

Self-care practice of the long-lived elderly in Brazil: an integrative review

Prática de autocuidado do idoso longo vivo no Brasil: uma revisão integrativa

Práctica de autocuidado de ancianos longevos en Brasil: una revisión integrativa

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Conhecer as evidências científicas sobre prática de autocuidado do idoso longo vivo no Brasil. **Método:** Trata-se de uma revisão integrativa com a busca nas bases de dados e biblioteca eletrônica como LILACS, BDENF e SciELO. **Resultados:** foram analisados nove artigos e, desses, cinco abordaram independência ou capacidade funcional como forma de prática de autocuidado. **Conclusão:** Os artigos analisados por autores com titulação de doutor, formação na área da enfermagem, com maior frequência para a Universidade Federal do Paraná. Destaca-se a importância deste estudo na ampliação dos conhecimentos científicos acerca das práticas de autocuidado do idoso longo vivo no Brasil.

Descritores: Atividade cotidiana; Autocuidado; Idoso.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To understand the scientific evidence on the practice of self-care of the long-lived elderly in Brazil. **Method:** This is an integrative review with the search in databases and electronic libraries such as LILACS, BDENF and SciELO. **Results:** nine articles were analyzed and, of these, five addressed independence or functional capacity as a form of self-care practice. **Conclusion:** The articles analyzed by authors with a PhD degree, training in the field of nursing, most frequently for the Federal University of Paraná. The importance of this study in expanding scientific knowledge about self-care practices for the long-lived elderly in Brazil is highlighted.

Descriptors: Activity, daily living; Self-care; Old.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Comprender las evidencias científicas sobre la práctica del autocuidado de los ancianos longevos en Brasil. **Método:** Se trata de una revisión integradora con el buscar en bases de datos y bibliotecas electrónicas como LILACS, BDENF y SciELO. **Resultados:** se analizaron nueve artículos y, de estos, cinco abordaron la independencia o la capacidad funcional como forma de práctica de autocuidado. **Conclusión:** Los artículos analizados por autores con grado de doctor, formación en el área de enfermería, con mayor frecuencia para la Universidad Federal de Paraná. Se destaca la importancia de este estudio en la ampliación del conocimiento científico sobre las prácticas de autocuidado de los ancianos longevos en Brasil.

Descriptores: Actividad, vida diaria; Autocuidado; Viejo.

Introduction

Population aging is a worldwide phenomenon that has been occurring exorbitantly in recent times. The data indicate that people aged 60 and over represent 11% of the world's population, and projections indicate that, by the year 2025, it will be approximately 15%, and may reach 22% in 2050.¹

Population aging is a worldwide phenomenon that has been occurring exorbitantly in recent times. The data indicate that people aged 60 and over represent 11% of the world's population, and projections indicate that, by the year 2025, it will be approximately 15%, and may reach 22% in 2050.^{2,3}

Essa expansão do número de idosos está intrinsecamente associada ao cuidado. Este está presente na vida do indivíduo desde os primórdios da sociedade e tem sido objeto de estudo de muitos teóricos, com destaque para a Teoria de Enfermagem de Déficit de Autocuidado de Orem, que está embasada na proposição de que qualquer pessoa possui potencial para cuidar de si próprio e de outrem que esteja sob sua incumbência, segundo as limitações a que está sujeita.⁴

The way people age is influenced in part by social inequalities. In a society in which the population is classified by economic power, the exclusion of the poorest is evident and, consequently, access to health services is limited, which compromises health and requires more complex care.⁵

There is a concern common to several countries in the world, the search for healthy aging, a subject that has been the subject of scientific studies in recent years, since many people reach old age with compromised health beyond the natural process, with a gradual loss of functional capacity.⁶ In this sense, It is necessary to develop public policies focused on health to serve this age group, as they commonly need care to maintain health and improve quality of life.

