

MEETING ABSTRACTS

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Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health (CIIS) National Meeting 2023

Lisbon, Portugal. 31 March - 01 April 2023

Published: 21 August 2023

Paulo J. G. Bettencourt^{1,2}, Ana Mineiro^{1,3}, Paulo Alves^{1,4}, Nuno Rosa^{1,5}, André Correia^{1,5}, Marlene Barros^{1,5}

¹ Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health, Portugal; ² Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Faculty of Medicine, Lisboa, Portugal; ³ Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Instituto de Ciências da Saúde, Lisboa, Portugal; ⁴ Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Instituto Ciências da Saúde, Escola Enfermagem (Porto), Portugal; ⁵ Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Faculty of Dental Medicine (FMD), Viseu, Portugal
Correspondence: Paulo J. G. Bettencourt (pbettencourt@ucp.pt)
BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):

The Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health (CIIS) is the research center of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP) focused on health care. The Center is organized in five platforms, and distributed in four geographies across Portugal: Lisbon, Porto, Viseu and Sintra (Table 1). The center has currently 155 active researchers and attracted funds exceeding 10M€.

For the first time ever, CIIS has organized a National Event that included researchers from all platforms and disciplines, in a truly interdisciplinary and translational scientific event, counting 117 registered participants and 120 abstracts. The meeting took place at the Faculty of Medicine, in the Sintra campus, on the 31st March and 1st April 2023. The Scientific Committee of the CIIS National Meeting decided that the theme for the meeting is *Interdisciplinary Health Care*. Rather than clustering researchers by platform or discipline, we decided to create three working sessions that are inclusive to everyone and not restricting the presentations by discipline, being therefore, interdisciplinary. These are: 1 – *Translational Care*; 2 – *Clinical Care*; and 3 – *Community Care*.

The meeting was held in the presence of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa Rector Professor Isabel Capelo Gil, the Vice-Rector Professor Peter Hanenberg, the Director of the CIIS, Professor Marlene Barros, the Director of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor António Almeida and the guest speaker Professor Tomáš Zima, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, and hosted by the Deputy Director of the CIIS, Professor Paulo J. G. Bettencourt.

For two days, papers were presented by invited speakers within each session, and posters were presented by CIIS researchers and students, in a highly anticipated poster session. All abstracts were peer-reviewed. To bring further excitement to the poster session, the Meeting Scientific Committee selected the best poster from each platform to receive the Best Poster Award. Finally, the CIIS platform coordinators presented their plans and vision for the future.

Following the success of this meeting, the Scientific Committee of the National Meeting, decided to implement yearly meetings of the Center.

We would like to acknowledge all CIIS members, staff and students that accepted the challenge of participating in this event, presenting their most recent data, sharing their knowledge, and making this truly an interdisciplinary health care event.

We hope this meeting has contributed to share the latest scientific achievements of all members and promoted the beginning of new collaborations for the future, keeping in mind the main goal of improving health care with an interdisciplinary view, to ultimately improve quality of life, with humanity and spirituality at the center of all scientific quests.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the funding from Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT), under the project UIDP/04279/2020 and UIDB/04279/2020.

Table 1 Platforms of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health

Name	Location	Head
Neurosciences	Lisbon and Porto	Prof. Ana Mineiro
Nursing	Lisbon and Porto	Prof. Paulo Alves
CatólicaMed	Sintra	Prof. Paulo Bettencourt
SalivaTec	Viseu	Prof. Nuno Rosa
Precision Dental Medicine	Viseu	Prof. André Correia



care have the opportunity to develop a wide range of narrative research methods to improve health policy, training, and practice in health care.

This is the way to add value to the knowledge of forgiving and being forgiven in palliative care patients, creating new knowledge, and opening up new strategies for the intervention.

