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Active diagnostics of dementia in the inland region of Portugal

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Abstract

Background: According to Alzheimer Europe (2019), it is estimated that in 2018, there were 8,885,101 people with dementia in Europe (EU-28), with a prevalence of 1.73%. In Portugal, it is estimated that this figure is 193,516, with a prevalence of 1.88%, surpassing the European trend, since it is expected to almost double the number of cases in 2050 (346,905), reflecting the significant increase of people over 70 years and, specifically over 85. The OECD's "Health at a Glance 2020" report indicates that Alzheimer's and other dementia accounted for 5% of all deaths in 2017.

Thus, it becomes relevant to study the magnitude of this problem also at the local level. This study aims to identify and characterize people with dementia in a region of the inland region of Portugal. It is assumed as the first stage of a more comprehensive study on the quality of life of the person with dementia and his/her family, within the framework of the NEUROQUALYFAM Project (0541_NEURO_QUALYFAM_6_E).

Method: This is a cross-sectional descriptive epidemiological study of people with dementia. The data, provided by health services, refer to the active diagnoses of the disease, according to the International Classification of Primary Health Care - ICPC-2 (P70 - Dementia) and do not allow to trace any of the individuals.

Result: The total number of people with active diagnosis of Dementia (P70) was in 2019, around 1603 cases, with an increase of 363 cases between 2014 and 2019. The proportion of active diagnoses in the resident population was 1.13%, with higher values in women (0.80% versus 0.33% in men). Most active diagnoses (95.51%) are from people aged 65 years or older, also reflecting the results a higher proportion in the higher age groups, namely 25.02% in the 80–84-year-old group and 43.54% in the 85-year-old group.

Conclusion: The identification and characterization of people with dementia, in the geographic area under study, will now allow the development of the study of the quality of life of these people and their families so that it is possible to implement more specific and targeted strategies for this target population.