

Transcultural information and communication technologies used by nurses to care for the elderly

Transculturalidade das tecnologias da informação e comunicação utilizadas pelo enfermeiro no cuidado à pessoa idosa

Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación transculturales utilizadas por los enfermeros para atender a los ancianos

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Refletir sobre a transculturalidade das tecnologias da informação e comunicação utilizadas pelo enfermeiro no cuidado à pessoa idosa no contexto amazônico a Luz da Teoria de Madeleine Leinigner. **Métodos:** Trata-se de um estudo teórico-reflexivo, acerca das tecnologias da informação e comunicação voltadas para a saúde da pessoa idosa. A presente reflexão, surgiu a partir das ponderações a respeito da importância na inserção de competências culturais na construção de tecnologias da informação e comunicação para cuidados as pessoas idosas amazônicas. **Resultados:** Emergiram do presente estudo duas categorias reflexivas: “A importância da competência cultural nas tecnologias da informação e comunicação” e a “Aplicação das tecnologias da informação e comunicação no cuidado à pessoa idosa no contexto amazônico: contribuições para a prática de enfermagem”. **Conclusão:** Pensar sobre essa questão tornou-se um passo inicial para a compreensão dos benefícios das tecnologias da informação e comunicação para profissionais enfermeiros que prestam assistência ao idoso que reside no âmbito da região Amazônica, tendo em vista as particularidades culturais desses indivíduos e os fatores que compõem o processo de envelhecimento humano.

Descritores: Tecnologia da Informação e Comunicação; Competência cultural; Saúde da pessoa idosa; Cuidados em enfermagem; Enfermeiros.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To reflect on the transcultural nature of the information and communication technologies used by nurses to care for the elderly in the Amazonian context in the light of Madeleine Leinigner's theory. **Methods:** This is a theoretical and reflective study on information and communication technologies for the health of the elderly. This reflection arose from reflections on the importance of inserting cultural competencies in the construction of information and communication technologies for the care of elderly people in the Amazon. **Results:** Two reflective categories emerged from this study: “The importance of cultural competence in information and communication technologies” and “The application of information and communication technologies in caring for the elderly in the Amazonian context: contributions to nursing practice”. **Conclusion:** Thinking about this issue has become an initial step towards understanding the benefits of information and communication technologies for nursing professionals who provide care for elderly people living in the Amazon region, bearing in mind the cultural particularities of these individuals and the factors that make up the human ageing process.

Descriptors: Information and communication technology; Cultural competence; Health of the elderly; Nursing care; Nurses.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Reflexionar sobre el carácter transcultural de las tecnologías de información y comunicación utilizadas por las enfermeras en la atención a los ancianos en el contexto amazónico a la luz de la teoría de Madeleine Leinigner. **Método:** Se trata de un estudio teórico y reflexivo sobre las tecnologías de información y comunicación para la salud de las personas mayores. La reflexión surgió a partir de reflexiones sobre la importancia de insertar competencias culturales en la construcción de tecnologías de información y comunicación para el cuidado de ancianos en la Amazonia. **Resultados:** Dos categorías reflexivas surgieron de este estudio: «La importancia de la competencia cultural en las tecnologías de información y comunicación» y «La aplicación de las tecnologías de información y comunicación en el cuidado de los ancianos en el contexto amazónico: contribuciones a la práctica de enfermería». **Conclusión:** La reflexión sobre este tema se ha convertido en un paso inicial para la comprensión de los beneficios de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación para los profesionales de enfermería que prestan atención a las personas mayores que viven en la región amazónica, teniendo en cuenta las particularidades culturales de estas personas y los factores que componen el proceso de envejecimiento humano.

Descriptores: Tecnología de la información y comunicación; Competencia cultural; Salud del anciano; Cuidados de enfermería; Enfermeros.

Introduction

The care provided by nursing covers different environments and reaches the most diverse populations, especially in the care of peoples in vulnerable situations, such as those who live in more distant regions and have barriers in accessing health services and information. In this scenario, nursing work in the Amazonian context requires a series of differentiated skills and competencies to meet the needs of populations residing in these regions, due to the epidemiological, geographical, and cultural singularities that surround the way of life, health, and well-being of these traditional peoples.

