# 52 - PERCEPTION OF PREVENTIVE ACTIONS AND SELF-CARE OF UNDERGRADUATES OF NURSING SCHOOLS

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## INTRODUCTION

Self-care can be defined as the fulfillment of tasks that people do for their own benefit in maintaining health and well-being (GOMIDES et al, 2013). Professionals who intend to take care of others should demonstrate the ability to take care of themselves, know the limits of their doing, and respect others as individuals (SANTOS, RADUNS, 2011).

This kind of action for their own benefit confirms primary care actions, i.e. the basis of the Unified Health Care System in Brazil, which aims to prevent health problems from demanding secondary and tertiary care, but if it happens, there should be no risk of serious damage or even death (BRASIL, 2007).

Undergraduates could be emotionally distressed in the presence of their patients' suffering, which impacts on the quality of care and the quality of their lives. We think it is essential that students gain perception of themselves as biopsychosocial spiritual beings. If, on the one hand, such identification movement is essential to enable them to understand the suffering and needs of their clients, it should not occur in a way that it paralyzes their performance or triggers suffering (KESTENBERG et al., 2006).

In this context, subjects that focus on learning how to "look after oneself" should be introduced into the curriculum of undergraduate courses, (NASCIMENTO, 2006). According to that author, a future caregiver should be seen as a human being in training, respected their integrity and dignity.

The aim of this study was to identify self-care practice among students at Unioeste/Foz do Iguaçu Nursing course, comparing what students consider health care preventive measures with what they actually do.

## METHOD

It was an exploratory cross-sectional study, conducted with the students of State University of West/Foz do Iguaçu Nursing course, in the first half of 2012. The inclusion criterion adopted was the proper enrollment in the nursing program in the academic year 2012 and an agreement to volunteer to participate in the survey.

The interview took place inside a classroom, after some explanation and signing of the informed consent form (ICF). Data were obtained through a questionnaire with 30 multiple choice questions that focused on preventive measures and screenings related to self-care.

Regarding ethical aspects, this survey followed the resolutions in force, and the project was examined by the Survey Ethics Committee/UNIOESTE, look under number 465.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Self-care

Of the 188 students enrolled, 120 (63.83%) participated in the survey and 68 (36.17%) did not participate (due to absence, wish not to participate in the survey or because they were not officially enrolled).

On the subject self-care, 91 students (75.83%) mentioned the practice of physical exercise, but only 44 (36.66%) do exercise. In Table 1 we can see the most mentioned responses, although for all the alternatives we realize that students indicate the answer while they admit not to follow.

Table 1 - Distribution of the variables mentioned by nursing students according to the measures considered preventive and measures actually implemented by them, UNIOESTE, 2012

| Variables | attendance[1] | attendance[2] |
|---|---|---|
| Did not respond | 18 | 18 |
| Balanced diet | 83 | 45 |
| Physical Exercise | 91 | 44 |
| Healthy sleep | 12 | 07 |
| Leisure time | 16 | 12 |
| Good family relationship | 08 | 05 |
| Medical appointments | 23 | 15 |
| Preventive screening | 44 | 22 |
| Personal hygiene | 05 | 05 |
| Condom use | 04 | 00 |
| None of the alternatives mentioned | 21 | - |
| Total: | 304 | 194 |

[1] Which of these do you consider preventive measures to maintain your health?
[2] And which one of them do you adopt?

Balanced diet has been frequently mentioned – 83 (69.16%) students named it as a preventive measure to maintain health, but only 45 (37.5%) can stick to a healthy diet.

In Brazil, as in other countries, overweight and obesity are increasing dramatically. In parallel, the prevalence of non-communicable chronic diseases is increasing, and among the main causes of these diseases is poor diet (VINHOLES et al., 2009), despite students seek good eating habits, eating a varied diet. Silva et al. (2010) also states that the consumption of fruits and vegetables depends on the social and economic condition, which summarizes the importance of university restaurants to the day-to-day of undergraduates in order to maintain a healthy diet with full meals by avoiding snacks, deep fried dishes and processed food with little nutritional value.

