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**NURSING INTERVENTIONS TO PREVENT SOCIAL ISOLATION
AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN URBAN AREAS:
A SCOPING REVIEW PROTOCOL**

**INTERVENÇÕES DE ENFERMAGEM NA PREVENÇÃO DO
ISOLAMENTO SOCIAL DE IDOSOS EM ÁREAS URBANAS:
PROTOCOLO SCOPING REVIEW**

**INTERVENCIONES DE ENFERMERÍA EN LA PREVENCIÓN DEL
AISLAMIENTO SOCIAL EN ANCIANOS EN ÁREAS URBANAS:
PROTOCOLO DE REVISIÓN DE ALCANCE**

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Abstract

Introduction: Ageing in urban areas poses challenges to public health, as population density and physical barriers may contribute to the worsening of social isolation among older adults. In this context, nursing interventions play a key role in promoting active ageing and social participation in this population. **Objective:** To map the scientific evidence on nursing interventions for the prevention of social isolation among older adults in urban areas. **Methodology:** This scoping review protocol was developed in accordance with the methodology proposed by the Joanna Briggs Institute, using the PCC strategy (Population: Older Adults aged 60 years or over; Concept: Nursing Interventions for the prevention of Social Isolation; Context: Urban Areas). The review question is: “What are the nursing interventions for the prevention of social isolation among older adults in urban areas?” The protocol is registered in the Open Science Framework (DOI: 10.17605/OSF.IO/E3FHR). Study selection will be conducted in three stages: title and abstract screening, full-text assessment against eligibility criteria, and data extraction and mapping of the included studies. **Results:** This protocol is expected to systematise the existing evidence on nursing interventions aimed at preventing social isolation among older adults in urban areas, identifying and organising the main types of interventions and their contexts of application. It is also anticipated that the future scoping review will highlight intervention patterns and gaps in the literature, contributing to the strengthening of community nursing practice and the development of more targeted strategies to address this issue. **Final considerations:** It is expected that this review will contribute to guiding community nursing interventions that are more specifically targeted at preventing social isolation among older adults in urban settings, supporting clinical decision-making, the planning of community strategies, and future research in this area.

Keywords: Aged; Nursing Care; Social Isolation; Urban Population.

Resumo

Introdução: O envelhecimento em áreas urbanas coloca desafios à saúde pública, uma vez que a densidade populacional e as barreiras físicas podem contribuir para o agravamento do isolamento social nos idosos. Neste contexto, as intervenções de enfermagem assumem um papel fundamental na promoção do envelhecimento ativo e da participação social desta população. **Objetivo:** Mapear a evidência científica sobre as intervenções de enfermagem na prevenção do isolamento social de idosos em áreas urbanas. **Metodologia:** O presente protocolo de *scoping review* foi desenvolvido com base na metodologia proposta pelo Joanna Briggs Institute, recorrendo à estratégia PCC (População: idosos com idade igual ou superior a 60 anos; Conceito: intervenções de enfermagem para a prevenção do isolamento social; Contexto: áreas urbanas). A questão de revisão definida é: “Quais as intervenções de enfermagem para a prevenção do isolamento social de idosos em áreas urbanas?”. O protocolo está registado no *Open Science Framework* (DOI: 10.17605/OSF.IO/E3FHR). A seleção dos estudos será realizada em três etapas: triagem de títulos e resumos, avaliação do texto completo para verificação dos critérios de elegibilidade e, posteriormente, extração e mapeamento dos dados dos estudos incluídos. **Resultados:** Prevê-se que este protocolo permita sistematizar a evidência existente sobre intervenções de enfermagem dirigidas à prevenção do isolamento social em idosos em áreas urbanas, identificando e organizando as principais tipologias de intervenção e os contextos de aplicação. Espera-se ainda que a futura *scoping review* permita evidenciar padrões de intervenção e lacunas na literatura, contribuindo para o reforço da prática de enfermagem comunitária e para o desenvolvimento de estratégias mais direcionadas a esta problemática. **Considerações finais:** Espera-se que esta revisão contribua para orientar intervenções de enfermagem comunitária mais direcionadas à prevenção do isolamento social de idosos em contexto urbano, apoiando a tomada de decisão clínica, o planeamento de estratégias comunitárias e futuras investigações nesta área.

Palavras-chave: Área Urbana; Enfermagem; Idoso; Isolamento Social.

