



Retirement Planning of college professors: an integrative review

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Abstract

Objective: to analyze the evidence available in the literature related to the retirement planning of college professors. **Method:** an integrative review carried out in the LILACS, Web of Science, PSYCNET, PubMed databases, as well as manual search using the keywords “retirement” and “professor”. Thirteen studies were retrieved and analyzed by the evidence hierarchy in the first half of 2019. **Results:** the studies address complex issues and are related to personal health, family ties, financial aspects, and organizational and institutional issues. Investing in institutional policies for effective retirement planning stood out, considering labor relations, dissatisfaction, and acknowledgment of the teaching and research work, as well as paying attention to feelings of emotional exhaustion, fatigue, or distress resulting from work. **Conclusion:** retirement is a subjective event. The decision to retire is related to the implicit planning to remain active either in the workplace or in the post-retirement period. Therefore, preparing to leave the work environment can promote and favor a flexible and progressive transition with quality and health.

Keywords: Retirement.
Faculty. Higher Education
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INTRODUCTION

Retirement is part of every worker's life and can be considered a liberating or recluding event as it brings feelings of uncertainty towards withdrawal from the labor world. This process may start up to fifteen years before the final retirement situation, and due to being a long period, it is divided into pre and post-retirement^{1,2}.

Pre-retirement corresponds to perceptions, attitudes, decision making, and planning for the near future^{1,2}. In this period, feelings of (in)decision, yearnings, and desires about the expectation of what will be experienced stand out associated with beliefs and perceptions that influence the effective withdrawal from the work environment³.

The post-retirement period is understood as a time of satisfaction and adaptation to this new life^{1,2}. The well-being and achievements of retiring result from the active effort that the worker made throughout the pre-retirement process. However, feelings of frustration, physical and emotional instability, illness, and feelings of ambivalence may occur⁴⁻⁶, even leading to the loss of the meaning of life and manifestation of suicidal behavior⁷.

In this imminent retirement scenario, preparation becomes relevant for the worker to be aware of personal needs and behavioral changes, believing in their ability to influence the model adopted of moving from work to retirement^{8,9}. In this perspective, retirement planning of college professors stands out and needs to be contextualized and (re) evaluated according to the particularities that the profession presents⁹⁻¹¹.

In the work context, teaching involves intellectual knowledge and maturity regarding the years of experience in teaching, research, and extension, in addition to achieving the fullness of immaterial theoretical production¹². Analyzing the subjectivities and singularities resulting from the profession, the disruption from labor to retirement can bring feelings of exclusion, loss of the main sources of appreciation and identity of these workers⁸⁻¹⁰, as well as it can be painful for the individual¹¹.

Despite the scientific literature gradually addressing¹⁻⁶ the theme of retirement, studies are still incipient and focus on describing the feelings and frustrations of workers regarding this event. Considering the imminent retirement, the need to formulate strategies, plans, and preparation policies to promote the health of this professor is reaffirmed, thus emphasizing the relevance of the role of nurses in retirement guidance and planning¹³.

Based on questions like "how to recognize the motivation of professors to work for longer than the estimated retirement time?; what is the contribution to quality in increasing life expectancy and (re)evaluating the context of professor shortages in several countries?; how do Higher Education Institutions prepare their teaching staff for this event?", the nurse can understand how the worker experiences this phenomenon, and thus have the necessary interactions to establish an active co-participation relationship with the development of goals to facilitate a healthy termination of work¹³.

Besides, it is relevant for society to have insights on the causes and motivations of retirement among college professors and the mitigating factors of a withdrawal process without effective preparation. Therefore, the objective of the present study is to analyze the evidence available in the literature related to the retirement planning of college professors.

METHOD

It is an integrative review developed in six stages: definition of the research question based on the problem, literature search, application of the inclusion criteria, evaluation of studies, data analysis, and synthesis of knowledge with the presentation of the review¹⁴. The recommendations of the guide Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) were followed to assist in the writing of the study¹⁵.

The search was carried out in June and July 2019 based on the guiding question *what evidence is available in the literature related to the retirement planning of college professors?* To develop this question, the PICo

strategy¹⁵ was used where the letter P corresponds to the population (professors), I is interest (preparation for retirement), and Co is the context (Higher Education Institutions).