Physical activity was mentioned as they claim it contributes to a healthy lifestyle, but less than a half of them practice

any. The Municipal Bureau of Sports of Foz do Iguaçu holds the Live Better Program, whose aim is to establish a preventive measure to the health of the population, with stretch classes, relaxation, massage, solo Pilates, aerobic dance and anaerobic exercise, besides community gym equipment. Activities are supervised by physical education teachers (PMFI, 2011).

Twelve students (10%) also mentioned healthy sleep, but only 7 (5.83%) can sleep well. Heavy workload and a great volume of undergraduate activities could explain sleep low performance, considering that the course overload is identified as a negative factor affecting the quality of life of nursing and medicine students (BAMPI et al ., 2013).

About leisure, of the 16 (13.33%) students who mentioned this measure, 12 (10%) could have such moments. Leisure is considered a factor jeopardized by academia overcharging and course load. However, it is considered essential to maintain a balanced life opposite to the overcharging faced by the undergraduates (BAMPI et al., 2013).

Family relationship was mentioned by 8 (6.66%) students, followed by 5 (4.16%) of them. According to Katsurayamaet al. (2010), a college student undertakes tasks that involve high performance and sustained effort at a routine of constant study, which may become a source of stress and hinder the maintenance of family affective bonds.

Medical appointments were mentioned by 23 (19.16%) and only 15 (12.5%) students seek this measure. Capilheira, Santos (2006) argue that women, former smokers, people with diabetes or hypertension, are the people who demand more health care services, featuring a population that only seeks professional physicians when signs of diseases and symptoms disturb their routine.

Personal hygiene has been mentioned by 5 college students and maintained by all of them. Although it was a small number, this response was the most consistent for everyone who mentioned it also carried it out. According to Souza et al. (2007), the precariousness of personal and household hygiene can encourage the growing and constant rate of worms, respiratory diseases and skin disorders.

Regarding the use of condoms, only 4 (3.33%) students mentioned it as a preventive measure and neither of them use it, which is an inconsistency, because when asked if they used condoms during their sexual intercourse 43% said yes, so its use should be further investigated.

When used, condom should prevent pregnancy when women for some reason cannot use oral contraceptives, and the sole reason to use it is prevent pregnancy, usually not thinking about the possibility of spreading sexually transmitted diseases (CHAVES et al., 2014).

And finally 21 (17.5%) students do not practice any of the measures mentioned. It is understood that self-care reflects quality of life and Brandãoet al, (2009, p.281) problematized:

> "Why do health care professionals who guide individuals to have a healthy lifestyle sometimes have contradictory behavior to what unfolds on the concepts mentioned?".

The same author also implies that Nursing students have enough to realize that prevention is a daily activity, a routine that must be implemented in our lives when we seek quality of life, longevity and habits that promote and maintain health.

**Preventive exams**

Regarding preventive screenings carried out along the year 2011, 46 (38%) undergraduates performed academic self-examination of breasts and testicles, 71 (59%) did not, and 3 (2.5%) did not answer; the ultrasound examination was done by 38 (34%) of the female students, 71 (63%) did not, 2 (1.9%) did not respond and 1 (0.98%) did not know; 51 (46%) of the female students performed the Pap test, 60 (53%) did not and 1 (0.98%) did not know; 55 (46%) took the blood test, 58 (48%) did not, 4 (3.3%) did not answer, and 3 (2.5%) did not know (Figure 1).

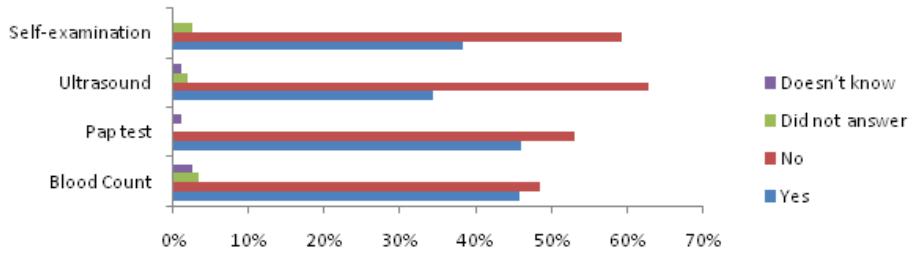



Figure 1 - Distribution of nursing students according to the performance of preventive screenings, UNIOESTE, 2012.