Resumen

Introducción: El envejecimiento en áreas urbanas plantea desafíos para la salud pública, ya que la densidad poblacional y las barreras físicas pueden contribuir al agravamiento del aislamiento social en ancianos. En este contexto, las intervenciones de enfermería desempeñan un papel fundamental en la promoción del envejecimiento activo y la participación social de esta población. **Objetivo:** Mapear la evidencia científica sobre las intervenciones de enfermería para la prevención del aislamiento social de ancianos en áreas urbanas. **Metodología:** Este protocolo de *scoping review* se ha desarrollado de acuerdo con la metodología propuesta por el Joanna Briggs Institute, utilizando la estrategia PCC (Población: Ancianos de 60 años o más; Concepto: Intervenciones de Enfermería para la prevención del Aislamiento Social; Contexto: Áreas Urbanas). La pregunta de revisión es: “¿Qué intervenciones de enfermería se utilizan para la prevención del aislamiento social en ancianos en áreas urbanas?”. El protocolo está registrado en el *Open Science Framework* (DOI: 10.17605/OSF.IO/E3FHR). La selección de estudios se realizará en tres etapas: cribado de títulos y resúmenes, evaluación del texto completo según los criterios de elegibilidad y, posteriormente, extracción y mapeo de los datos de los estudios incluidos. **Resultados:** Se espera que este protocolo permita sistematizar la evidencia existente sobre intervenciones de enfermería dirigidas a la prevención del aislamiento social en ancianos en áreas urbanas, identificando y organizando los principales tipos de intervenciones y sus contextos de aplicación. Asimismo, se prevé que la futura *scoping review* permita evidenciar patrones de intervención y lagunas en la literatura, contribuyendo al fortalecimiento de la práctica de enfermería comunitaria y al desarrollo de estrategias más dirigidas a esta problemática. **Consideraciones finales:** Se espera que esta revisión contribuya a orientar intervenciones de enfermería comunitaria más dirigidas a la prevención del aislamiento social de las personas mayores en contextos urbanos, apoyando la toma de decisiones clínicas, la planificación de estrategias comunitarias y futuras investigaciones en esta área.

Descriptores: Aislamiento Social; Anciano; Área Urbana; Enfermería.

Introduction

Population aging constitutes one of the major public health challenges of the 21st century, and it is estimated that the global population aged 60 years and over—defined by the World Health Organization as older adults—will double by 2050⁽¹⁾. Simultaneously, social isolation has become particularly relevant among older adults, affecting between 20% and 34% of this population and being associated with negative consequences for physical and mental health, including an increased risk of frailty, functional decline, dementia, and premature mortality^(1–3).

Understanding this phenomenon requires a clear distinction between social isolation—an objective condition characterized by a lack of interpersonal ties, low frequency of interactions, and a limited social network—and loneliness, which refers to the subjective and distressing experience of a discrepancy between desired and actual relationships^(1,3,4). This distinction is essential for nursing intervention, as it allows interventions to focus on measurable indicators of social connectedness⁽⁴⁾.

The present study focuses specifically on the urban context, as urban areas present characteristics that may significantly influence the social participation and integration of older adults. Despite high population density, factors such as architectural barriers, insecurity, reduced mobility, fragmentation of social support networks, and changes in community dynamics may contribute to worsening social isolation and hinder the community integration of older adults^(3,5,6). Therefore, understanding the interventions implemented in urban settings is relevant to addressing the specific needs of this context.

Nursing, particularly within the field of community and public health nursing (CPHN), plays an important role in preventing social isolation through the promotion of active aging, strengthening of social support networks, and coordination with community resources^(7–10). Nursing interventions may include individual and group strategies aimed at empowering older adults, promoting social participation, and identifying situations of vulnerability at an early stage.

This study will adopt Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory as its theoretical framework, considering that social interaction and community participation may influence older adults' self-care capacity and well-being. Within this model, nursing intervenes when limitations exist in an individual's ability to meet self-care needs, promoting autonomy, social participation, and well-being⁽¹¹⁾. Thus, this theory provides conceptual support for understanding nursing interventions aimed at preventing social isolation among older adults.

Although increasing attention has been given to social isolation among older adults, scientific evidence regarding nursing interventions specifically directed toward preventing this phenomenon among residents of urban areas remains dispersed and insufficiently systematized. The preliminary search conducted across different databases and the Open Science Framework did not identify published or ongoing protocols or scoping reviews specifically synthesizing evidence on this topic.