To search for the studies, the LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences), Web of Science, PsycNet, PubMed databases were selected, as well as manual search in the Google Scholar Electronic Resource. The controlled descriptors of Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and Health Sciences Descriptors (DECS) “retirement”, “professor”, and “college professor” were used combined with the boolean operators *AND* and *OR*, according to the search strategy systematized in Table 1.

The inclusion criteria were defined as being a primary paper addressing aspects related to retirement planning of professors, in addition to being available *online* in full with free open access, published in Portuguese, English, and Spanish, without delimiting the time frame. When the full

paper was not available in the database, the search strategies were exhausted by contacting the authors and the institutions of origin of the papers. Papers that did not answer the research question were excluded, and duplicates were considered only once.

Data were extracted by two authors of the review in a double independent way, and a third author was invited to solve and minimize possible errors of interpretation, search, evaluation, and analysis of the papers given the doubts that may arise from the review process. The nomenclatures related to the type of study indicated by the authors were maintained.

From that, 178 studies were retrieved. After reading the title and abstract, 59 publications were excluded because they did not answer the research question. Subsequently, the articles were read in full and the selection criteria were applied, with 106 publications being excluded and resulting in 13 primary studies for the *corpus* of this integrative review, as shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Search strategies for recovering productions.

Search	Strategy
LILACS	"RETIREMENT" [Words] AND ("COLLEGE PROFESSOR") OR "PROFESSOR"
Web of Science	SUBJECT: (Retirement) AND TOPIC: (teacher) AND TOPIC: (university)
PSYCNET	Retirement AND Any Field: teacher AND Any Field: university
PubMed	(faculty [Title_Abstract] OR college professors_[Title_Abstract])
Manual search at Google Scholar	"Retirement Planning of professors"