Nurse care in the Amazon includes different age groups, with a focus on the elderly. The elderly population has significantly increased over the years due to the demographic and epidemiological transition processes that have led to substantial changes in the health-disease status of the population.¹

In association with the milestone of human aging, chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have emerged, which require more attention from health professionals in the care of the elderly and imply greater spending and investments in health, since such comorbidities have the capacity to make the elderly more fragile and in need of specific care.²

Thus, the role of the nurse in the care practices of the elderly in the Amazon requires a different perspective, with the implementation of innovative strategies and methodologies that aim to achieve positive results in the promotion of health and prevention of diseases in these individuals. Because this is a population group in which health conditions tend to decline as time goes by, nurses must plan their care in a systematic and effective way.

In view of this, the use of innovative technologies can help nurses in health care for the elderly, as these tools work as essential allies in the practice of daily care for professionals.³ The application and use of technologies in the health field have gained space in recent times, with a view to adding notorious results and positive repercussions to the work of health professionals.⁴

In this perspective, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can be defined as tools responsible for transmitting, informing and storing electronic patient data through digital means, such as telemedicine, e-health, computers, mobile health, smartphone applications and text message.⁵

Thus, this technology is an interesting proposal in the implementation of nurses' care, as they help to improve the quality of life of the elderly and assist in prevention and health promotion practices, through the incorporation of technologies that envision educational, preventive and rehabilitation actions.⁶

To support this reflection, the assumptions of Madeleine Leininger's Theory of Diversity and Universality of Cultural Care (TDUCC) were used. The theorist based her theory on the following principles: culture, cultural values, culturally diverse nursing care, ethnocentrism, generalization, stereotype, cultural congruence, ethnonursing and transcultural nursing. Therefore, as postulated by Leininger, nursing care should be based on the importance of understanding the cultural values and individual and collective experiences of each person through the health-disease process.⁷

In view of the above, the importance of this theme is understood, so it is necessary to reflect on the North Region, in which there is a shortage of ICTs in

primary care.⁸ As described, the following question was elaborated: What are the questions about the use and development of culturally congruent ICTs for nurses in the care of the elderly in the Amazon? The objective of this study was to reflect on the transculturality of information and communication technologies used by nurses in the care of the elderly in the Amazonian context in the light of Leininger's Theory.

Method

This is a theoretical-reflective essay, based on studies and debates regarding the discipline of Nursing Technologies for Education and Health Care of the academic master's course of the Graduate Program in Nursing – PPGENF of the Federal University of Amazonas – UFAM, in Broad Association with the State University of Pará – UEPA. The discipline was developed between September and December 2022, through meetings that promoted critical and reflective dialogue on health technologies with a focus on education and care, including the theoretical and practical aspects of the use of emerging technologies.

Therefore, the exclusion and inclusion criteria for the selection of bibliographic material were not specifically outlined, as it is a reflective study. Regarding the ethical procedures, the need to submit the study to the University's Ethics Committee was excluded because there was no link with any direct/applied research, however, following the ethical precepts, we emphasize that all authors were duly referenced.

The present reflection arose from the authors' reflections on the theme in question, on the importance of a differentiated look at the creation of new health technologies, focused on the area of nursing in the context of the traditional peoples of the Amazon, from which two reflective categories emerged: "The importance of cultural competence in information and communication technologies" and "Application of information and communication technologies in the care of the elderly in the Amazonian context: contributions to nursing practice".

Results and Discussion

The importance of cultural competence in the development of information and communication technologies

Information and communication technologies play an essential role in facilitating the care of health professionals, as they allow information to be shared among professionals who work in areas of difficult access, such as riverside communities located in the interior of Amazonas.

In view of the technological scenario, the approach of studies that portray the importance of thinking about the cultural competence of health technologies, from its initial idea, requires a reflection on how nurses perform skills in discerning and experiencing cultural difference during care and what are the facilities and barriers with the use of technological devices that have this cross-cultural view.⁹

The reflection on the possible contributions of technological resources to the health of the elderly in the Amazon arises from the recognition and understanding that the being cared for experiences their conceptions about life,

health and well-being, from the cultural, social and collective influence. These may have the ability to assist and facilitate effective and appropriate communication in intercultural situations between the professional and the person being cared for.

Thus, ICTs are important resources that facilitate primary care, emerging to fill possible gaps in nurses' care. That said, it is highlighted that for the effectiveness of health devices, it is necessary to invest in tools that incorporate and work on the valorization of cultural competence, for the different social groups, ensuring individual or community integrity before, during and after care.

The present discussion brings up the idea of applying the cross-cultural theory in the process of development of health technologies, for the conception of culturally congruent care based on the diversity and representativeness of the Amazonian elderly.

