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INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ELDERLY AND YOUNG PEOPLE: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To verify if there are barriers in the communication processes between young and elderly people.

Method: It is an integrative review that identified the scientific evidence about intergenerational communication between young and old. 729 articles were selected, of which 14 comprised the sample.

Results: The results showed the relevance of the theme, in view of the growing phenomenon of the aging of the world's populations, which increasingly drives towards emerging needs for redirection in the process of permanent education. A consensus was found in the literature studied about the benefits of communication processes between young and old.

Conclusion: The communicational processes allow an improvement in the youth's attitudes towards the elderly, reduction of prejudices and tensions in the relationships between them. The importance and effectiveness of intergenerational programs is emphasized to bring generations closer and to improve social and family life.

Descriptors: Communication barriers; communication; aged; adolescent.

INTRODUCTION

Population ageing occurs all over the world and brings with it some concerns because it has social and biological consequences for society. Studies point out one in nine people is 60 years old or older and this demographic phenomenon is intensifying due to low fertility and mortality along with the development of science and technology⁽¹⁻²⁾. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), life expectancy in the world rises by 5 years from 2000 to 2015, representing an increase in the population of the elderly public. Also according to the WHO, there is an age inequality between countries, so there is a need to support and advance Universal Health Coverage to match the differences. Countries such as Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Iceland, Israel, Sweden, France, Japan, Singapore, Australia, South Korea and Canada, have indicators with life expectancy in 2015 that exceeded 82 years. The WHO also points out that Brazil has a life expectancy indicator of 75 years⁽³⁾. There has been an increase in life expectancy at birth in Brazil in 2018, in which women reached an average of 79.9 years and men 72.8 years⁽⁴⁾.

Aging is a biological and non-pathological process and, being old does not mean being sick, however, the increase in age brings about changes that provide the elderly, limitations in their functional capacity, in their autonomy and in relating to their environment⁽⁵⁾.

Intergenerational communication favors the construction of bonds, breaks down barriers of social and cultural stereotypes and prejudices. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize age and cultural differences using them as an educational tool for the construction of intergenerational relationships⁽⁶⁻⁸⁾.

In this perspective, the Ottawa letter of 1986 defines Health Promotion as a combination of actions within public policies between the State and the community, respecting individual skills and proposing reorientations of intersectoral interventions in joint actions⁽⁹⁾.

This research presents an integrative review, which aimed to verify whether there are barriers in the communication processes between young people and the elderly.

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

To achieve this aim, the guiding question was elaborated on: what is the scientific evidence on the intergenerational communication between young and old? Therefore, the articles contemplated to compose this study were extracted from academic databases.

The integrative literature review aims to identify the results and effects of the announced studies on the subject of intergenerational communication and to provide scientific evidence to specialists to support them in their knowledge and decisions⁽¹⁰⁾.

Thus, it was possible to identify in the results of the articles studied, the relevance of the theme of intergenerational communication between young and old, considering the different barriers existing in the communication process, between these generations^(7-8,14,20). In parallel, the articles brought methods of intervention, which made it possible to minimize the barriers detected by these researches^(20-21,24).

In this perspective, knowing the methodological strategies addressed in these articles, which were part of this study on intergenerational communication between young people and the elderly, allowed us to appreciate the benefits achieved between these two groups, in the behavioral changes presented in the research^(17,23).

Thus, the results found in these articles indicated that knowing and sharing experiences is advantageous and prosperous in the relationships between these generations^(7-8,20,22,24).

Since it was through socialization interventions and generational programs, which were structured from the everyday life of the young and the elderly, inclusion activities, it was possible to demystify pre-established and stereotyped concepts^(6,8,20,24).

For this purpose, the benefits pointed out in the articles, showed the minimization of prejudices between young and old and the motivation to learn from the different^(6-8,18,23).

Thus, this study contemplated the following phases: elaboration of the guiding question, objective of the research, database search, data collection, inclusion and exclusion criteria, consolidation of the results, discussion of the results and the aspects of the integrative review, critical analysis of the reserarches⁽¹¹⁾.