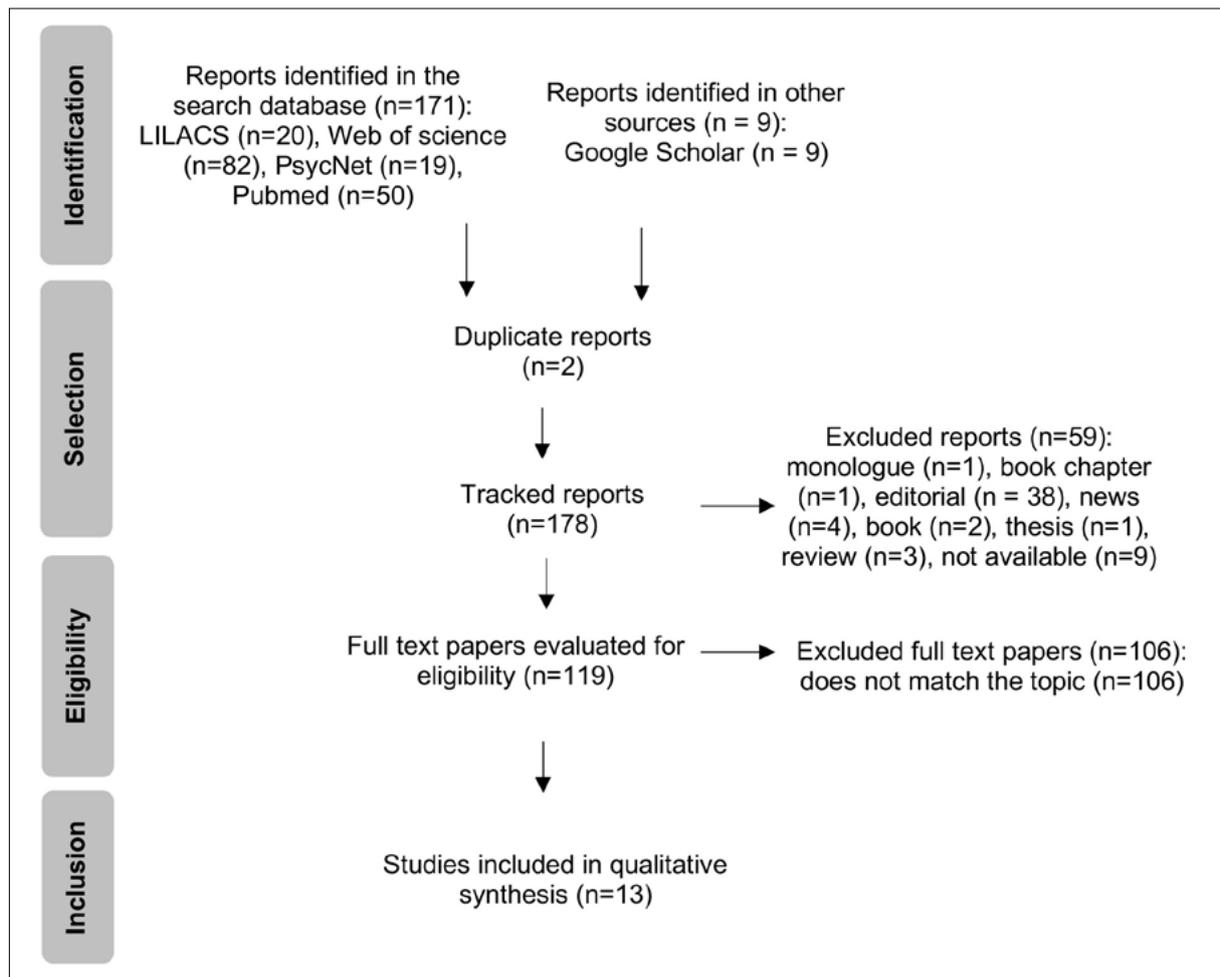


Figure 1. Flowchart developed for the study, adaptation of PRISMA.

To extract the information from the studies during the analysis phase, a summary table was created with the characteristics of the primary studies included, namely: title of the article, author(s), year of publication, journal, objective(s), type of study, main results, and conclusions. It should be noted that the precepts of Law No. 9,610/1998 regulating copyright¹⁶ were respected.

Each study was classified according to the level of evidence. The method used to classify the strength of evidence from primary studies corresponds to the hierarchy of evidence associated with strength levels: Intervention/Treatment or Diagnosis/Diagnostic test; Prognostic/Prediction, and Meaning. The study identified only clinical questions about Meaning, whose strength of evidence is classified into five

levels: I) Meta-synthesis of qualitative studies, II) A qualitative study, III) Synthesis of descriptive studies, IV) Only a descriptive study, and V) Expert opinion¹⁷.

RESULTS

Regarding the level of evidence of the clinical question about Meaning, the study's findings indicate that the primary papers are 38.4% predominant at level II¹⁸⁻²², 7.7% at level III²³, and 53.8% at level IV²⁴⁻³⁰. Table 2 systematizes the selection of the studies included and emphasizes the reference and year of publication, objectives, main results, evidence, and level of evidence of the clinical question about Meaning.

Table 2. Description of the studies selected in the integrative review

Reference/ Year	Objectives	Results	Evidence	Level of evidence
Dorfman ¹⁸ 1984	To investigate reactions to the retirement of professors from liberal arts colleges and a comprehensive university	Specific assistance to professors during this period; support in the continuity of labor work; proposals for gradual retirement	Personal well-being; Organizational and institutional policies	II
Ricardo et. al. ¹⁹ 1999	To promote rethinking about this phase of life and prepare for the retirement process	Institutional retirement planning policies; support in the continuity of labor work; retirement programs; propositions for gradual retirement	Personal well-being; Organizational and institutional policies	
Debetir ²⁰ 2011	To evaluate the contribution of the retirement guidance program developed at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina for a positive experience in this phase of life	Teachers' emotions and feelings; motivation; reflection; changes like positive attitude	Personal well-being	
Bressan et. al. ²¹ 2013	Get to know the perceptions of federal civil servants about well-being in retirement and how they were preparing for this transition	Well-being of the retiree; family role in preparing for retirement	Personal well-being; Family ties	
Machado, Lucas ²² 2017	Unveiling the influence of work and family ties on the decision to retire	Preparation as a positive event for those with stable health conditions; cultural and leisure activities; family participation	Personal well-being; Family ties	
Villardón-Gallego, Moro, Atxurra ²³ 2017	To analyze the conditions, emotions, and feelings associated with the moment of retirement of the university faculty	Labor relations within the institution; dissatisfaction with the workload and performance of administrative functions; lack of acknowledgment such as lack of prestige; absence of a management plan of the institution human resources	Personal well-being; Organizational and institutional policies	III

