this study have artificial teeth and are well adapted to the dental prosthesis.

Faced with the perceptions of the elderly on their oral health, the data showed that 68.7% considered as excellent (16.2%) or good (52.5%). In an epidemiological survey conducted in Brazil in 2002-2003, most of the senile in the study, i.e. 45.99% consider their oral health as good (BRAZIL, 2004). In the study by Martins; Barreto; Pordeus (2008) also found positive results as to the oral health among the senile, being that most (54.0%) reported it as excellent/good. However, contrary to most of the studies, two studies carried out in Araraquara/SP, Brazil revealed perceptions, in the majority, regular (42.7%) (SILVA; FERNANDES, 2001) or poor (HENRIQUES et al., 2007).

Before the investigations on the self-perception of the elderly in relation to oral health, some presented perceptions positive and others negative. It is therefore, believed, that the studies may have shown higher satisfactory perceptions, including this, due to the rehabilitation of the oral cavity by prosthetic use. The fact is that, even with all the studies demonstrating a high degree of loss dental and dental prostheses use, the senile present a unique way of perceiving this health determinant

(BENEDETTI; MELLO; GONALVES, 2007).

The assertion can be verified by the lack of correlation between oral health and general health established by a greater fraction of the elderly in this study, because 60.0% do not believe that the oral conditions may interfere with general health, contrary to some studies (REIS; MARCELO, 2006; CAVALCANTE, 2005; GOUARNALUSSES, 1999) that demonstrate this connection.

We can say that the general health of the elderly is influenced by oral conditions, because they involve language, chewing and aesthetics (physical appearance) and lastly, self-esteem of the senile (GOUARNALUSSES, 1999). Cavalcante (2005) found results which highlight that the oral health conditions exert a strong influence on the welfare of the senile, i.e. if problems occur in the mouth any level of severity (small, medium or large) its presence can minimize the quality of life of such individuals. Also, in the study of Reis; Marcelo (2006) the oral health has not been perceived separate from general health, extrapolating including biological aspects and by associating with the capacity of communication and social interaction.

The losses of dental elements (both partially and in total) have implications in all the organs of the body, for the mouth and the port of entry of food and liquids, which are indispensable to the organic functioning as a whole. Thus, an oral health precarious in the elderly is configured, as they say Camargo; Sousa (2006), in the reduction of quality of life and is a risk factor for their general health.

Then, the non-perception of senile in this study on the interconnection between oral health and in general verifies the fragmented vision in such subjects which perceive their health, since before the data collected, the mouth does not seem to be part of the rest of the body, not interfering on the proper functioning of this.

On the functions that the teeth (natural or artificial) have after 60 years, the majority of senile patrons of the Municipal Elderly Living Center in Campina Grande/PB, Brazil emphasized the chewing (63.2%), phonation (28.2%) and aesthetics (7.7%). Cavalcante (2005) underscored in a study the connection only regarding the chewing.

The fact is that the teeth (natural or artificial) engaged in numerous roles and their absence influences on various aspects of the body, such as in chewing, swallowing and speech (pronunciation) (CAVALCANTI; BIANCHINI, 2008; COLUSSI; FREITAS, 2002). They are still added to the aesthetic and digestive components (COLUSSI; FREITAS, 2002). However, it should be emphasized that maintaining natural teeth must be a practical, since regardless of age, Moriguchi (1992) stresses that people with all dental components present a chewing capacity of 100.0 %, already for individuals who use a full dental prosthesis, this capacity decreases to 25.0 %.

In relation to the limitation of contacts with other people because the oral, the collected data showed that the majority of the elderly (77.5 %) never ceased to maintain contact with other subjects because of the oral conditions. The similarity of this study, Cavalcante (2005) identified that the most senile of his research did not report any problem in regard to the limitations in social situations due to such conditions and Martins; Barreto; Pordeus (2008) also observed with respect to the relationship with other persons, that 72.0 % of a group of 5,326 senile said that the oral did not affect the same.

These data may be related to perception satisfactory that the elderly have in relation to their oral conditions, as well as because they are already well adapted to the dental prostheses, contradicting including study that emphasizes that the loss and dental prosthetic use and negative factor that affects the social function, due to appearance (BRUNETTI; MONTENEGRO; MANETTA, 1998).