Increasingly, the elderly are reaching the fourth age, and there are determinants of longevity that explain this increase in the number of long-lived elderly, such as advances in the area of health, which provides disease prevention and health promotion, through the offer of vaccines, medicines, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic diseases. in addition to basic sanitation and decent housing. In addition to others such as the expansion of public policies for social assistance, social security, urban infrastructure, health and work. All of these factors contribute to increased life expectancy and longevity.⁵

The ability to self-care, in part, is related to the knowledge about the practices that need to be directed to take care of oneself and the adaptive process for one's reality. Therefore, it is up to the health professional to guide individuals to adhere to self-care and change behaviors that harm health. It is necessary to first carry out a screening, usually performed during home visits, to verify the limiting aspects, financial, environmental, social, psychological, among others, that prevent the individual from performing their self-care and changes in their lifestyle⁷. In this way, the professional, by knowing the client's reality, can offer information for self-care appropriate to the client's experience, which facilitates the learning process and ensures that self-care practices are carried out effectively and with minimal interference.

Self-care is considered a fundamental tool for maintaining the health and functional capacity of the elderly, recognized as an important health promotion strategy. This population requires assistance or care in self-care activities or practices.

Self-care practices are related to the ability to develop Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs). In addition to these activities, there is a balanced or adequate diet, physical exercise, absence of smoking and alcohol intake, in addition to the correct use of medications. The development of functional capacity to perform ADLs and IADLs is important because it allows the maintenance of the life, health and well-being of the elderly person.⁸⁻⁹

Thus, there is a need to carry out studies focused on the theme of self-care practices for long-lived elderly, taking into account the exponential growth of the elderly population and the health and care process of these elderly. Therefore, it is emphasized that this integrative review is essential to gather data on the subject and collaborates with society and the scientific community, providing a basis for new investigations focused on the theme in question. Thus, this investigation aims to know the scientific evidence on self-care practices of the long-lived elderly in Brazil.

Method

This is an integrative literature review study, which followed six stages, namely: elaboration of the guiding question, search or sampling in the literature, data collection, critical analysis of the included studies, discussion of the results and presentation of the integrative review.¹⁰

The research question of the integrative literature review arose from the PICO strategy, an acronym in which P stands for population; I, interest; Co, context, fundamental elements of the research question for integrative literature review.¹¹ In accordance with the recommendations of the PICO Strategy, the question of the bibliographic search for the proposal of the integrative review study was: What is the published scientific evidence on the self-care practices (I) of the long-lived elderly (P) in Brazil (Co)?

The search and sampling of the study were carried out in online databases and in an electronic library: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), Nursing Database (BDENF) and Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO). These were selected because they are the best known in Brazil and Latin America. The descriptors used in the LILACS, BDENF and SciELO library databases included the languages Portuguese, English and Spanish and were combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR, in order to restrict the search.

The search and sampling of the publications took place in the period from April to June 2020, covering as inclusion criteria a ten-year time frame (February 2010 to March 2020), articles in Portuguese, English and Spanish available in full and meeting the objective of this research. While the criteria used for exclusion were reflection articles, literature reviews, editorials, term papers, dissertations and theses, as well as duplication in the databases.

A survey of the articles was carried out in the following online databases and virtual library: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS); Nursing Databases (BDENF), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), using the following descriptors standardized as Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS): Elderly aged 80 years or older AND Self-care AND Activities of daily living.

In the survey of the databases and electronic library, it was found that, in the BDENF, 79 publications were found and four were pre-selected, and, in the end, one study was selected. As for LILACS, 208 articles were found, 28 were pre-selected and six were included in the research. In SciELO, 79 articles were found, of which four were pre-selected and, finally, two were selected for this review, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Number of studies identified in the databases and electronic library. 2024.

DB and EL	Found	Preselected	Selected	Excluded
SciELO	79	4	2	2
BDENF	51	4	1	3
LILACS	208	28	6	22
TOTAL	338	36	9	27

Legend: BD-Databases; BE- Electronic Library.

It is worth mentioning that the articles included in this integrative review were assigned a code for their identification, A1 to A9. The selection of articles and their inclusion in the study were carried out by two independent researchers. Initially, the title and summary of the articles found were read. Subsequently, a detailed reading of the texts was carried out.

To extract the data from the selected literature, a specific instrument was developed for the study in question, which consists of information on: title of the work, score of the journal in the Qualis CAPES system (2013-2016) through the Sucupira Platform, title of the journal (year, volume and number), authors (title, training and origin of the institution) study objectives, method, Study design, study site, instrument, analysis, inclusion and exclusion criteria, sample, study outcome, study limitation. The instrument was filled out individually, after careful reading of the selected articles in full.

