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RESEARCH

Hanseníase: uma abordagem educativa com estudantes do ensino médio

Leprosy: an educational approach with high school

Lepra: un enfoque educativo con estudiantes de secundaria

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Analyzing the high school students' knowledge about leprosy, before and after the practice of health education in the classroom. **Method:** an exploratory and descriptive study, with population of 358 high school students and sample of 200 students. The criteria for selection sample: students enrolled in the selected school for the study, present in the classroom and had signed the Free and Informed Consent. For the data collection we used a questionnaire with closed questions about leprosy. The project was approved by the CEP of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, with protocol number 085/08 and CAAE 00780051000-09. **Results:** At first, the leprosy was little known by the students. However, this reality changed after the completion of the lecture as a tool for health education. **Conclusion:** we have emphasized the importance of the health education practices about leprosy by nursing. **Descriptors:** Health education, Leprosy, Nursing.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar o conhecimento de escolares do ensino médio sobre hanseníase, antes e após a prática da educação em saúde nas salas de aula. **Método:** Estudo exploratório e descritivo, com população de 358 estudantes do ensino médio e amostra de 200 escolares. Critérios de seleção da amostra: alunos matriculados na escola selecionada para estudo, presentes em sala de aula e que assinaram o TCLE. Para a coleta de dados foi utilizado um questionário contendo questões fechadas sobre a hanseníase. O projeto foi submetido e aprovado pelo CEP da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, com número de protocolo 085/08 e CAAE 00780051000-09. **Resultados:** Em princípio, a hanseníase era pouco conhecida pelos escolares. Entretanto, esta realidade logo se transformou após a realização da palestra como instrumento de educação em saúde. **Conclusão:** Enfatizou-se a importância de ações de educação em saúde sobre hanseníase realizada pela enfermagem. **Descritores:** Educação em saúde, Hanseníase, Enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Evaluar el conocimiento de los estudiantes de la secundaria sobre la lepra antes y después de la práctica de la educación para la salud en las aulas. **Método:** estudio exploratorio y descriptivo, con población de 358 estudiantes de secundaria y muestra de 200 estudiantes. Se seleccionaron los estudiantes inscritos en la escuela, presente en el aula y que firmaron el formulario de consentimiento. Para la recolección de datos se utilizó un cuestionario con preguntas cerradas sobre la lepra. El proyecto fue sometido y aprobado por el CEP de la Universidad Federal de Rio Grande do Norte, número de protocolo 085/08 y CAAE 00780051000-09. **Resultados:** En principio, la lepra era poco conocida por los estudiantes. Sin embargo, pronto se hizo realidad después de la finalización de la conferencia como una herramienta de educación para la salud. **Conclusión:** Se hizo hincapié en la importancia de las acciones de educación para la salud sobre la lepra en poder de la enfermería. **Descriptor:** Educación para la salud, Lepra, Enfermería.

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INTRODUCTION

Leprosy is a disease reported since biblical times as leprosy, known for more than three or four thousand years in India, China and Japan, making it an ancient disease. It was in 1873 that the Norwegian physician Gerhard Armauer Hansen identified the bacillus that causes the disease, *Mycobacterium leprae*, with the name change of leprosy to Hansen's disease, in honor of its discoverer.¹

The bacillus of leprosy is transmitted through the upper airways for respiratory droplets. Once present in the body, settle into skin cells and peripheral nerves causing different forms of clinical manifestations, and may cause physical disabilities and consequent reduction of work capacity and restricted social life.²

Leprosy diagnosis is made by clinical presentation of dermatologic physical examination, in which the altered sensitivity of leprosy lesions is evaluated. The bacilloscopy is a microscopic examination through which is evidenced the *Mycobacterium leprae* and serves as a support for the diagnosis.³

In 1983 the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended the introduction of polychemotherapy (MDT) in the treatment of leprosy.³ Composed by sulfone, clofazimine and rifampicin drug, MDT is effective in curing leprosy and has minimal side effects, which provides disease control.⁴

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) established strategies to eliminate leprosy as a public health problem and defined as an indicator of eliminating a prevalence of less than one (1) case for every ten thousand (10.000) inhabitants.⁵

It is evident that to control the decentralization of leprosy is needed, with expanded coverage of leprosy, services providing diagnostic support and MDT in primary health care at the municipal level.⁶

The leprosy control activities aimed at early detection of all existing cases of disease in the community and their immediate treatment, since such measures prevent the development of the same, with consequent installation of physical disabilities caused.⁷

That the increase in the detection and absolute number of leprosy cases in Brazil in recent years, is due to the professionals, increasing the coverage of the control program and disclosure of the signs and symptoms of the disease training by various media is observed.⁸

Educational activities should integrate all the leprosy control activities; and health education is a necessary activity and that should be disseminated to leprosy patients and the population as a whole.⁹

The nurse is a professional who plays a significant role when using educational actions in health as an instrument of work, both individually as collective. And on

assistance to leprosy, the nursing and the entire multidisciplinary team must contribute to the completeness of care using health education activities.¹⁰⁻¹

On this reality that permeates the leprosy, realizes the importance of health education in prevention and in promoting the early diagnosis of this disease that is incurable, but what if you don't have the proper treatment can leave serious sequelae in patients.