Therefore, it is relevant to conduct a scoping review to map the available scientific evidence on nursing interventions for the prevention of social isolation among older adults living in urban areas, identifying the types of interventions implemented, their contexts of application, and existing gaps in the literature.

Objective

To map the scientific evidence regarding nursing interventions for the prevention of social isolation among older adults living in urban areas. The aim is to identify the types of interventions implemented, their main outcomes, and gaps in knowledge, contributing to the support of CPHN clinical practice in promoting active and healthy aging.

Methodology

This scoping review protocol will be conducted following the methodology proposed by the JBI for evidence mapping reviews. This method makes it possible to identify the extent of available literature, map key concepts, and identify knowledge gaps regarding nursing interventions for the prevention of social isolation among older adults in urban areas⁽¹²⁾.

The structure of this scoping review consists of five consecutive main stages, adapted to the purposes of the study: (1) Research question development; (2) Study identification; (3) Study selection; (4) Data extraction; and (5) Analysis and presentation of results⁽¹³⁾.

Research question

To develop the research question, the Population, Concept, and Context (PCC) strategy for scoping reviews, recommended by the JBI, was used⁽¹²⁾. The following elements were defined: P (Population): Older adults aged 60 years and over; C (Concept): Nursing interventions for the prevention of social isolation; C (Context): Urban areas. Based on these definitions, the guiding question was established: What are the nursing interventions for the prevention of social isolation among older adults living in urban areas?

Study identification

The literature search was conducted between January and March 2026. To ensure suitability across different databases and platforms, the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS — *Descritores em Ciências da Saúde*) were used for Portuguese-language databases: “Área Urbana”, “Enfermagem”, “Idoso”, and “Isolamento Social”. For English-language databases, the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) descriptors used were: Aged, Nursing Care, Urban Population, and Social Isolation.

Due to the specific nature of the topic, natural language terms will also be included, namely: “Elderly”, “Old Adults”, “Aged 60+”, “Nurs*”, “Nurse”, “Nurses”, “Nursing”, “Nursing Intervention”, “Com-

munity Nursing”, “Urban Area”, “Urban Environment”, “City Population”, and “Metropolitan Area”.

The search strategy will be carried out in two stages. In the first stage, an initial search will be conducted to identify keywords and indexing terms relevant to the topic under study.

In the second stage, a comprehensive search will be conducted using validated descriptors (DeCS/MeSH) and the Boolean operators AND and OR (Table 1) in the MEDLINE Complete and CINAHL Complete databases (via EBSCOhost), PubMed, and the Cochrane Library, as well as RCAAP for gray literature searches.

After searching the different databases, all identified records will be exported to a bibliographic management software program (e.g., Mendeley), where duplicate records will be removed prior to the study selection process.

Table 1: Search strategy to be used in the MEDLINE database (via EBSCO).

Database	Search strategy
MEDLINE (via EBSCO)	((MH “Aged+” OR TI “elderly” OR AB “elderly” OR TI “older adults” OR AB “older adults”) AND (MH “Social Isolation+” OR TI “social isolation” OR AB “social isolation”) AND (MH “Nursing Care+” OR MH “Nursing Interventions+” OR MH “Community Health Nursing+” OR TI “nurs*” OR AB “nurs”) AND (MH “Urban Population+” OR TI “urban” OR AB “urban”))

Study selection

Study selection will be carried out by two independent reviewers, RA and SR, initially through the screening of titles and abstracts, followed by full-text assessment of selected studies. In cases of disagreement, a third reviewer, RM, will be consulted. The selection process will be documented using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) flow diagram⁽¹⁴⁾.

Studies addressing individual or group nursing interventions aimed at preventing social isolation among older adults living in urban areas will be included. With regard to primary studies, quantitative studies will be considered, including randomized clinical trials, quasi-experimental studies, cohort studies, case-control studies, and cross-sectional studies,

as well as qualitative studies, such as phenomenological studies and studies based on interviews or focus groups, in addition to mixed-methods studies. Literature reviews, including systematic reviews, narrative reviews, and scoping reviews, will also be included, as well as gray literature, including technical reports, dissertations and academic theses, institutional documents, guidelines, and relevant community health programs. Publications in Portuguese, English, and Spanish will be considered. No time restriction will be established for study inclusion, as the aim is to comprehensively map the available evidence on the topic as thoroughly as possible.