The classification by level of evidence, based on a hierarchy, was guided by aspects delimited by the Agency for Healthcare and Research and Quality (AHRQ), in which seven levels could be observed, namely: level I is equivalent to systematic review or meta-analysis; level II is equivalent to well-defined, randomized controlled clinical trials; level III is equivalent to well-defined non-randomized clinical trials; level IV is equivalent to well-defined cohort and case-control studies; level V is equivalent to the systematic review of descriptive and qualitative studies; level VI is equivalent to descriptive or qualitative studies and level VII is equivalent to opinions of authorities and/or reports of specialty committees.¹²

The results found in this integrative review were presented through graphs and tables, using the Microsoft Excel program (2016 version). Data were analyzed descriptively. The presentation of the results and their discussion were highlighted, aiming to gather motivated knowledge on the theme referred to in this integrative review.

With regard to the ethical aspects of the research, it is noteworthy that all the authors consulted were mentioned in the text and referenced. The integrative review does not require the submission of the study to a Research Ethics Committee (REC) with human beings.

Results

In this review, nine articles were selected and, of these, six were indexed in the Lilacs database, two in SciELO and one in Bdenf (Chart I). It is worth noting that the number of authors of the publications ranged from three to ten.

On the other hand, the authors' areas of training included nursing, medicine, biochemistry and physiotherapy, with collaborators who had a doctorate in their academic background. In a search carried out in the Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID), it was found that the information about the training of some authors was incomplete. Therefore, only the information available in the curriculum presented in ORCID was considered.

Regarding the objectives presented by the researchers of the studies, several were found, among them the involvement of the long-lived elderly and self-care practices. Regarding the year of publications, three articles from 2016 were found, followed by two from 2015. As for the journal in which they were published, two articles are from the Brazilian Journal of Geriatrics and Gerontology (RBGG).

The stratification of the journals obtained by the Qualis system of Capes through the Sucupira Platform was one of the aspects analyzed in the articles. It was found that three articles received stratum B1, followed by two classified as A2 and two as B3.

Chart 1 - Characterization of the selected articles according to code, authors, title, objective, type of study and place of research. Goiás, 2024.

Cód./Authors	Title	Journal	Qualis/Year	Objective
A1/Silva SPZ, Marin MJS, Rodrigues MMR ¹³	Living and health conditions of the elderly over 80 years of age	Revista Gaúcha de Enfermagem	B1/2015	To describe sociodemographic data and health conditions of older adults aged 80 years or older.
A2/Ribeiro DKMN, Lenardt MH, Michel T, Setoguchi LS, Grden CRB, Oliveira ES. ¹⁴	Contributing factors to the functional independence of long-lived elderly	Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da USP	A2/2015	To verify the socioeconomic and clinical factors that contribute to the functional independence of the long-lived elderly in a community.
A3/Porciúncula RCR, Carvalho EF, Barreto KM, Leite VMM. ¹⁵	Socioepidemiological profile and autonomy of long-lived people in Recife-PE, Northeast Brazil	Revista Brasileira de Geriatria e Gerontologia (RBGG)	B1/2014	To analyze the socio-epidemiological profile and the degree of autonomy and independence of long-lived elderly people in the city of Recife-PE.
A4/Fernandes DS, Gonçalves LHT, Ferreira AMR, Santos MIPO. ¹⁶	Evaluation of the functional capacity of long-lived elderly people in the Amazon	Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem	A2/2019	To evaluate the functional capacity of long-lived Amazonian elderly.
A5/Veiga B, Pereira RAB, Pereira AMV, Nickel R. ¹⁷	Evaluation of functionality and disability of long-lived elderly in outpatient follow-up using WHODAS 2.0	Revista Brasileira de Geriatria e Gerontologia (RBGG)	B1/2016	To analyze the level of functionality and disability of long-lived elderly in outpatient follow-up at a university hospital in the city of Curitiba, Paraná, and to identify functional differences between the sexes and the most frequent diseases.
A6/Andriolo BNG, Santos NV, Volse AA, Fé LCM,	Evaluation of the degree of functionality	Revista da Sociedade Brasileira	B4/2016	To evaluate the degree of functional independence, through basic

