

Health education: a field of action and clinical research in nursing

The complexity of being human, and the actual and potential problems that modify the health-disease continuum in the population which frequents health services, imposes new challenges to professionals involved in clinical practice⁽¹⁾. Each day human beings need more accurate and complex interventions because of their multidimensionality; a single health profession can not meet all the demands of the clients, which highlights the need to promote an interdisciplinary approach in the health care delivery system⁽¹⁾.

Education and health are two areas of action in which professionals at any level of health care can contribute to support the progress of human development. Educational practices in this area should be directed to the development of individual and collective capabilities in order to improve the quality of life and health, and to improve self-management, especially when related to chronic degenerative diseases⁽²⁾.

The World Health Organization (OMS) suggests that health care education can be addressed through workshops and training for patients and families. Educational materials that supplement these guidelines can be made available for patients and families with access to information and self-management support outside the health facility, using telephone or Internet. Computer resources for the preparation of materials for individualized self-management can also be used⁽²⁾.

Thus, this theme has been the focus of national and international research, especially studies related to chronic diseases, such as the health education for lifestyle modification in coronary heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Research has demonstrated excellence in work groups that conduct health education and promote an interdisciplinary-patient-family relationship, resulting in positive outcomes in effectively coping with chronic diseases, and the empowerment of self-care. Many interdisciplinary teams are involved in developing health education activities for clients and their families that foster independence and participation in all of the care they receive.

The interdisciplinary approach recognizes the growth of health sciences, and the natural consequence of this is acceptance that the solitary perspective of a singular discipline is no longer viable. An interdisciplinary perspective brings the ability to work together to find shared solutions to problems experienced by people and institutions⁽³⁾. The direct and indirect care provided to the patient must be reflected in the light of proposals for collective health and constructivist education.

Based on research found in major electronic databases, it is evident that some academic institutions in Brazil have demonstrated engagement with constructing this area of nursing knowledge. These institutions have created outpatient services to promote the longitudinal support for patients and families in order to promote guidelines for coping with disease and making therapeutic changes in lifestyle.

The Paulista School of Nursing, Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP) is among those institutions exemplifying the role of outpatient health education. Its clinic opened at the beginning of 2010, with a physical space for nursing care performed by nurses in various clinical areas with the aim of guiding and monitoring the therapeutic management of patients and families of the Hospital São Paulo, UNIFESP university hospital.

At this time, the clinic functions with the help of volunteer professionals and researchers who conduct the consultations and provide care and education. Thus, the activities begin upon entering the waiting room and continue through subsequent telephone consultations. The clinic practice enhances therapeutic relationships between educator and the patient/family, but it also promotes the intellectual maturation of the educators through discussions based on literature about deviations identified during the patient/family consultations, considered from a bio-psycho-social (basic human needs) perspective.

The type of outpatient care that has occurred in our institution and other institutions in Brazil has filled a previous gap in nursing care. We believe that future research into these educational and outpatient consultation clinics will provide a basis for understanding the ongoing educational process for patients and family members. It may well alter the natural history of the disease, improve treatment adherence, and improve the educational methods used in accordance with socio-cultural factors.

REFERENCES

1. Matos E, Pires DE. Práticas de cuidado na perspectiva interdisciplinar: um caminho promissor. *Texto Contexto Enferm.* 2009; 18(2): 338-46.
2. Organização Mundial da Saúde. Cuidados inovadores pra condições crônicas: componentes estruturais de ação. Relatório anual. Brasília: OMS; 2003.
3. Saube R, Cutolo LR, Wendhausen AL, Benito GA. Competência dos profissionais da saúde para o trabalho interdisciplinar. *Interface - Comunicação, Saúde, Educação.* 2005; 9 (18): 521-36.

Alba Lucia Bottura Leite de Barros Alba Lucia Bottura Leite de Barros
Full Professor, School of Nursing of the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP)

Camila de Souza Carneiro Camila de Souza Carneiro
Coronary Care Unit nurse at the Hospital São Paulo, Cardiovascular Nurse Specialist at InCor-FMUSP, Health Educator CEDESS-UNIFESP, Masters and PhD(c) in Nursing, UNIFESP

Vinícius Batista Santos Vinicius Santos Batista
Specialist in Cardiovascular Nursing, UNIFESP, manager of the cardiology units of the Hospital São Paulo Paulista School, Master of Nursing, UNIFESP