Therefore, the rationale for the present study is the need to practice to be carried out to promote the spread of information regarding leprosy. Since this disease is regarded as a public health problem in Brazil, which depends on early diagnosis and early treatment immediately so there is reduction in the number of affected.

Through this perspective of health education, it is questioned: the extent to which high school students dominate the theme involving leprosy and what is the impact of health education on appropriation of knowledge pertinent to leprosy by these students.

OBJECTIVE

Analyzing the knowledge of high school students about Hansen's disease before and after the practice of health education in the classrooms.

METHOD

The present study is of exploratory type - descriptive combined, of quantitative nature.

The exploratory research aims to provide a greater familiarity with the problem viewing to make it explicit. With respect to descriptive research, this aims to describe the characteristics of a particular population or phenomenon or the establishment of relationships between variables, and involves the use of standardized data collection techniques.¹²

The survey was conducted in a high school public school located in the municipality of Parnamirim-RN, in July 2011. After presenting the proposal to study the principal and other employees at the school, they have shown interest in the subject and have enabled the completion of the survey. Thus, occurred the selection of the place of study.

The population of the study consisted of all students enrolled in the school, making a total of 358 individuals. The sample consisted of 200 high school students from that school, aged 13 to 24 years old and belonging to the male and female gender. It should be noted that the total number of individuals that composed the sample was selected from the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of the present study.

The inclusion criteria for the selection of the sample were: be enrolled in high school in that school, being present in the classroom during the realization of research and allow their achievement by signing an informed consent (TFCC). For students under 18 years of age, the FICS was duly signed by their legal guardians.

As an exclusion criterion was used the lack of correspondence to the inclusion criteria, how not to be enrolled in high school or be absent in the classroom during the search, as well as those who have not consented to its realization.

The instrument used in data collection was a questionnaire containing 7 closed issues about leprosy, drawn up on the basis of the schedule of basic attention paragraph 21, published in 2008 by the Ministry of Health, contributing to the strengthening of realizing actions developed by all healthcare professionals in the basic attention.

The research was submitted and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, with protocol number 085/08 and Certificate of Introduction to Ethics Assessment-CAAE 00780051000-09.

For attendance to the objective proposed by the study, the data collection occurred in 3 distinct phases: the first phase, the pre-test, there was applied a questionnaire with closed questions. In the second phase was held a lecture through dialogue as health education activities, considering the prior knowledge of schoolchildren about leprosy, in order to enlighten them about the epidemiological chain of the disease. Later, in the third stage, the post-test, was reapplied the questionnaire.

The data obtained by the questionnaires were accounted for, organized and categorized in Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet for quantitative analysis with simple percentage of statistical data. Such results are presented and discussed throughout the article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the completion of the collection, analysis and processing of the data, there was obtained the results presented below in the form of percentage value and its absolute value. The results are laid out in Table 1.

With the first stage of the research, in the pre-test phase, 84% (168) of the students had heard about Hansen's disease and 16% (32) claimed not having heard about the disease. From the ones who have heard, 27% (75) was through television, 16.63% (23) by health professionals, 9,34% (17) at school and 3,29% (6) of the individuals heard through their families.

Regarding the etiology of Hansen's disease, fewer than half of the sample of the study answered correctly, when saying that the disease has as its causative agent a bacterium 43% (86).

As regards the transmission of leprosy, 54.5% (109) claimed not to know, 17% (34) scored correctly on be transmitted only by man, 16.5% (33) said to be for dogs and cats and 12% (24) by mosquitoes. When asked about the symptoms of leprosy, 52% (104) responded correctly, that is a lesion on skin and peripheral nerves.

On the issue concerning the cure of leprosy 54,5% (119) replied that Hansen's disease is curable, 12% (24) that has no cure and 28,5% (57) didn't know. And, about which health service to search, in case of suspected leprosy, most missed scoring hospital, 51% (102), as a gateway to the diagnosis of the disease.

After activity of health education, the results reflect positively the significant change of learning that students have obtained in front of Hansen's theme. And such a change is materialized in the figures presented on the data collected in the post-test after lecture on leprosy.

All of the students (200) have heard about leprosy. Of the 342 responses obtained from questioning about how you heard about leprosy, 40,05% (137) was on television, 14,61% (50) by health professionals, 43,85% (150) at school and 1,75% (06) by family members.