Therefore, there are gaps in studies that focused on barriers and aspects for implementation based on technological tools in the field of health. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that the first requirement to achieve culturally competent care must be care centered on the reality of the individual and the community.

For this, in the light of an intercultural view, it is essential that new health technologies guarantee the specificity of collective and individual care for users who access health services, because only then will there be quality care, effective in accordance with the behaviors and health conditions faced by individuals and health professionals.⁸

Thus, nursing care for the elderly in the Amazon should incorporate the traditional knowledge and customs of these individuals, adding the traditional knowledge of the elderly to the technical-scientific knowledge of nursing, forming a set that involves and respects both the experience of these individuals and the nursing process, creating a correlation in the exchange of information based on technologies.

The ethnic and cultural values of the elderly, associated with the use of health technologies in the work of nurses, demonstrate that the profession is moving towards equity and the understanding that different peoples and different cultures refer to different ways of revolutionizing health care, based on systematic, holistic practices based on tools that can help the population to overcome their daily difficulties related to illness and other factors. socio-environmental and economic aspects of the region.

Application of information and communication technologies in the care of the elderly in the Amazonian context: contributions to nursing practice

ICTs are methods that have been used in nursing health care, due to the ability of these tools to provide possible support to professionals in solving problems evidenced in the community and in the context of health care for the elderly. When included in the care of the elderly in the Amazon, such technologies must be constituted by characteristics and aspects inherent to the experience and ethnic-cultural customs of the older adults who live in the Amazon region.

The bases of holistic nursing care and health practices that value popular values and knowledge are linked to the premises arising from transculturality,

which over the years have positively added to the construction of scientific knowledge in the profession. The care model proposed by Leininger's theory allows nursing professionals to develop health practices aligned with the concepts that underlie the sociocultural aspects of being cared for.¹⁰

Ethnonursing must understand and take hold of the social, cultural and political context that permeates the experience of individuals in the various stages of life. Knowledge about language, ancestral knowledge, customs, life habits and environment are fundamental to face the challenges inherent to health promotion and especially to provide humanized nursing care.

The peculiarities of the Amazon carry with them traces of indigenous culture, where the subsistence of many individuals, especially the riverside dwellers, is still based on resources from nature, from animal and plant extractivism. In the same way, the health practices of this population are based on the knowledge of common sense, with the use of medicinal plants for curative purposes of many diseases.¹¹

The geographical location of many rural communities and even some municipalities makes it impossible for the elderly in the Amazon to have full access to health services and comprehensive care for their physical and mental well-being. In view of this, nurses face numerous challenges to provide humanized and quality care to the elderly in the Amazon environment.¹²

In view of the above, it is noted that the use of creativity, innovation and cultural sensitivity of nurses are competencies that will favor the care of the elderly in the Amazon. Thus, the insertion of technologies contributes significantly to the work routine of these professionals and can support nurses' actions in a differentiated way in the context of the Amazon region.¹³

The use of ICTs in the care of older adults in the Amazon requires sensitivity and clinical reasoning from professionals, since it is not enough just to implement, but to seek to understand the limitations and resistances presented by the elderly, with regard to linguistic and religious barriers, eating habits, education and behaviors that are potentially harmful to health, although they are part of the culture of these elderly. The adaptation of technologies according to the reality and culture of the peoples to whom the care will be offered becomes paramount for the excellence of the intended objective and integrality in care.

From this perspective, it is up to the nurse, based on the survey of the main needs and difficulties of the elderly person, to propose the development of functionally viable technologies or to manage their construction, to meet the profile of this population group, which needs their traditional knowledge to be respected and preserved.

Therefore, the construction of educational or care activities based on the deconstruction of prejudices, strengthen the progress of health promotion and reestablishment in the face of differentiated aging in Amazonas, since care practices conceived from a perspective that transcends technicality and consider human values, corroborate beneficial results. The universality and diversity of care can be achieved when the strategies promoted are centered on the preservation of the personal, historical, and cultural identity of the elderly person.¹⁴

Conclusion

This reflection enables the understanding of the benefits of information and communication technologies in nursing care practice, a tool that can streamline, optimize and reduce costs in relation to the efficacy and effectiveness of actions in the scope of primary health care in geographic locations of difficult access.

Thus, it is noticeable that the incorporation of technological assistance in health services facilitates the access of its users. Therefore, the need for reflective and motivational discussions on the need for the feasibility, use and applicability of ICTs aimed at the health of the elderly in the Amazon is argued.

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