To ensure consistency with the phenomenon under study, rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. Inclusion criteria were defined according to the PCC mnemonic: Population: Studies including individuals aged 60 years and over; Concept: Studies addressing nursing interventions focused on the prevention of social isolation; Context: Studies conducted in urban areas or urban centers.

Study selection will also be guided by exclusion criteria based on the need to ensure the homogeneity of the phenomenon under study. Institutionalized older adults living in Care Homes for Elderly People (*Estruturas Residenciais para Pessoas Idosas*) will be excluded, as the controlled environment and support dynamics in these institutions differ structurally from the isolation experienced in home and urban settings. Older adults residing in rural settings will also be excluded.

Data extraction and analysis plan

Data extraction

Data from the included studies will be extracted by two reviewers, RA and SR, using an instrument specifically developed for this study, with the aim of ensuring rigorous systematization and comparability of the mapped evidence (Table 2). This process will make it possible to organize information in a structured manner, facilitating the identification of patterns in nursing interventions and the detection of gaps in current knowledge. The instrument focuses on variables that allow characterization of both the methodological profile of the studies and the nature of the nursing interventions implemented in the urban context.

Before final data extraction, the instrument will undergo pilot testing using a small number of selected studies to verify the clarity, adequacy, and applicability of the defined categories. Whenever necessary, adjustments may be made to the instrument throughout the review process, ensuring greater methodological rigor and alignment with the objectives of the scoping review.

Table 2: Data extraction instrument for the selected studies.

Data extraction instrument											
Reviewer responsible for data extraction									Extraction date		
Study 1											
Title	Author(s)	Year	Country	Type of source	Study method	Sample size	Objectives	Nursing interventions	Results/conclusions	Gaps identified	Suggestions for future research

Analysis and presentation of results

The results will be presented through a narrative synthesis, complemented by tables and summary charts that allow the identified evidence to be mapped in a clear and structured manner, addressing the objective of the review.

The final stage of this scoping review consists of analysis and presentation of results and will be guided by the JBI methodological guidelines⁽¹⁴⁾. A descriptive analysis of the methodological characteristics of included studies will be conducted, including year of publication, country of origin, methodological design, and study setting.

The identified nursing interventions will be organized through thematic categorization, making it possible to group the different types of interventions, implemented strategies, contexts of application, and the main reported outcomes. The analysis will also seek to identify patterns in the interventions described, as well as gaps and priority areas for future research on the prevention of social isolation among older adults living in urban areas.

The presentation of results will be structured using the PRISMA-ScR flow diagram to demonstrate the study selection and exclusion process, as well as summary tables that systematize the main characteristics and conclusions of included studies, allowing for a structured and integrated mapping of the current scientific production on the topic⁽¹⁴⁾.

This review is expected to contribute to the systematization of scientific evidence regarding nursing interventions for the prevention of social isolation among older adults living in urban areas, enabling the identification of intervention types, contexts of application, and priority areas for future research. The findings may support CPHN practice by contributing to the development of more targeted strategies for promoting social participation, community integration, and healthy aging.

It is also expected that this review will identify gaps in the scientific literature, particularly regarding the diversity of implemented interventions, the urban contexts studied, and the outcomes reported. Additionally, challenges related to the conceptual

heterogeneity of social isolation and the methodological variability of the included studies may emerge.

As potential limitations of this review, the exclusive inclusion of studies published in Portuguese, English, and Spanish should be highlighted, as this may limit the identification of relevant evidence published in other languages. Furthermore, the exclusion of rural settings and institutionalized older adults represents a methodological decision adopted to ensure greater specificity regarding the phenomenon under study in the urban context.

Final considerations

This scoping review protocol may contribute to the development of a structured review of scientific evidence regarding nursing interventions aimed at preventing social isolation among older adults living in urban areas. The future review is expected to identify intervention types, contexts of application, reported outcomes, and gaps in the literature, thereby strengthening the evidence base for CPHN practice.

Additionally, the findings may support the planning of community strategies better tailored to the needs of older adults in urban settings, contributing to health-related decision-making, the development of more targeted interventions, and the definition of future lines of research in this area.

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SR: Conception and design of the research.
 Data collection. Analysis and interpretation of
 data. Writing of the manuscript. Critical review
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RA: Conception and design of the research.
 Data collection. Analysis and interpretation of
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RM: Conception and design of the research.
 Analysis and interpretation of data. Writing of
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SV: Conception and design of the research.
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