Session 3 - Community Care

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- Teaching spiritual care in Portuguese nursing schools

Ana Afonso¹, Sara Sitefane¹, Isabel Rabiais¹, Sílvia Caldeira¹

¹ Institute of Health Sciences, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon, Portugal

Correspondence: Ana Afonso (s-anfiafonso@ucp.pt)

BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P74

Background

Spiritual care is an essential dimension of holistic care. Organizations, such as the International Council of Nurses, mention the importance of spirituality for health and the urgency of nurses providing spiritual care. At the same time, studies show that spirituality brings benefits at the level of coping strategies both in crisis or struggling experiences, greater gratitude, facilitating forgiveness and meaning of life. However, spirituality and spiritual care seem to have been neglected and, among other factors, the lack of training in the nursing degree has been described as critical.

The undergraduate nursing degree in Portugal should ensure scientific, technical, human, and cultural training for of providing and managing general nursing care. As so, the undergraduate degree should provide the conditions to learn about spiritual care based on a holistic approach to patients, families, and communities.

The school curriculum and respective syllabuses are not random, and the choice of different curricular units results from reflexive and intentional processes in each institution.

Materials and methods

An exploratory study was conducted to map the explicit reference of spiritual care in the undergraduate nursing degree in all nursing schools in Portugal.

Data were collected in September 2022 by searching for the spiritual* research term in the designation of the undergraduate nursing degree curricular units as displayed on the websites of the higher education institutions (HEI).

Results

Of the 36 HEI, none had curricular units entitled with spirituality or spiritual care.

Conclusions

Although it cannot be inferred that spiritual care is not addressed in the undergraduate nursing degree, as the curriculum is a form of social visibility of a discipline and a profession, these data should lead us to reflect on the (in)visibility that is given to the spiritual dimension. So further studies are needed to disclose and understand how students are prepared to attend to patients in a holistic paradigm that includes attention to the spiritual dimension of health.

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- Correspondence between language performance of children in formal alternative care and the placement environment: Preliminary data from a systematic review

Ana Carolina Capinha¹, Ana Mineiro¹, Mara Moita^{1,2}, Ana Maria Abreu¹

¹ Centro de Investigação Interdisciplinar em Saúde, Instituto de Ciências da Saúde, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisboa, Portugal; ² Centro de Linguística da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal

Correspondence: Ana Carolina Capinha (anacarolinacapinha@gmail.com)

BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P75

Background

An estimated 2.7 million children live in formal alternative care (FAC). FAC varies in living conditions and care provided. However, research

has shown that living in FAC adversely affects child development. This should be cautiously interpreted as studies reporting these effects have mainly been conducted in the northern hemisphere, in psychosocially deprived settings. Conversely, due to socio-economic factors, FAC compares favorably to domestic care in low-income countries.

Here, we sought to understand the correspondence between children's language performance in FAC and the placement setting (residential, foster, and kinship care), a query subset from a more extensive main study aiming to investigate children's language development in formal alternative care.

Materials and methods

We systematically searched APA PsycInfo, Cochrane Library, Embase, ERIC, MEDLINE, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science databases between October and November 2021. The search was not circumscribed to a period. Only primary English reports published in peer-reviewed journals investigating the language performance of children up to age 18 in FAC were included.

Results

We identified ten reports that matched these criteria. Eight reports (80%) described changes in the setting in FAC leading to variations in children's linguistic performance. We found that children who transition from low-quality settings (i.e., settings in which some aspect of care is substantially lower than suggested by best practice) to higher-quality environments show a "catch-up effect" in their linguistic performance. When this change happens early, children in FAC have equivalent language performances to the comparison groups (children living with their biological parents). Conversely, children who stay with their families in situations of abuse or exposure to war show lower linguistic performance scores than children in FAC.

Conclusions

Thus, not all settings, even if family-based, can be linguistically enriching; there needs to be reciprocity in interactions between carers and children to promote this development. Training and support for carers in all care settings are essential to ensure responsiveness and developmentally appropriate environments for children in FAC.