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study made it possible to reach the originally proposed goal. Therefore, the diagnosis on oral health, from the senile at the elderly Municipal Living Center in Campina Grande/PB, revealed that these individuals have their own vision for their oral conditions, perceiving them as positive even with a high rate of tooth loss and dental prostheses usage.

From these concepts, let it be clear that new approaches and new studies should be performed, linking the self-perception of the elderly and the clinical evaluation, because both provide different information and is indispensable to the integration of care. Also it is hoped that these data can serve as indicators, forming the development of more effective public health policies, which include the intercession oral health and third age, subsidizing education work, both for the universe in focus, as for society, emphasizing the importance of oral health in the first levels of health care.

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ORAL HEALTH DURING OLD AGE: PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELDERLY IN CAMPINA GRANDE-PB

ABSTRACT

Objective: interpret the perceptions of the senile in a group of elderly people Campina Grande-PB on oral health. Methodology: exploratory-descriptive cross-sectional outline with a quantitative approach, developed with 80 subjects, applying a validated form and considering all the ethical aspects of research involving human beings. Results: showed that the higher proportion of elderly people perceived as excellent or good (68.7 %) oral healthcare, even all (100%) already having dental losses and 85% using dental prosthesis. Conclusion: the senile perceive their oral health in a unique way, because even with the high degree of dental loss and use of dental prostheses, there is satisfactoriness regarding their general perceptions.

SANTÉ BUCCO-DENTAIRE VIEILLESSE: PERCEPTION DES ANCIENS

RÉSUMÉ

Objectif: Pour interpréter les perceptions d'un groupe sénile personnes âgées Campina Grande-PB sur la santé bucco-dentaire. Méthodologie: étude randomisée exploratoire descriptive, transversale approche quantitative, développée avec 80 sujets, l'application d'un formulaire validé et compte tenu de tous les aspects éthiques de la recherche impliquant des êtres humains. Résultats: ont montré que la plus forte proportion de personnes âgées perçue comme excellente ou bonne (68,7%) santé bucco-dentaire, voire toute perte de dents (100%) avait déjà présenté et 85% étant des utilisateurs de la prothèse. Conclusion: l'sénile perçoivent leur santé bucco-dentaire d'une manière unique, parce que même avec le haut degré de la perte des dents et port de prothèses dentaires, il satisfactoriness à la perception générale.

MOTS CLÉS: Vieillissement. Santé bucco-dentaire. Perceptions.

SALUD BUCAL EN LA VEJEZ: PERCEPCIONES DE LOS ANCIANOS

RESUMEN

Objetivo: interpretar las percepciones de la salud bucal de los ancianos in the group de Campina Grande-PB. Metodología: aleatorio exploratorio descriptivo, de corte transversal enfoque cuantitativo, desarrollado con 80 temas, la aplicación de un formulario validado y teniendo en cuenta todos los aspectos éticos de la investigación con seres humanos. Resultados: Se demostró que la mayor proporción de personas de edad avanzada percibido como excelente o buena (68,7%) la salud bucal, incluso la totalidad (100%) habían presentado ya la pérdida de dientes y el 85% eran usuarios de la prótesis. Conclusión: la senil perciben su salud bucal de una manera única, porque incluso con el alto grado de pérdida de dientes y prótesis dentales, no satisfactoriedad en cuanto a las percepciones generales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Envejecimiento. Salud Bucal. Perceptiones.

SAÚDE BUCAL NA VELHICE: PERCEPÇÕES DE IDOSOS CAMPINENSES

RESUMO

Objetivo: interpretar as percepções dos senis de um grupo de idosos de Campina Grande-PB sobre a saúde bucal. Metodologia: delineamento exploratório-descritivo e transversal, com abordagem quantitativa, desenvolvido com 80 sujeitos, aplicando-se um formulário validado e considerando todos os aspectos éticos de pesquisas envolvendo seres humanos. Resultados: evidenciaram que a maior proporção dos idosos percebeu como ótima ou boa (68,7%) a saúde bucal, mesmo todos (100%) já tendo apresentado perdas dentárias e 85% sendo usuários de prótese. Conclusão: os senis percebem sua saúde bucal de modo singular, pois mesmo com o alto grau de perdas dentárias e uso de próteses, há satisfatoriedade quanto às percepções gerais.

PALAVRAS CHAVE Envelhecimento. Saúde bucal. Percepção.