



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

THE ROLE OF NURSING IN MENTAL HEALTH IN THE PRIMARY CARE

***Alan Cássio Carvalho Coutinho; Ana Claudia de Almeida Varão; Andrea Dutra Pereira; Claudiane Sousa Miritiba; Iracema Murada Pessoa; Jocelha de Maria Costa de Almeida; Karla Janyelle de Sousa Silva; Leticia Samara Ribeiro da Silva; Livia Alessandra Aroucha; Luciane Sousa Pessoa Cardoso; Maria Beatriz Pereira da Silva and Otavio Leless Miranda Neto**

RUA SANTA ROSA, 102, Brasil

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th August, 2019
Received in revised form
19th September, 2019
Accepted 24th October, 2019
Published online 30th November, 2019

Key Words:

Nursing Care, Mental Health,
Primary Care.

*Corresponding author:

Alan Cássio Carvalho Coutinho

ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze scientific evidence found in literature about the role of nursing in Mental Health in the Primary Care. **Methods:** This article is an integrative literature review. To survey articles in the literature, the databases LILACS, SCIELO and BDEF were used. Were found 53 studies, of which 10 met the inclusion criteria. **Results:** From the analysis of scientific productions, it was possible to verify that most nurses feel unprepared to work in the area of mental health in primary care, or even those who said they feel prepared, few were able to detail this knowledge. Studies demonstrate there are no specific activities aimed at promoting mental health, so that nursing care is restricted to the actions of the own routine from the basic healthcare units. **Conclusion:** It is essential that nurses include mental health actions in their practice for the integrality of care to people with mental disorders and family support. It is needed to have since graduation concern with the aspect of their education, in addition to the training of those already inserted in primary care, aiming at the implementation of more effective actions involving Mental Health in Primary Care.

Copyright © 2019, Alan Cássio Carvalho Coutinho et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Alan Cássio Carvalho Coutinho; Ana Claudia de Almeida Varão; Andrea Dutra Pereira et al. 2019. "The role of nursing in mental health in the primary care", *International Journal of Development Research*, 09, (11), 31888-31892.

INTRODUCTION

The change of the mental health care model, based on the debate proposed by the Brazilian Psychiatric Reform in the late 70's, consisted on the rupture of the asylum or clinical-psychiatric model of exclusion and isolation of individuals with mental disorders to the psychosocial rehabilitation model. Were implemented, with this process, multiple health services which compose this network of mental health care, qualifying care through welcoming and continuous follow up, the so-called Psychosocial Care Network (PSCN) (SILVA PO, et al., 2018). In PSCN, the incorporation of Primary Care as one of its essential components establishes that health services at this point of care also have the responsibility to develop actions to promote mental health, prevention and care of people with mental disorders (BRASIL, 2011). According to Waidman MAP, et al. (2012), when considering the gradual increase in the number of people suffering from mental disorders and that this represents a worldwide expanding public health problem, it is necessary to think this reality is closely related to the health service and, especially, with Primary Care. The author also highlights Primary Care as the main access for people who seek to have their basic needs met, pointing out that this

mode of care includes not only assistance to individuals in psychological distress or already installed mental disorders, but the development of preventive and early detection actions as well, which involve both the individual and their family. As stated by Azevedo DM, et al. (2014), the health care provided in primary care is considered the structuring axis of the Brazil's health system, as, besides being the access to the Unified Health System (SUS), it manages referrals, coordinates and integrates work performed by other levels of attention and follows up, longitudinally, one's health during life. In this perspective, mental health practices in primary care must be based on the principles of SUS, such as universality, accessibility, bonding, longitudinality of care, integrality, accountability, humanization, equity and social participation (BOLSONI EB, et al., 2015). In this logic of primary care being the first contact of individuals, families and communities to the health system, the nursing practice in Mental Health in the primary care consists of actions in a broader area and wider scope, which is no longer limited to care of hospitalized patients, but also incorporates attention to the healthy ones in the Basic Healthcare Units (BHU) within the Family Health Strategy (FHS), which are central devices for the Primary Care operation, aiming at its expansion, qualification and