The guiding question was drafted using the strategy of PICO (*Population Intervention Context, Outcome Setting*)⁽¹²⁾ e o relatório da revisão foi de acordo com o PRISMA⁽¹³⁾.

Thus, the searches and pre-selection of this study were performed by two autonomous researchers, which had the purpose of constituting the calibration in the verification of the concordance indicator of the studies found. For better transparency and impartiality in the study, when faced with divergences found during the calibration process of the final selection of studies, a third researcher was consulted.

The searches of the articles in the electronic databases surveyed were: CINAHL, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science and, Scielo, using the descriptors indexed in MeshTerms and their crossings, using the Boolean operator AND and OR. The first crossover was performed with the following descriptors: "Intergenerational relations", AND "adolescent" OR "Young adult" AND "Communication" OR "Comunication Barriers" AND "Elderly" OR "age" OR "aging" OR "Old adult". For these crossings, a filter was used for the qualifier "Title, Summary and Descriptor". A second crossover was also performed with three Descriptors: "adolescent" OR "Young adult" AND "Communication" OR "Comunication Barriers" AND "Elderly" OR "age" OR "aging" OR "Old adult", the filter for qualifier "Title, Summary and Descriptor" was used. The third crossover was performed with the following Descriptors: "Intergenerational" AND "adolescent" OR "Young adult" AND "Elderly" OR "age" OR "aging" OR "Old adult".

In the search strategy, adjustments were made according to the peculiarity of each database searched, thus preserving the conformation of the guiding question and the inclusion criteria of the study. The inclusion criteria were: no time or language limiter was used, as well as research carried out outside the academic publication channels, scienti-

fic articles of primary data, which addressed communication processes between generations, full articles in full, articles in any language, as long as it dealt with the theme of Intergenerational Communication. In the same proposal, the exclusion criteria were established: articles that did not analyze intergenerational communication processes, as well as scientific papers presented in congresses and duplicate articles.

The articles were selected from reading the titles and abstracts, observing the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which dealt with scientific evidence about intergenerational communication between the elderly and young people.

RESULTS

This research selected 729 articles, of which 14 comprised the sample. The articles were retrieved by independent researchers, followed by the comparison of the choices for the construction of the final sample about intergenerational communication.

In the selection process, when presenting the indexed descriptors and using a filter for the qualifier “title”, “summary and descriptor”, 144 studies were retrieved at the first moment of the research. In the second stage, the descriptors with the qualifier for “title” were used, and 72 articles were found. In the third moment of the research, when the qualifier was changed to “descriptor”, 513 articles remained, making a total of 729 articles in the first pre-selection.

After reading the titles and abstracts of these articles, 62 were pre-selected, excluding 667, as they did not fit the theme of scientific evidence about communication between the elderly and young people. Subsequently, 62 articles were read in full, 17 were selected and 45 were excluded, as they did not fulfill the prerequisites of the theme communication between generations. Next, the reading by calibration was verified, with three articles being excluded, as they do not fulfill the requirements involving the theme of intergenerational communication between young and elderly, leaving 14 for the final sample.

It was observed that the selected articles dealt with the years 2002 to 2016, but no publications were found during the years 2005 to 2007 and 2014 with the descriptors that contemplated the theme of intergenerational communication between young and old people, the focus of this study. Regarding the places of publication, the United States stands out with eight studies, China with three studies and one study in the following locations: Canada, London and Brazil.

Table 1 – Characterization of the selected articles in the sample.