Amaral ARC, Carmo BMSS. ¹⁸	in elderly users of a health center	de Clínica Médica		activities of daily living, among elderly users of a health center.
A7/Jorge MSG, Lima WG, Vogelmann SC, Myra RS, Wibelinger LM. ¹⁹	Characterization of the sociodemographic profile of health conditions and social conditions of octogenarian elderly	Revista Saúde e Pesquisa	B3/2017	To characterize the sociodemographic profile, health conditions and social conditions of octogenarian elderly.
A8/Possatto JM, Rabelo DF. ²⁰	Psychological health conditions, functional capacity and social support of the elderly	Revista Kairós Gerontologia	B3/2017	To evaluate depressive and anxiety symptoms in the elderly, and their relationship with gender, age, functional capacity and perception of association with social support.
A9/Campos ACV, Ferreira EF, Vargas AMD, Gonçalves LHT. ²¹	Profile of healthy aging of centenarian Brazilian elderly	Revista Latino-Americano de Enfermagem	A1/2016	To identify the healthy aging profile of octogenarian Brazilian elderly.

Chart 2 shows that the articles were designed in descriptive, cross-sectional and cohort studies, and all of them used a quantitative approach. Regarding the place of study, four were concentrated in elderly people living in a municipality, mainly in the urban area. Two articles had a Basic Health Unit as their research site. Regarding the region in which the research was conducted, most of them were concentrated in the South region, specifically in Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul.

Regarding the critical evaluation of the selected articles, they were classified by level of evidence and orientation, based on the Agency for Healthcare and Research and Quality (AHRQ) instrument, as level IV because they presented evidence derived from a cross-sectional and cohort study.

Chart 2 - Characterization of the selected articles according to code, type of study, methodological approach, place of research and main results. 2024.

Cód	Type of Study /Approach	Research place	Main Results
A1	Transversal/QT	City of Marília (Midwest region of São Paulo)	The data obtained among the 96 elderly people over 80 years of age reveal living and health conditions that are not favorable to a quality survival, including little or no schooling, widowhood, the presence of dependence for Instrumental Activities of Daily Living, hearing and visual impairment and the presence of pain in different regions of the body.
A2	Transversal/QT	Basic Health Unit of Curitiba-PA	The significant variables that contributed to functional independence were remaining economically active, practicing physical and leisure activities, having life, eating fruits, vegetables and meat. Guidance to conduct these practices reduces the demand for care and help needed in daily activities.
A3	Cohort /QT	Six Health Districts from Recife-PE	In the majority of the elderly, feminization, low level of education, widowhood as marital status, and retirement as the main source of income were observed. The elderly commonly

			lived with daughters and grandchildren, and the main health problems were hypertension, back disease, vision problems, urinary incontinence, and osteoporosis. The degree of autonomy and independence of the long-lived elderly was considered good, since there were no reports of impediments in performing activities of daily living (ADLs) by the majority of the elderly.
A4	Transversal/QT	Municipal Health Unit of the Guamá Neighborhood of the municipality of Belém-PA	The elderly showed modified independence in the domains of self-care, sphincter control, locomotion, and supervision in mobility/transfer. In terms of mobility, men showed total independence. In the age group of 80 to 89 years, modified independence was observed.
A5	Transversal and Descriptive/QT	Outpatient Clinic Health of the Elderly at CHC-UFPR	The sample consisted of 28 subjects, with a mean age of 86.21 (± 4.17) years, 50.0% were male, 46.4% were widowed and 57.1% performed the activities evaluated independently. In the comparison between genders, there were no significant differences between the groups in relation to age ($p \leq 0.635$) and years of schooling ($p \leq 0.329$), however, women had a higher level of disability than men in general ($p \leq 0.16$).
A6	Descriptive /QT	Center Marco's School of Health, in Belém	There was a significant correlation between the level of dependence and diabetes mellitus, the practice of physical activities and Basic Activities of Daily Living. Among the elderly, 69.7% were considered independent, with 69.09% allocated to classification A of the scale, 24.85% to B, 0.61% to C and 5.45% to other classifications. The Basic Activity of Daily Living that presented the most dependent elderly was related to continence.
A7	Cohort /QT	Residents of the urban area of the municipality of Passo Fund/RS	The results showed that the sample was predominantly female (68.96%), widowed (62.06%), aged 80-89 years (79.31%), with basic education (89.63%) and retired (75.86%). They owned their own home (65.51%), had children and/or grandchildren (89.65%), were Catholic (84.48%), had health insurance (58.62%), had eye alterations (72.41%) and used correction devices (72.41%). Most of them had systemic arterial hypertension (55.17%), used hypotensive drugs (55.17%), had regular medical appointments (63.79%), had undergone physical therapy (53.44%), practiced physical activity (65.11%) and classified their health as regular or good (43.10%).
A8	Transversal/QT	Basic Health Unit of the municipality of Santo Antônio de	The results showed an association between depression and anxiety and functional impairment in the performance of activities of daily living, as well as anxiety with low social involvement and low perceived social support.