In Brazil, until 2008 it was estimated about 466,730 new cases of cancers, according to the National Cancer Institute (NCI, 2012): first breast cancer, second prostate, followed by womb cancer.

Lima, Missio (2009) found, in the 3rd year of Nursing course at the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), that 60% of the students surveyed do not conduct any examination to prevent cancer and 40% regularly perform preventative procedures such as: Pap test, breast or testicles self-examination, but in the fourth year the result was the opposite, as 60% reported making preventive procedures and only 40% said they did not.

Testicular cancer is worrisome because the incidence is higher in men of reproductive age, although rare, occurring between 15 and 50 years. It can be easily confused with or even masked by orchiepididymitis (inflammation of the testicles and epididymis). Testicular tumors corresponds to 5% of all cases of cancer among men, easily cured if detected early, presenting a low rate of mortality, so it is important to perform self-examination to detect the disease in the early stages (NCI 2012).

Milito (2013) highlights the effectiveness of ultrasound screening in early detection. The quality of these tests reflects the successive decline in cancer mortality rates. Hence we see the importance of annual preventive exams for the health of women (cervix or uterus cancer) and men (prostate cancer).

According to Goldman et al. (2010), a survey conducted at the Federal University of São Paulo evaluated the preventive practices of gynecology, and college female students showed they knew about the importance of the exam, as 84.4% had performed the examination and only 14.0% did not, while 1.6% did not answer.

Complete blood counts were performed more frequently in the second year of the course. The exam alone gives no diagnosis, but is part of a range of tests that indicate some diseases and are ordered along with other laboratory tests, guiding professional and confirming or discarding various diseases. Because it is a broad examination, it can be expensive and the application at the public health care system follows the needs of each age group (GROTTO, 2009).

**FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Most undergraduates are aware of how they must behave to prevent diseases, but they do not act that way. The data related to examinations and preventive measures reveal that they know the various ways to take care of their bodies; they master information and are inserted in a workplace that provides easy access to health care institutions, but fail to practice prevention.

The survey allows us to state that students who do not have a healthy lifestyle or an adequate level of self-care make no use of their theoretical, practical and scientific knowledge for their own good, driving themselves away from the example to be followed by their customers.

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**ABSTRACT**

Self-care can be defined as the fulfillment of tasks that people do for their own benefit in maintaining health and well-being. The aim of the article was to identify self-care practice among nursing/Unioeste undergraduates, in Foz do Iguaçu/PR. This is an exploratory cross-sectional study, whose population is made up of 188 nursing students, and data collection was conducted in the first half of 2012, after approval by the Ethics Committee/Unioeste. Data were collected by administering a questionnaire to 120 students who volunteered to participate in this survey. On the subject of self-care, 91 students (75.83%) mentioned physical exercise practice, but only 44 (36.66%) do exercise, and the same occurred to all of the other self-care measures mentioned. Most of them did not perform any preventive screenings. Although college students have enough knowledge to perform self-care, they do not take care of themselves. There is a dualism in the speech of aspiring professionals and what they actually experience.