Author/Year/ Country	Research objectives	Research design	Sample
So; Shek ⁽⁶⁾ , 2011, China.	Explore how the intergenerational solidarity generated from the intergenerational programme fosters positive youth development.	Exploratory analysis.	Pilot Apprenticeship Program for the Elderly in public primary and secondary schools.
Giles; Ballard; Mccann ⁽⁷⁾ , 2002, USA.	Investigate the communication of Italian-American youth with peers of the same age and with the elderly.	Descriptive, exploratory, qualitative analysis.	406 university students, aged 17 to 30 years old, of both sexes and, elderly people over 65 years old.
Zuccher ⁽⁸⁾ , 2010, USA.	Explore the experiences of healthy elderly people from an intergenerational service learning program with university students.	Descriptive, exploratory, qualitative analysis	14 elderly people, 11 women and 03 men, aged 65 to 87, with a mean age of 76 years.
Yamashita; Kinney; Lokon ⁽¹⁴⁾ , 2011, USA.	Examine the effects of a gerontology course and an intergenerational learning service project for people with dementia.	Descriptive, exploratory, qualitative analysis.	220 young university students.
Thompson; Weaver ⁽¹⁵⁾ , 2015, USA.	Analyze the introduction of intergenerational programs within the school curriculum.	Quasi-experimental analysis.	1,026 high school students who participated in the Intergenerational Program.
Souza ⁽¹⁶⁾ , 2003, Brasil.	Evaluate the project of integration between generations according to the opinion of the participants and emphasize the contribution of these age groups in the construction of social capital.	Qualitative analysis.	Nine groups with 84 students between 13 and 19 years old, and three groups with 26 elderly people aged 60 or over.
Augustin; Freshman ⁽¹⁷⁾ , 2015, USA.	Encourage university students to choose careers with the elderly people.	Qualitative analysis.	36 undergraduate students, between 21 and 30 years old.
Lin; Zhang ⁽¹⁸⁾ , 2008, China.	Examine interview reports on inter and intra-generational communication experiences and the perceptions of young and old people.	Descriptive, exploratory, qualitative analysis.	Young and 31 elderly, 16 women and 15 men, between 60 and 82 years old.

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Author/Year/ Country	Research objectives	Research design	Sample
Fingerman; Miller; Charles ⁽¹⁹⁾ , 2008, USA.	Investigate whether social partners behave with greater consideration and use less conflictive conflict strategies with the elderly.	Descriptive, quantitative, qualitative, cross-sectional cohort analysis.	87 young people (22 to 35 years old); 89 elderly (65 to 77 years old), of both sexes.
Zhang ⁽²⁰⁾ , 2004, China.	Examine young people's written accounts of intergenerational communication in conflict situations in the People's Republic of China.	Descriptive, exploratory, qualitative analysis.	441 university students, 17 to 25 years old, of both sexes.
Drury; Hutchison; Abrams ⁽²¹⁾ , 2016, Inglaterra.	Investigate the positive results of attitudes, associated with direct intergenerational contact.	Descriptive, quantitative, qualitative analysis.	180 university students between 17 and 25 years old, of both sexes; and 95 workers, between 18 and 30 years old.
Cornelius; LeGrand; Jemmott ⁽²²⁾ , 2009, USA.	Examine sexual communications, attitudes and feelings towards these communications between African American grandparents and their teenage grandchildren.	Descriptive, quantitative, qualitative analysis.	40 adolescents (11 to 13 years old) and 40 grandparents (48 to 79 years old).
Fletcher; Mullett ⁽²³⁾ , 2016, Canadá.	Provide opportunities for sharing intergenerational knowledge through digital stories.	Participatory action research.	22 young men and women, between 16 and 29 years old, and 14 elderly people.
Giles; Khajavy; Choi ⁽²⁴⁾ , 2012, USA.	Examine the perceptions of American and Iranian young adults about communication with peers, middle-aged adults and elderly people.	Descriptive, exploratory, qualitative analysis.	Elderly people and 439 undergraduate students between 20 and 43 years old, of both sexes.

DISCUSSION

The search in the literature highlighted the relevance of the selected articles; however, the production on this theme is still insufficient, only a few countries have dealt with intergenerational communication, especially since 2008. However, there is a consensus about the benefits of communication processes between young and old.

The importance of intergenerational communication as an instrument to minimize pre-established concepts has been highlighted in research. And also the need to share knowledge, through intergenerational projects, with young and old people^(6,8,14-16). In particular, Zuccheri's studies have examined and encouraged university students regarding the importance of intergenerational relationships and care in gerontology courses and other university courses⁽⁶⁾. Thus, generational educational programs become instruments that favor communication between generations, besides helping professionals in health education activities⁽²²⁾.