		Jesus, State of Bahia	Measures to reduce the risk and prevalence of depression and anxiety in the elderly should include better prevention and treatment of disabling health conditions, as well as strategies to compensate for functional damage already installed, adequate social support, prevention of social isolation, and strengthening of psychosocial resources that favor emotional regulation and psychological adjustment.
A9	Cohort /QT	Municipality of Sete Lagoas, Minas Gerais, Brazil	Of the 335 elderly people who participated in this study, most of them were female (62.1%), aged between 80 and 84 years (50.4%), widowed (53.4%), illiterate (59.1%), with a monthly income of less than one minimum wage (59.1%); retired (85.7%), living with a spouse (63.8%), without a caregiver (60.3%), with two or more children (82.7%) and two or more grandchildren (78.8%). The results indicate three groups with a healthier aging profile: elderly aged 80-84 years (55.6%), elderly aged 85 years and over, married (64.9%) and elderly aged 85 years and over, without a partner and also without a caregiver (54.2%).

The instruments developed by the authors of the articles selected for application to the elderly (Chart 3) were: form, questionnaire, structured interview script and form for collection in medical records.

Chart 3 - Instruments, indices and scales used to collect data from the studies. 2024.

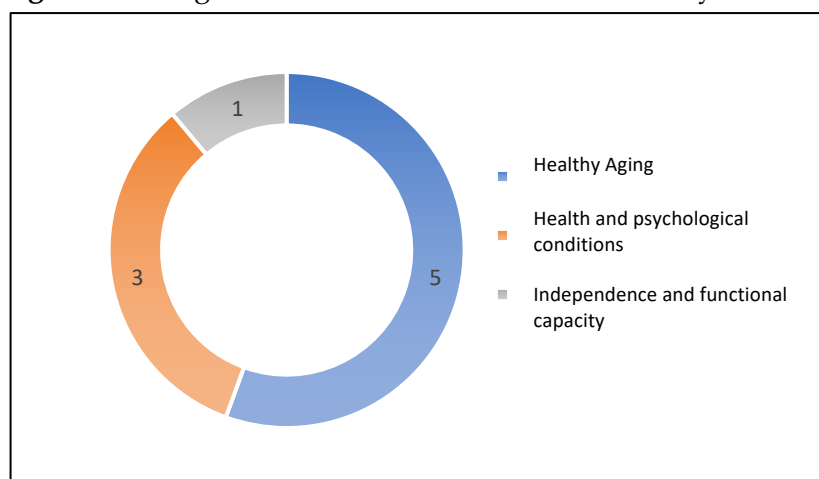
Authors' elaboration tools	n
Form	4
Questionnaire	3
Structured Interview Script	1
Form for collection in medical records	1
Validated scales and indices	n
Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE)	4
Functional Independence Measure (FIM)	2
Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)	2
Behavioral Scale	1
Lawton and Brody Scale	1
Pain Scale	1
Katz Scale	1
Index of Independence in Activities of Daily Living	1
Beck Anxiety Inventory	1
Perceived Social Support-ISEL Reduced	1

Forms are used to collect data and help in the organization of information, and questionnaires are a type of investigation technique that has a large number of discursive questions with the aim of providing knowledge to the researcher. While interview scripts help the researcher to develop the questions to the interviewee, using clear and easy-to-understand language.

It should also be noted that the most frequent instrument used in four studies was the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), followed by the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) and the Functional Independence Measure (FIM), both of which were applied in two articles.

Regarding the theme of the studies analyzed, it was found that most of them dealt with a theme involving independence or functional capacity of the long-lived elderly as a form of self-care practice to be investigated, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Categories of the themes of the articles analyzed. 2024.