**KEY WORDS:** Self-care; Nursing students; Health care promotion.

**LA PERCEPTION D'ACTIONS PREVENTIVES ET LE SOIN DE SOI CHEZ L'ETUDIANT DU COURS UNIVERSITAIRE EN SOINS INFIRMIERS**

**RESUMÉ**

Le soin de soi peut être défini comme la pratique d'activités que les gens réalisent dans leur propre intérêt pour maintenir leur santé et bien-être. L'objectif a été celui d'identifier la pratique du soin de soi chez les étudiants en Soins Infirmiers / Unioeste, Foz do Iguaçu / PR. Il s'agit d'une étude transversale exploratoire, dont la population est composée de 188 étudiants du cours en Soins Infirmiers. La collecte des données a été réalisée dans le premier semestre de 2012, après l'approbation par le Comité d'Éthique / Unioeste. Les données ont été recueillies par l'administration d'un questionnaire à 120 étudiants qui ont accepté de participer volontairement à l'étude. Sur le sujet soin de soi, 91 élèves (75,83 %) ont mentioné la pratique de l'exercice physique, mais seulement 44 (36,66 %) le font vraiment, et le même s'est produit pour toutes les autres mesures présentées sur le soin de soi. La majorité n'a pas non plus réalisé des examens préventifs. Bien que les étudiants aient des connaissances afin

de pratiquer le soin de soi, ils ne le font pas. Il y a une dualité entre le discours d'un futur professionnel et ce qu'ils vivent effectivement.

**MOTS-CLÉS** : Soin de soi ; Étudiants en Soins Infirmiers ; Promotion de la santé.

**PERCEPCION DE ACCIONES PREVENTIVAS Y AUTOCUIDADO DEL ESTUDIANTE DEL CURSO DE ENFERMERÍA**

**RESUMEN**

El autocuidado puede definirse como la práctica de actividades que las personas realizan en su propio beneficio en la manutención de la salud y bienestar. El objetivo fue identificar la práctica del autocuidado entre los estudiantes de Enfermería de la Universidad Estatal del Oeste del Paraná (Unioeste), Foz do Iguaçu,/PR. Se trata de un estudio transversal de exploración, cuya población se constituye de los 188 estudiantes del curso de Enfermería. La recolección de datos fue realizada en el primer semestre del 2012, después de la aprobación en el Comité de Ética/Unioeste. Los datos fueron levantados mediante la aplicación de un cuestionario para los 120 alumnos que aceptaron participar voluntariamente de la pesquisa. Acerca del tema autocuidado, 91 alumnos (75,83%) mencionaron la práctica de ejercicios físicos, pero apenas 44 (36,66%) de ellos la practican; y lo mismo ocurrió para todas las otras medidas de autocuidado presentadas. La mayoría también no realizó exámenes preventivos. Aunque los estudiantes tengan conocimientos para ejecutar el autocuidado, no lo practican. Existe una dualidad entre el discurso de un futuro profesional y lo que él efectivamente realiza.

**DESCRIPTORES:** Auto cuidado; Estudiantes de Enfermería; Promoción de la Salud.

**PERCEPÇÃO DE AÇÕES PREVENTIVAS E AUTOCUIDADO DO ACADÊMICO DO CURSO DE ENFERMAGEM**

**RESUMO**

O autocuidado pode ser definido como a prática de atividades que as pessoas realizam em seu próprio benefício na manutenção da saúde e bem-estar. O objetivo foi identificar a prática do autocuidado entre os acadêmicos de Enfermagem/Unioeste, Foz do Iguaçu/PR. Trata-se de um estudo transversal exploratório, cuja população constitui-se dos 188 acadêmicos do curso de Enfermagem, a coleta de dados foirealizadano primeiro semestre de 2012,após a aprovação no Comitê de Ética/Unioeste. Os dados foram colhidos mediante aplicação de um questionário para os 120 alunos que aceitaram participar voluntariamente da pesquisa.Sobre o tema autocuidado, 91 alunos (75,83%) citaram a prática de exercícios físicos, porém apenas 44 (36,66%) praticam, e o mesmo ocorreu para todas as outras medidas de autocuidado apresentadas. A maioria também não realizou exames preventivos. Embora os acadêmicos tenham conhecimentos para executar o autocuidado, não o praticam. Existe uma dualidade entre o discurso de um futuro profissional e o que eles efetivamente vivenciam.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Autocuidado;Estudantes de enfermagem; Promoção da saúde.