consolidation (SILVA PO, *et al.*, 2018). It is agreed that the nursing team makes the first contact with the patient, establishing a bond characterized by the welcoming and understanding attitude of their values and desires. The nurse, as a direct acting in this service, and given their responsibilities and competences, occupies the role of primary care agent in Mental Health. In agreement with Amarante AL, *et al.* (2011), the nurse has to, while attributing and taking into account the real needs of the population: plan, manage, coordinate, execute and evaluate health actions, prioritizing integral care. The articulation between mental health and primary care presupposes a care model which adopts as principles the notion of territory, intersectoriality, psychosocial rehabilitation and interdisciplinarity in order to promote the citizenship of users (SILVA PO, *et al.*, 2018). Based on this situation, it is considered one of the nurse's duties to act in promoting people and families' mental health, in the transition from an eminently hospital practice to another which incorporates one's recognition as a human being. Considering that primary care constitutes a privileged plan for the assistance of mental health needs, nurses must be prepared to help people with mental disorders, promoting actions to include patients in the many forms of service organization and building spaces to do psychosocial rehabilitation along with the family, which may occur as care practices are being reformulated (WAIDMAN MAP, *et al.*, 2012). In light of Primary Care as the first level of user care, conducive to prevention and early detection of mental disorders due to bonding with the community, and taking into consideration that nurses are the reference care professionals, this integrative review has as general objective: To analyze scientific evidence found in the literature about the role of nursing in Mental Health in Primary Care, and as specific objectives: To identify the function of nursing in Mental Health assistance in Primary Care and To verify the role of nurses in promoting mental health actions at this level of attention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is an integrative literature review. Mendes KDS, *et al.* (2008) define integrative review as a research method which allows the synthesis of multiple published studies and enables general conclusions about a particular area of study. In the construction of this integrative review, the following steps were taken: definition of the theme; elaboration of the guiding question; establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria; definition of the information to be extracted from the selected articles; critical analysis of included studies; discussion of results; and presentation of the integrative review. As a guideline of this study, the following guiding question was formulated: What is the scientific evidence found in the literature about the practice of nursing in Mental Health in Primary Care?

The search for scientific articles about the chosen theme was carried out between May 20 and 30, 2019. To survey the articles in the literature, were used the following databases: Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) and Nursing Database (BDENF). Search strategies were guided by terms taken from the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS). The terms selected were: Nursing Care, Mental Health, Primary Care. Were adopted the following inclusion criteria: articles in Portuguese, published and indexed in the referred databases in the last ten years (2008-2018), full-text available, with free access and related to the present theme focusing on Nursing.

Exclusion criteria included all articles which were not relevant to the research theme, review articles, articles published in other languages, not free or covering other professional categories, experience-type research, undergraduate studies, monographs, dissertations, theses and summaries of events.

The descriptors crossing resulted in a total of 53 articles.

Chart 1. Criteria for selecting articles according to databases. Bacabal - MA, 2019

Criteria	LILACS	SCIELO	BDENF
Total found	27	8	18
1º Moment: selection by title reading	6	5	5
2º Moment: selection by abstract reading	5	4	1
Total selected	10 articles		

Chart 2. Analysis of articles by title, author, database, journal and year of publication. Bacabal - MA, 2019