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- Development and test of a complex intervention: "Promoting spiritual coping" of family caregivers of an adult relative with severe mental illness

Tiago Casaleiro^{1,2}, Helga Martins^{1,3}, Joana Romeiro¹, Sílvia Caldeira¹

¹ Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health, Lisboa, Portugal; ² Escola Superior de Enfermagem São Francisco das Misericórdias, Lisboa, Portugal; ³ Instituto Politécnico de Beja, Escola Superior de Saúde, Beja, Portugal

Correspondence: Tiago Casaleiro (tcasaleiro@esesfm.pt)

BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P76

Background

Severe mental illness is characterized by severe changes in functionality interfering with daily life activities. The home-dwelling person with severe mental illness often needs support from family members who assume the role of caregivers. The performance of the role of family caregiver often leads to a burden, with an impact on physical and mental health. As so, the caregiver develops coping strategies to deal with stressful situations. Among these, spiritual coping strategies are often used, which involve the relationship with oneself, others, and/or the transcendent/God or nature and may include religious or spiritual practices. These strategies are related to improvement in physical and mental well-being. The specialist nurse in mental and psychiatric health has competencies, such as the systemic assessment and intervention based on the biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions aiming at the promotion of well-being and mental health.

The main goal of this study was to develop and test the intervention "promoting spiritual coping" in the family caregivers of home-dwelling people with mental illness.

Materials and methods

A mixed-method study with a sequential exploratory design was conducted, using the development and feasibility/pilot phases of

the Medical Research Council's framework. The development stage included a systematic literature review according to Joanna Briggs Institute guidelines; two focus groups with caregivers and experts; and an online modified e-Delphi. The test phase consisted of a pilot test with ten family caregivers of home-dwelling people with a mental illness accompanied by the community mental health structures of health units in the Lisbon region. The outcomes included spiritual coping, quality of life, and the burden of the family caregiver.

Results

A protocol for the intervention was developed and tested with a group of ten family caregivers. A three-session intervention was implemented. The outcomes were assessed pre and post-intervention. Significant changes were observed in the outcomes and the family caregivers mentioned that it was helpful to discuss issues regarding spirituality and religiosity.

Conclusion

The intervention "promoting spiritual coping" was developed and tested, considered appropriate for family caregivers of people with mental illness, to be applied in psychotherapeutic context by mental health nurses.

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- Validation of the European Portuguese version of the Brief RCOPE: a methodological study

Tiago Casaleiro^{1,2}, Helga Martins^{1,3}, Joana Romeiro¹, Sílvia Caldeira¹
¹ Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health, Lisboa, Portugal; ² Escola Superior de Enfermagem São Francisco das Misericórdias, Lisboa, Portugal; ³ Instituto Politécnico de Beja, Escola Superior de Saúde, Beja, Portugal

Correspondence: Tiago Casaleiro (tcasaleiro@esesfm.pt)

BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P77

Background

Being a family caregiver often leads to a burden, with an impact on different dimensions of life. As so, the caregiver develops coping strategies to deal with stressful situations. Coping is a multifactorial and individual process related to responding to stressful situations, such as being a caregiver of a relative with health conditions. There are different coping strategies, such as spiritual/religious coping. The 14-item Brief RCOPE is a widely used instrument to assess spiritual/religious coping, but it is not available in European Portuguese. This instrument is a short version of RCOPE which has 63 items. The aim was to translate, adapt and validate the 14-item Brief RCOPE in Portuguese caregivers of an adult relative with a health condition, such as dementia, mental illness, disabilities, among other physical illnesses.

Materials and methods

To examine the psychometric properties of the Brief RCOPE it was used the methodological guideline provided by Sousa and Rojjanasirart.

Results

The linguistic and conceptual equivalence of the scale was established. A total of 105 questionnaires were included in this study. The internal consistency was acceptable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$). The Principal Axis Factor (PAF) analysis with varimax rotation identified two factors made up of 13 items, and one item was excluded from the scale.

