

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

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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 31<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> 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



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significant differences between the thirds regarding the VITA 3D<sup>®</sup>-Master guide. Regarding the agreement between gender of evaluators, no statistically significant differences were found.

#### Conclusion

According to the results obtained, the influence of Smile Lite<sup>®</sup> can be verified in certain situations, namely in the dental division by thirds. Thus, it is a valid and influential element in shade matching. Taking into account the conclusions presented, it is important that further studies are carried out in the future due to the scarce literature on the subject.

#### P71

##### - The duality between pain and suffering in assisted reproduction techniques: a cross-sectional study

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*BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P71*

#### Background

Evidence has demonstrated possible side effects and adverse effects due to hormonal medications to increase women's fertility. In addition, frequent and painful therapeutic administrations, successive exposure of the woman's body for examination, and invasive, mechanistic, and dehumanizing procedures have been described by women during fertility treatments.

This study explored perceptions of pain and suffering in women during assisted reproductive techniques.

#### Materials and methods

This was a cross-sectional study conducted from September 2019 to June 2020. The Ethics Committee of The Institute of Health Sciences of Universidade Católica Portuguesa approved this study. The sample was composed of 104 Portuguese adults in the process of engaging or at any stage of a fertility treatment recruited from the web which gave their informed consent to participate in the study. The survey comprised demographic questions, clinical-health aspects, and the first part of the Portuguese version of the Meaning in Suffering Test (MIST-P). Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS (version 26.0).

#### Results

More than half of the participants in the study identified body changes (n=54; 51.9%) as an aspect that enhances suffering. Moreover, the pain had a high presence among people undergoing fertility treatment (n=82; 78.8%), highlighting the idea of suffering as a profound experience beyond the organic side of living with infertility. Moreover, healthcare practices, such as talking to clients, caring, and providing comfort were strategies suggested by the sample under study.

#### Conclusions

This study highlighted the fact that suffering is not synonymous with pain, although it appears closely related to it. These findings play a fundamental role in future healthcare practices and specifically in the crucial role of nurses in providing a holistic and person-centered approach to improve the quality of life of such individuals and simultaneously raise the quality of nursing care in the reproductive context.

#### P72

##### - The relationship between religion and the meaning in suffering: perception of people with infertility

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*BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P72*

#### Background

Religion is a strategy that emerges, is developed, and is often used to face and overcome an adverse health event. Spirituality is essential to maintaining an individual's mental health. Spiritual practices (such as

prayer, mediation, attending religious services, and spending time in nature, reading religious books or self-help texts) are commonly used to recover mental well-being.

#### Materials and methods

For the purpose of the study of exploring the relationship between religion and the meaning of suffering in people with infertility, a cross-sectional study was carried out from September 2019 to June 2020. Informed consent was obtained. The Ethics Committee of The Institute of Health Sciences of Universidade Católica Portuguesa approved this study. The sample was composed of 104 Portuguese adults in the process of engaging or at any stage of a fertility treatment recruited from online forums and social (in)fertility-related websites. The survey comprised demographic questions, information about spiritual and religious beliefs, clinical-health aspects, and the Portuguese version of the Meaning in Suffering Test (MIST-P). Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS (version 26.0).

#### Results

The religious aspect stood out in the sample (n=20; 66.7%). A comparison between the change in the importance of spirituality/religion after the diagnosis of infertility and after the start of fertility treatment confirmed that there were more changes in the latter context than in the former. The meaning of unavoidable suffering was significantly associated with changes in religion during the infertility diagnosis phase (p = 0.03) with higher MIST-P scores (M = 3.88, SD = 0.81). Religion was identified as a source of spiritual strength and support in the individual's search for meaning in suffering.

#### Conclusions

Further longitudinal research is imperative to understand the profile of meaning in suffering and its relationship with religious and spiritual beliefs through long reproductive treatments.

#### P73

##### - Studying end-of-life narratives to understand and integrate forgiveness

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*BMC Proceedings 2023, 17(9):P73*

#### Background

Since childhood, we live embedded in stories affirmed and reaffirmed throughout our lives as one of the most important ways of defining and shaping cultures and personal interactions. Stories gain relevance in times of transition and/or life change events, such as being a palliative care patient. For those living this condition, life review may bring the need for forgiveness, which seems critical in getting serenity and peace at the end of life. Forgiveness facilitation is a nursing intervention, but a deeper understanding of this phenomenon must inform effective implementation.

This study aims at studying end-of-life narratives to understand and integrate forgiveness.

#### Material and methods

Narrative research is a type of qualitative research in which participants interpret their own experiences, telling their individual stories in their own words to the researcher in an interview. It seeks to minimize the interviewer's influence, avoiding the question-answer structure standard in structured or semi-structured interviews, and avoiding restructuring, as the researcher does not question the interviewee's answers but encourages the interviewee to tell the story.

#### Results

The research findings are, therefore, a joint product of the participants sharing their experiences and the researcher analyzing them. A narrative showing the connection of someone's experiences to a specific care context and their previous experiences can provide detailed insight into the experiences of a person receiving care.

#### Conclusions

Narrative research is thus a specific innovative approach in the field of qualitative methodology dedicated to the ongoing development of rigorous analytical methods to understand personal and cultural experiences. Health professionals working in palliative

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

#### P74

##### - Teaching spiritual care in Portuguese nursing schools

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*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.

#### P75

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

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*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.

#### P76

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

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*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