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REVISTA IBERO-AMERICANA DE SAÚDE E ENVELHECIMENTO
REVISTA IBERO-AMERICANA DE SALUD Y ENVEJECIMIENTO

EDITORIAL

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In troubled times such as those we are living through, the result of a pandemic that has worn us down and a war that is relentless, it becomes even more imperative to invest in high quality health care.

The World Health Organization (WHO) understands quality health care to be that which contemplates a high degree of professional excellence, with minimal risks and health outcomes for patients and efficient use of resources⁽¹⁾.

In the pursuit of basic principles of quality in health such as effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction, it is important to invest in a true integration of care, more people-centered and coordinated with each other.

For this integration to be effective, the different levels of care must be articulated and the intervention planned taking into account the skills and responsibilities of each one. An example of this are the multiple challenges that health professionals face, whether with children and young people or with adults, the elderly, and their caregivers, regardless of the context in which they develop their practice.

One of the greatest challenges is undoubtedly the empowerment of those who are targeted by health care. Empowerment, as a dynamic concept focused on solutions rather than problems, aims to help people develop skills in the face of certain circumstances⁽²⁾. We can then state that empowerment is closely linked to literacy.

Health literacy, according to the WHO involves the knowledge, motivation and skills to obtain, understand, evaluate and apply health information to make judgments and make decisions in everyday life about health care, disease prevention and health promotion to maintain or improve quality of life over the course of a lifetime⁽³⁾.

This definition glimpses beyond challenge an opportunity for all those who provide health care and do so in different pathways and moments of the life cycle. It is not by chance that literacy is mentioned in the health determinants, more precisely in the demographic, social and economic ones, identified as one of the priorities in the National Health Plan 2021-2030.

It is therefore essential that health professionals adopt the promotion of health literacy as one of their flagships and do so armed with knowledge and strategies for interaction and communication with people.

As a final message and resuming the theme of care integration point out that it goes hand in hand with health literacy, both with the goal of empowering people, improving their autonomy and critical thinking when it comes to choices related to their health⁽⁴⁾.

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