The authors So, Zuchero, Yamashita recommend that educational programs should be instituted that prioritize the discussions on the theme of intergenerationality^(6,8,14). These authors corroborate with Thompson, Souza and Cornelius in which they emphasize the effectiveness of intergenerational programs, as well as the relevance of constituting spaces in school and academic environments that can ensure greater interaction and understanding in dialogues between generations. They also consider the emerging need to propagate new studies that address the intergenerational theme^(6,8,14-16,22).

Therefore, participating in Intergenerational Programmes can determine positive results for young people in the development of relations between the generations. It also gives back to the elderly the motivation to learn new knowledge and to young people the overcoming of prejudices⁽⁶⁾.

In their investigations, Lin and Zhang point out that the experiences and perceptions of the elderly in relation to young people, demonstrate that the elderly perceive that young people are less likely to endure life's difficulties. And that the elderly rarely share their personal problems or painful life experiences with young people⁽¹⁸⁾.

And also that Giles, Fingerman, Zhang and Drury point out that the results are positive when they involve attitudes associated with direct contact between young and the elderly people, such as: reduction of prejudice between generations, improvement of attitudes towards the elderly, minimizing tensions^(7,19-21). These same authors highlight the importance of examining intergenerational communication in conflict situations.

Thus, attention is drawn to the studies by Fletcher and Giles, who analyzed the communicational processes in relations between generations without family ties. These showed that the generational differences based historically and culturally can cause communication problems between the oldest and the youngest. However, activities carried out in the communities through projects, have brought knowledge and communication between young and elderly people closer together⁽²³⁻²⁴⁾.

According to Zhang, investigations into intergenerational communication should be expanded by establishing a line of research⁽²⁰⁾.

It becomes evident that the communication aspect is a generator factor of inclusion, because it allows the elderly and young people to be heard and considered⁽⁷⁾. Zuccherò's, Yamashita's, Thompson's, Augustin's and Drury's researches emphasized that the direct contact of young people with the elderly may be imperative in the decrease of prejudice between generations and demand positive attitudes among the elderly people^(8,14-15,17,21).

Therefore, current contemporary issues, such as technologies, can be a factor of difficulty for the elderly and, at the same time, an instrument of rapprochement between the young and the elderly, in projects that permeate intergenerational learning. Consequently, this is an instrument of prevention and preservation of local culture, because it establishes a link of approaching knowledge and communication between generations⁽²³⁾.

In this perspective, Giles and Augustin corroborate with Zhang and Deslandes when they report that distinguishing cultural differences and using them as an educational tool for interpersonal relations can be a path that allows a better generational dialogue, minimizing tensions and conflicting relations in the intergenerational dialogue^(7,17,20,25).

For this purpose, Giles, Khajavy and Choi⁽²⁴⁾ state that studying intergenerational communication based on cultural issues, proposing a cross-cultural model of knowledge can establish criteria of satisfaction and dialogue between the generations. Thus, it is necessary to ensure the exchange of knowledge and experiences between the generations through the Permanent Education process⁽²²⁾.

Communication processes use methodologies and practices capable of favoring the health promotion actions of individuals and communities in their different evolutionary periods^(16,26).

There is a need to highlight the importance of investing in the training of professionals from different academic areas, as well as in the production of studies that address the theme of intergenerational communication between young and old⁽⁷⁾. This justifies the relevance of the theme, according to the articles cited.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research pointed out the scientific evidence about the intergenerational communication between young and old people, although the scarcity of national and international research on the subject has been identified. The selected studies demonstrated the importance and effectiveness arising from the generational meetings and their communication processes, to address issues relevant to quality of life, health and society among young and elderly people.

In view of the growing phenomenon of aging of world populations, which increasingly drives to emerging needs for redirection in the permanent education process, the need to invest in generational programs with the aim of providing opportunities for meetings between young and old, in building intergenerational relationships in which there is respect, appreciation of the other, the exchange of knowledge and experience and overcoming prejudices. Therefore, spaces for this to occur must be optimized and built in partnerships between public and private sectors.

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