to be continued

Continuation of Chart 2

Reference/ Year	Objectives	Results	Evidence	Level of evidence
Dorfman ²⁴ 1980	To analyze the faculty knowledge regarding the retirement system	Financial losses; the need for financial planning	Financial aspect; Organizational and institutional policies	IV
Jones ²⁵ 1992	To know retirement benefit programs for medicine professors and the retirement incentive programs being used	Need to implement retirement programs; favorable financial conditions	Financial aspect; Organizational and institutional policies	
Ghent, Allen, Clark ²⁶ 2001	Provide preliminary results of the effects of starting a phased retirement program on faculty retirement decisions	Plans and strategies for implementing the retirement planning; programs to reduce workloads; influence on work performance; salary increases	Personal well-being; Financial aspect; Organizational and institutional policies	
Allen, Clark, Ghent ²⁷ 2003	To examine the experience of the phased retirement system for professors in the system of the University of North Carolina	Participation in retirement programs; increase in work performance; financial incentives	Personal well-being; Financial aspect; Organizational and institutional policies	
Latif, Alkhateeb ²⁸ 2012	To describe the retirement plans and perceptions of faculty members and examine the factors, perception, or conditions that may influence the retirement decision	Family participation in preparing for retirement; reduced distress in the teaching profession; transition with quality of life	Personal well-being; Family ties	
Dodds, Cruz, Israel ²⁹ 2013	To identify common perceptions and ideas about preparing and planning for retirement in academic ophthalmology departments	Emotional exhaustion; lack of incentive; financial insecurity; lack of family income generation; the need for family action	Personal well-being; Family ties; Financial aspect; Organizational and institutional policies	
Van Droogenbroec, Spruyt ³⁰ 2014	To examine the determinants of early retirement among senior working and retired professors aged 45 to 65 in Flanders, Belgium	Feelings of emotional exhaustion, fatigue, or distress; high workload; dissatisfaction with activities not related to teaching	Personal well-being; Organizational and institutional policies	

These studies were published in 1980²⁴, 1984¹⁸, 1992²⁵, 1999¹⁹, 2001²⁶, 2003²⁷, 2011²⁰, 2012²⁸, 2013^{21,29}, 2014³⁰, 2017^{22,23}. Regarding the country of origin, it was shown that 46.1% of the studies came from the United States of America (USA)^{18,24-27,29}, 30.8% were from Brazil¹⁹⁻²², besides one survey in Belgium³⁰, one in Spain²³, and one covering Canada and the United Kingdom²⁸.

Regarding the participants, 53.8% of the studies involved all professors of the educational institution^{18,22-24,26,27,29}, 15.4% corresponded to the faculty of the Medicine course^{25,29} and technical-administrative staff^{20,21}, 7.8% of the studies are part

of the faculty of the Pharmacy course²⁸ and the senior professors³⁰. The quantitative methodological design was adopted in 53.8% of the productions^{23-27,29,30}, the qualitative one in 38.4%¹⁸⁻²², and one study carried out both quantitative and qualitative approaches²⁸. Among the quantitative studies, one was characterized as cross-sectional²⁹; the remaining 46.1% were not specified. In the qualitative studies, one case study¹⁸, one exploratory study²⁰, and one descriptive study²² were carried out, and two studies^{19,21} did not specify the approach.

The journals chosen by the authors to publish the research were the *Research in Higher Education*^{18,24},

Research on Aging^{26,30}, *Revista Brasileira de Geriatria e Gerontologia*^{21,22}; the others were the *Academic Medicine*²⁵; *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*²⁸; *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*²⁷; *Revista InterAÇÃO*¹⁹; *Ophthalmology*²⁹; *ReCaPe – Revista de Carreiras e Pessoas*²⁰, and *Revista Eletrônica Interuniversitária de Formação de Professores*²³.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study indicate that the scientific production on retirement was gradually developed from the 1980s. Although aspects involving all professors of an institution are mostly discussed, the studies present specific discussions on the fields of knowledge of Medicine and Pharmacy, and for Technical-Administrative and Senior professors. Despite being carried out based on quantitative designs, the results of the research contemplated the complex and subjective issues surrounding retirement and were published in journals addressing the process of human aging.