Conclusion

The European Portuguese version of the Brief RCOPE is a reliable and valid measure for assessing the religious coping of family caregivers of adults with health conditions.

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- Cognitive, emotional, and motivational effects of gamification in the context of learning: A protocol feasibility and usability study

Franz Coelho¹, David Aparício², Patrícia Sousa¹, Daniel Gonçalves³, Ana Maria Abreu¹

¹ Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health (CIIS), Institute of Health Sciences, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 1649-023 Lisbon, Portugal; ² Escola de Enfermagem, Institute of Health Sciences, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 1649-023 Lisbon, Portugal; ³ INESC-ID and Instituto Superior Técnico – University of Lisbon, Av. Rovisco Pais, 1049-001 Lisbon, Portugal

Correspondence: Franz Coelho (franzgrc@hotmail.com)

BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P78

Gamification is the use of game elements in non-gaming contexts. Empirical studies show that gamification impacts performance, engagement, attention, motivation, and emotions in cognition and learning contexts. However, the literature seems limited by the lack of consistent theoretical support related to gamification; the heterogeneity of results and methodologies; samples without statistical robustness; and the lack of validated questionnaires or non-subjective resources in evaluating individuals. We intend to address these gaps in a future comprehensive randomized control trial (RCT) study. To this end, we carried out a pilot study to assess the feasibility and usability of the RCT. A simple digital course was created and nested (or not) within an e-learning platform, which was adapted to four different versions containing different embedded game elements ("points", "challenge", "medals", and "points + challenge + medals") and one version without embedded game elements. Ten nursing students were recruited to take the course and were asked to watch the course video lessons, do summative exercises, and answer a final assessment. While doing so, we measured affective states with the Self-Assessment Manikin questionnaire, motivation with the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory, the experience with the User Experience Questionnaire and considered an open question to collect ideas for improvements. We also identified the player profiles with the Brainhex Questionnaire. Correct exercises and the final assessment provided engagement and performance scores. Results showed that the protocol is feasible, but there are adjustments to be made to the e-learning platform and its versions. There were technical issues with running it on different operating systems and configurations. It affected the eye tracker and facial recognition software that were plugged in to collect attention and emotion scores. On the other hand, students were interested in experiencing new forms of learning content. Data from this study will be used to develop new web-based versions of the e-learning platform to circumvent the encountered problems, facilitate the implementation, enable the operation, and afford easier user access. This web-based version will also be used to improve the intervention and evaluate the e-learning interface usability, providing insights concerning the acceptability and adaptability of the interface and protocol to refine the research design of the future RCT study. This study received approval from the Comissão de Ética para a Saúde (# 210) and all the students signed an informed consent before the study.

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- Characterization of oral health in a group of elderly adults from Viseu – implications for treatment efficacy

Sara Sousa¹, Raíafa Guilherme¹, Adriana Ribeiro¹, Nélio Veiga², Maria Correia²

¹ Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Faculty of Dental Medicine (FMD), Viseu, Portugal; ² Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Faculty of Dental Medicine (FMD), Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health (CIIS), Viseu, Portugal

Correspondence: Maria Correia (mcorreia@ucp.pt)

BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P79

Background

Although it is not recognized and valued by everyone, oral health has a great impact on quality of life, affecting physiological, aesthetic, and social aspects of everyday life. In the elderly oral health issues are prevalent and treatment needs increased. This work presents a characterization of the oral health in an elderly population of Viseu in different dimensions.

Materials and methods

Clinical aspects such as tooth loss due to caries, periodontal disease indexes, properties of saliva and total microbial load, as well as *Firmicutes* and *Bacteroidetes* quantification and quality of life indexes were obtained. Questionnaires for sociodemographic data and self-perceived oral health; clinical assessments of oral health indexes and saliva for biochemical and microbiological parameters were used to collect data. Data and sample collection was approved by the ethics committee of IMM and informed consent was signed by every participant in the study.

Results