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AGING IN FOCUS: CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION OF A FAMILY HEALTH TEAM

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Background: Population aging is a global trend that presents significant challenges for public health. Community-dwelling older adults represent a diverse population with different levels of autonomy and healthcare needs. Therefore, it is essential to use specific assessment tools that are sensitive to the characteristics and contexts of this population.
Objectives: To identify the characteristics of the elderly population in a neighborhood of the municipality in Rio Grande do Sul, aiming to understand frailty and factors associated with certain risks, such as falls and hospitalizations, preventing functional incapacity and promoting independence and autonomy in their daily activities with safety and dignity.
Methods: This research consists of an observational cross-sectional descriptive study. Individuals aged 60 years or older, of both sexes, and living in households within a specific community monitored by a Family Health team were evaluated. Data collection was conducted through the application of a structured questionnaire developed by researchers, which included personal data, risk factors and socioenvironmental aspects. Additionally, information on fall history, use of walking aids, past hospitalizations, and whether the individual had a formal or informal caregiver, among other aspects, was gathered. Physical assessment was conducted using tests based on the conceptual models of frailty according to Fried's phenotype and the Edmonton Frail Scale.
Results: A total of 202 individuals were evaluated, the majority of whom were women (59%), with a mean age of 71.7 years. 76% of the sample were overweight or obese to some degree, and 46% perceived their health status as poor or average, and another third of the sample reported having difficulty performing daily activities (40%), which resulted in 46% of the sample reporting feeling sad or depressed. Regarding the functional tests, it is important to highlight that women had more falls, lower handgrip strength, slower speed to perform the timed-up-and-go test and slower gait speed than men, with statistically significant differences ($p < 0,05$).
Conclusion: The findings of this study highlight the predominance of women in the evaluated elderly population, with greater functional vulnerability among them, including a higher occurrence of falls, lower handgrip strength, and slower performance in functional tests. Additionally, the reported difficulty in performing daily activities by one-third of the participants reinforces the need for strategies focused on promoting functionality and preventing disabilities.
Implications: These results highlight the importance of targeted physiotherapy interventions aimed at improving mobility, nutritional status, and mental health in the elderly population. The high prevalence of overweight and functional limitations demonstrates the need for early assessments in Primary Health Care and preventive interventions. Additionally, the findings emphasize the relevance of community programs focused on exercise, fall prevention, and mental health support, guiding management, professional training, and public policies for active aging.
Keywords: Aging, Frailty, Public Health

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PARTICIPANTS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE ACQUIRE INFORMAL KNOWLEDGE?

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Background: Aging population is an irreversible phenomenon; therefore, it is essential that it is addressed actively, ensuring the possibility of continued education for the elderly.
Objectives: To assess and compare the non-formal content learning of participants from the University of the Third Age (U3A) before and after they participated in various theoretical and practical modules of the extension program offered by different health courses.
Methods: This is longitudinal research of analytical and descriptive approaches. The sample consisted of 23 elderly individuals of both sexes from a University of the Third Age, using convenience sampling. Two tests, comprising 24 questions divided into 7 domains, were used to assess participants' learning before and after the extension project, and a telephone interview was conducted to outline the sociodemographic and educational profile. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 20.0 software.
Results: The sample consisted of 23 participants, with 20 females (87%), and an average age of 70.22 ± 7.42 years. Regarding education, 10 (43.5%) had completed elementary school, and 15 (65.2%) earned up to one minimum wage. Performance comparisons between the first and second tests showed an increase in the number of correct answers and a decrease in the number of errors; however, these results did not reach statistical significance. There was a statistically significant reduction in unanswered questions. The question about "aid devices" had the highest rate of blank responses. In the philosophical domain, only the item "social life" showed a statistically significant difference. In both evaluations, the questions with the highest accuracy rates were about "aging and tasks" and "medical specialty." The highest error rate was for "types of dementia" and "medicinal plants." In test 2, the topics "first aid" and "physical activity" were the most mentioned in the discussion question.
Conclusion: The aspect of "social life" was the only one that showed a statistically significant difference, demonstrating that the main role of U3A in socialization was fulfilled and overshadowed non-formal learning.
Implications: The results highlight the significant contribution of the University of the Third Age in promoting socialization and the need for more opportunities to be made available for this target group in our country.
Keywords: Aged, University, Learning

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