Levels of evidence of the clinical question about Meaning resulting from qualitative studies were found¹⁸⁻²² and classified as level II. They infer the need for institutional policies for more effective retirement planning¹⁹ with specific assistance for professors during this phase, a greater amount of information about retirement, support in the continuity of work, and proposals for gradual retirement^{18,19}.

Retirement planning is developed as a positive event for those professors who have stable health conditions and more involved in cultural and leisure activities, and mainly with time to enjoy the family life^{22,31}, which accentuates the feeling of “retiree’s well-being” when associated with the family’s participation emphasizing the need to involve it in the preparation of these university employees^{21,22}.

Considered a moment of transition, retirement planning involves raising awareness, instrumentalization, and strategies to (re)signify that moment. The results show the importance of developing institutional programs to offer possibilities for the promotion of quality of life and personal growth instead of something immediate¹⁹. Such actions can contribute to the expression

of emotions and feelings of professors in the pre-retirement phase as a motivator for reflection and changes to positive attitudes²⁰.

Level III evidence derived from the synthesis of the descriptive studies²³ shows that labor relations within the institution, dissatisfaction with the workload related to administrative functions, lack of acknowledgment of the teaching and research work for years, and the lack of prestige directly influence retirement planning²³.

Thus, we can infer the relevance of propositions for the implementation of a human resources management plan for institutions to take advantage of the high potential of professors who are often devalued with the effective removal from the work environment²³. The experiences of the so-called program “*Emeritus colleges*” developed in the USA corroborates these propositions since flexible activities were implemented in a gradual way to offer a continuous relationship to research professors during the retirement planning to enable the reduction of workloads, dissatisfactions, and frustrations that could result from this process^{23,32}.

Regardless of the proposals chosen by the Educational Institutions to manage this pre-retirement phase for their workers, they must be committed to supporting professors before the changes resulting from retirement to favor a flexible and progressive transition. Therefore, the preparatory strategies for retirement must meet the needs of professors to reduce the possibility of a traumatic personal process affecting students, and that can therefore benefit the university by maintaining quality in teaching²³.

Worker participation in a retirement planning program aimed at interventions consistent with the needs of workers is a tool for achieving positive results, therefore improvements in expectations and knowledge about this process of retiring¹³.

In this sense, the important role of nurses in stimulating and guiding this preparation program stands out through the help in setting goals and managing feelings in the care of physical, emotional, and cognitive health with insertion in social activities, financial planning, and interpersonal relations¹³.

Level IV evidence resulting from descriptive studies²⁴⁻³⁰ indicates that retirement involves feelings of emotional exhaustion, fatigue, or distress resulting from workloads^{29,30}. They result from the possible loss of incentive to work, insecurity of financial status, (in)existence of a partner to generate family income, as well as aspects involving the work mood and the lack of pressure to retire.^{29,33}

These aspects mainly affect the younger professors in the pre-retirement phase, in contrast to the older ones who seek to postpone the moment of retirement to remain active²⁹. The institutional support which is essential to neutralize any discomfort that may be caused in the pre-retirement phase³⁴ influences the decisions on the preparation of the faculty.

The anxieties and doubts can be alleviated by inserting the family in the pre-retirement phase^{21,28,29,32}. Furthermore, it implies reflecting on how Higher Education Institutions are organized, and what are the prerogatives of plans and strategies for implementing retirement planning offered to the faculty to favor the moment of transition from work to retirement²⁵⁻²⁷.

The experience of the so-called program “*Emeritus colleges*” of the Institutions that are part of the study carried out in the USA provides an ongoing relationship with the research professors by offering flexible activities during the retirement planning in a gradual manner, thus enabling the reduction of workloads^{23,35} and discussions about dissatisfaction with activities not related to teaching (administrative functions) to propose and discuss solutions^{23,30}.