With all students (200) receiving information about leprosy, 97,5% (195) stated that this disease is caused by a bacterium, 94% (188) pointed out that the transmission happens only through man and 96.5% (193) marked, as to the symptoms, lesion on skin and peripheral nerves as the correct alternative.

In questioning "Once acquired, Hansen's disease is curable?", 99,5% (199) replied that Hansen's disease is curable and 0,5% (1) continued to ensure that do not have a cure. With respect to the health service should be sought in cases of suspected leprosy, 7% (14) answered hospital and 93% (186) basic unit of health.

Table 1: Answers to the questionnaire regarding leprosy, in the pre-test and in the post-test.

Questions	Possible Answers	Pre-test	Post-test
Have you ever heard about leprosy?			
	Yes	84% (168)	100% (200)
	No	16% (32)	0% (0)
If you have already heard, where did it go?			
	Television	27% (75)	40,05% (137)
	Health professionals	16,63% (23)	14,61% (50)
	School	9,34% (17)	43,85% (150)
	Family	3,29% (6)	1,75% (06)
What is the etiology (cause) of leprosy?			
	Bacterium	43% (86)	97,5% (195)
	STD	6% (12)	0% (0)
	Caused by carelessness	9% (18)	2% (4)
	Do not know	42% (84)	0,5% (1)
From who is leprosy transmitted?			
	Mosquitoes	12% (24)	2% (4)
	Dogs and cats	16,5% (33)	3% (6)
	Only by men	17% (34)	94% (188)
	Do not know	54,5% (109)	1% (2)

What are the symptoms of leprosy?			
	Nausea and vomiting	8,5% (17)	0,5% (1)
	High fever and cough	7% (14)	3% (6)
	Lesion on skin and nerves		
	Peripheral	52% (104)	96,5% (193)
	Do not know	32,5% (65)	0% (0)
Once acquired, Hansen's disease is curable?			
	Yes	54,5% (119)	99,5% (199)
	No	12% (24)	0,5% (1)
	Do not know	28,5% (57)	0% (0)
In case of suspicion of Hansen's disease, for which health service I should look for?			
	Hospital	51% (102)	7% (14)
	Basic Health Unit	49% (98)	93% (186)

Source: Leprosy: an educational approach with high school students in the city of Parnamirim-RN. 2012. Nursing Department, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte.

With respect to the control of leprosy, information and public education are intended to awareness of people by promoting a better understanding about the disease with deconstruction of the myths, misconceptions and fighting the stigma and the increasing demand for health services with consequent support for people affected by leprosy.¹³

When comparing the results obtained in the research before and after health education intervention, one realizes that such activity was significant for students since 100% of the sample went on to meet Hansen.

It is essential to emphasize that the analysis of these results is positively regarded, by virtue of that disinformation on the population is the main challenge to eliminate the disease found that still constitutes a public health problem, particularly with regard to information about prevention and control.¹⁴

With respect to the cure of leprosy, 54,5% (119) aptly replied that Yes, being that the second time the test was applied, the percentage of hits was 99,5% (199). Although the disease is recognized by notions of prejudice and aversion, marked by stigmatization and social segregation, today leprosy has treatment and cure, but for the discovery of new cases is required the disclosure of its signs and symptoms, and also of the existence of the treatment and its cure.¹⁵⁻⁶

When asked about what the health service search suspected leprosy, 49% (98) responded in the basic health unit pre-test, against 93% (186) in the post-test. It is emphasized that early detection of leprosy cases is essential to prevent disabilities caused by illness and to control the outbreaks of food-borne infections, contributing to the Elimination of leprosy as a public health problem.¹⁷

Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment of reactions and neuritis act jointly to prevent deficiencies and physical disabilities caused by illness. Such measures are essential to avoid or reduce the costs of rehabilitation and improve the quality of life of individuals.¹⁸

It is noticeable that this study reinforces the idea that health education on leprosy is an activity that must be performed by nurses in the most diverse spaces, for individuals

from various walks of life, with the aim of making these subjects meet the disease and disseminate such knowledge.¹⁹

CONCLUSION

In the present study it was observed that, in principle, the sample had related knowledge deficit regarding Hansen's disease, is a disease which is few discussed by the schools and society.

But this became reality after the completion of the lecture as a tool for health education and, with it, all the participants went on to meet the leprosy and a percentage considered was able to identify the epidemiologic chain related elements, such as Etiologic Agent, form of transmission, symptoms and health service to be sought in case of suspicion of the disease.

Soon, the impact and the importance of health education on leprosy, since this is a disease that is incurable, but that can leave sequelae in patients, if they do not receive the proper treatment.

It is believed that with the development of this work and the consequent increase in the number of individuals with information about leprosy there is dispersion of such information, since this sample presents on knowledge about this disease and may spread it by the community, alerting it to leprosy.

The execution of this work also leads us to the analysis of our actions while nursing professionals, taking information and proposing a closer relationship with such a pathological condition.

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