Discussion

Longevity has become an increasingly present reality in society, and its frequency has increased over the years²². In this sense, longevity is understood as the progression of the physiological process after the age of 80. At this stage, significant changes occur in the individual's body, such as loss of functional and cognitive capacity, and in many cases it is accompanied by diseases and health problems, especially Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).²³

Among the themes identified in this review, independence and functional capacity were evidenced, and evidence emerged for the assessment of the Basic Activities of Daily Living (BADL) of the long-lived elderly, as a form of self-care practice. Functional capacity is associated with the changes that occur in the body with the aging process, which leads to a functional decline, especially in the elderly, in addition to physiological transformations and factors that indicate living and health conditions, such as financial and social conditions. Through this indicator, it is possible for health professionals to perceive the way in which the elderly are living their longevity.²⁴

The assessment of the functional capacity of the elderly has become an essential parameter in the practice of gerontology. It is important to assess functional capacity, since it can identify the associated factors, seeking from the health professional a plan of health actions such as the promotion and prevention of diseases and injuries, in addition to keeping these individuals active, independent and autonomous for longer and actively participating in society. This functional capacity can be defined as the potential of the elderly to perform tasks, decide and act in their lives independently, in their daily lives.^{25,26, 27,28}

It is observed that, in three themes of the selected articles, the health condition, social and psychological life of the long-lived elderly was highlighted, which demonstrates the importance of knowing these conditions in order to provide measures of health care actions for coping and specific interventions.

Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) were present in the selected articles, especially with regard to the long-lived elderly, who were affected by systemic arterial hypertension, diabetes mellitus, spinal disease, depression and anxiety. As a result, aging, in addition to NCDs, can lead to limitations in autonomy and functional independence.

The repercussions of longevity on the lives of the elderly and society is characterized as an individual characteristic of each person. Commonly, with increasing age, there is a greater probability of the emergence of diseases, especially those of a chronic nature, which can generate dependencies and disabilities in the elderly, especially in the long-lived, which increases the demands of health and social assistance establishments.^{16,29}

In a study³⁰ conducted with 272 older adults to evaluate the influence of chronic morbidities on functional capacity in older adults living in the municipality of Herval d'Oeste, Santa Catarina State, Brazil, it was found that the functional capacity activities in which the elderly showed the most dependence were bathing, dressing, and contingency. The women studied were more dependent than the men in all activities, and contingency was the activity in which they showed greater dependence.

As a limitation of this review, it is pointed out the access to only two databases and one virtual library, in addition to the possibility that, based on the inclusion criterion, some articles on the theme were not selected for the delimited research period. It is important to note that the search process was extremely rigorous, especially in relation to the selected articles. Thus, it is suggested that the theme be explored in new scientific investigations that may arouse the interest of other authors for the development of research on self-care practices involving the long-lived elderly, specifically in Brazil.

Conclusion

The integrative literature review made it possible to gather studies addressing themes related to the practice of self-care of the long-lived elderly, with the objective of knowing the scientific evidence available in the literature on the subject. The proven and functional method for convergence and even the identification of gaps related to possible future studies was of great contribution with regard to the development and analysis of the results obtained.

It is noteworthy that self-care practices are related to Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs), as well as actions such as a balanced or adequate diet, physical exercise, absence of smoking and alcohol consumption, and adequate number of meals per day.

In this integrative review, the articles analyzed by authors with a doctorate degree, training in the field of nursing, predominated more frequently for the Federal University of Paraná. Most of the articles were published in 2016, with a predominance of publications for the South region. Regarding the methodological design of the studies analyzed, more frequently for cross-sectional and cohort studies, with a quantitative approach. Another fact that draws attention was the significant number of use of the Mini-Mental State

Examination instrument, which seeks to evaluate the elderly for cognitive screening, which, however, does not serve as a conclusive diagnosis, requiring a more detailed evaluation.

With regard to the themes categorized through the analysis of the publications, it was found that the most frequently studied theme on self-care practice was related to the daily activities of the long-lived elderly, especially in the use of instruments that sought to assess Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). Self-care related to lifestyle habits, behavior, and health was also highlighted.

It is important to emphasize that, considering that there was a scarcity of studies developed with this public, it is necessary to develop research, especially in the area of nursing, in order to know the self-care practices of the long-lived elderly in order to improve care for this population.

Finally, it can be identified that this synthesis of knowledge brought by the studies included in this review reinforces the theme as essential in maintaining the health and well-being of the long-lived elderly, especially those affected by NCDs.

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