These are also evidenced in institutions in North Carolina, USA, where the phased retirement program was provided and allowed older professors to work part-time and receive full retirement benefits in the same way²³. These findings indicate that there is a considerable relationship between the professor who adheres to the phased retirement and the work performance which is also influenced by salary increases^{26,27}.

It is possible to perceive a contemporary model related to the health of this old person who is still at work, the need to have associated health promotion actions, prevention of preventable diseases, early care,

rehabilitation of injuries, and education. This means a comprehensive care line based on the needs of the workers, with the healthcare professional being the protagonist and being able to mediate in care actions and attitudes³⁶.

Evidence suggests that reacting to the distress on the teaching career seems essential to avoid an abrupt withdrawal from the context of full-time work and to understand the desirable active transition with quality of everyday work^{26,28}. Despite the culture of immediatism and lack of preparation observed, it can result in a reduction in the quality of transition from work to retirement and a decrease in personal progression in the post-retirement phase in the daily life of the worker.

Transition to retirement directly influences having a job after retirement (bridge employment), in addition to the postponement of retirement or permanence in the institution³⁷. Information related to retirement planning constantly emphasizes the relevance of the financial planning that should be carried out at the beginning of the teaching career not to interfere in the retirement of the worker²⁴.

It appears that each worker experiences the interruption of work activities in different ways. The break from work can trigger anxiety, identity crises, ambivalent and confused feelings, mood swings, and psychosomatic disorders. Therefore, retirement planning programs tend to assist in this process, provided the worker integrates it and is prepared while still working. Retirement planning programs can be configured as a reference for workers who are close to retirement, helping to develop life projects after work³⁸.

In this sense, retirement planning programs were considered essential to expand the level of understanding of the faculty about financial benefits and losses since there may be doubts about the individual retirement system and/or about social security^{24,25}. However, participation in retirement planning programs is not a condition to an active preparation but contributes as a motivating axis for reflections and initial attitudinal changes which are considered by the studies' evidence as positive and trigger for well-being²⁷⁻²⁹.

To effectively contemplate the transition to retirement, the responsibility of competent bodies for the health of the worker is evident, as well as the health professionals who are essential to recognize the aspects that are directly related to the retirement planning of professors. In this context, the nurse and the nursing staff stand out to allow promoting actions and planning strategies to meet the interests of professors in the pre-retirement period, as well as the interests of the institution associated with keeping this worker in the institution and the (re) organization of retirement planning programs³⁹.

As a limitation of the present study, we point out the absence of indexing in the bases of some journals addressing the theme, and controlled descriptors in publications corresponding to those selected for this review. It is inferred that including other databases and controlled descriptors may cover a greater amount of publications, besides considering the resumption of evidence on the retirement planning of studies published in the scientific community. Lastly, it is considered that studies like this can provide subsidies for institutions to implement and adjust their retirement planning systems for their faculty.

CONCLUSION

The evidence in the present study shows that retirement is considered an event of singular concepts and subjective order. Regardless of the reasons associated with the decision to retire, implicit planning consists of the will to remain active, whether in the workplace or after retirement. However, said preparatory actions become a source of stress, anguish, and concerns of an identity-cultural, family,

social, financial, and institutional-organizational order when making the transition from the work context to an often uncertain future.

The study allowed us to know the nuances involved in the retirement planning for college professors emerging from the experiences of the national and foreign scenario disseminated in the scientific community. This knowledge can provide subsidies to professors and institutions in the decision-making process when managing the pre-retirement process.

It is understood that retirement planning can minimize stress and generate feelings of confidence about the years after retirement. We can infer the need to carry out studies to implement and evaluate the use of different strategies such as integrated programs adapted to each Educational Institution and corresponding to the needs of their professors.

Also, we believe that it is possible to experience this transition effectively and healthily as long as everyone involved resignifies their responsibility in this scenario of the professor's retirement. Thus, it is suggested that the health legislation for workers and old people is more effective; that Educational Institutions implement and revise their retirement planning program; that health professionals - specifically nurses - are more engaged in ensuring the care of these workers by subsidizing care in the principles of geriatrics and gerontology; and last but not least, that professors understand the relevance of preparing for withdrawal from work activities in the Educational Institution and that it can impact their quality of life.

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