N	Articles Title	Author	Database	Journal	Year
1	Nursing assistance to people with mental disorders and to families in Primary Care.	Waidman MAP, et al.	LILACS	Acta Paulista de Enfermagem	2012
2	Mental health nursing and the family health strategy: how the nurse is working?	Ribeiro LM, et al.	LILACS	Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da USP	2010
3	The nurse and the actions of mental health in basic health units.	Caixeta CC e Moreno V	LILACS	Revista Eletrônica de Enfermagem	2008
4	<i>Perfil dos enfermeiros da estratégia saúde da família e suas habilidades para atuar na saúde mental.</i> Family health strategy nurses' profile and their abilities to act in mental health.	Gonçalves RMDA e Pedrosa LAK	LILACS	Revista Ciência, Cuidado e Saúde	2009
5	Nursing mental health care strategies in Brazilian family health program	Amarante AL, et al.	LILACS	Texto Contexto Enfermagem	2011
6	Mental health in the work of Nurse the Primary Care of a municipality in Brazil	Silva APM, et al.	SCIELO	Revista Cubana de Enfermería	2015
7	Mental health promotion: Nurses' actions included in primary health care	Gonçalves RMDA, et al.	SCIELO	Revista Portuguesa de Enfermagem de Saúde Mental	2013
8	Demands of mental health: nurses' perceptions of family health teams	Souza J e LuisMAV.	SCIELO	Acta Paulista de Enfermagem	2012
9	Mental health nursing consultations in primary health care	Bolsoni EB, et al.	SCIELO	Revista Eletrônica Saúde Mental Álcool e Drogas	2015
10	The mental health nursing work in the family health strategy	Oliveira FB, et al.	BDENF	Revista da Rede de Enfermagem do Nordeste (Rene)	2011

For the selection of studies, at first, the titles were read, resulting in the selection of 16 publications and then the critical analysis of the abstracts. After this second moment, the final sample of this integrative review was constituted with a total of 10 articles.

which met the previously established inclusion criteria, being five in the LILACS database, four in SCIELO and one in BDEF. The ten articles which constitute the final sample of this review were fully read, analyzed according to methodological aspects and approach of the theme raised, and

Chart 3. Analysis of articles according to type of study, objectives, main results and conclusions/ recommendations. Bacabal - MA, 2019

Nº	Types of study	Objectives	Main results	Conclusions/ Recommendations
1	Exploratory-descriptive, with qualitative approach.	To know how nurses who work in the FHS perceive their ability to assist the person with mental disorder and their family and identify the activities developed by them.	Nurses do not feel empowered and mental health activities are restricted to the actions of BHUs's own routine.	There are no activities aimed at promoting mental health.
2	Analytical, with qualitative approach.	Describe the activities focused on the attention to people with mental disorder in the FHS and identify if the professionals are prepared to serve this specific clientele.	There are no activities for the people with mental disorder in the basic network, and there is a lack of training of nurses.	There must be professional qualification.
3	Descriptive qualitative/ exploratory.	Understand how nurses in basic units recognize mental health actions.	There is no specific mental health care. The activities are restricted to referral to the specialized mental health service and guidance on the use of psychiatric medication.	Training is required and it is essential to establish an interface with actions directed at mental health.
4	Quantitative of descriptive and transversal character.	Describe the sociodemographic profile of FHS nurses and identify their skills to act in mental health.	Most nurses feel unprepared to deal with mental health in the FHS.	For the integrality of primary care, it is reinforced the importance of developing improvement in mental health.
5	Descriptive, with qualitative approach.	Describe the strategies used by "family nurses" in caring for patients in psychological distress.	There are difficulties in identifying mental health care as part of the operationalization of actions in the daily life of the FHS. Nurses do not know how to detect mental problems, realizing their ignorance and prejudice in assisting people with mental disorder.	Specific actions are not planned, but there are indirect strategies for mental health care. The nurse should look for multidisciplinary to expand the level of health of people with psychic problems.
6	Exploratory qualitative	Comprehend how the preparation is developed and what is the knowledge that nurses working in the FHS have about Mental Health to care for patients with mental disorders.	The nurses reported they felt prepared to deal with their patients and knew the main disorders, but few were able to detail this knowledge.	Greater preparation of nurses in the mental health area is necessary to provide resolute care to patients who require such care.
7	Quantitative	Describe the actions of nurses in promoting mental health inserted in primary care.	Most nurses feel unprepared to deal with mental health in the FHS.	It is important to reinforce the need for improvement in mental health, with proposals for continuing education.
8	Exploratory-descriptive, with qualitative approach.	Describe how mental health needs are identified and accepted by FHS teams, as conceived by nurses.	The lack of indicators in the Primary Care Information System (SIAB) affects the planning of mental health actions and that other chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension, are a priority for the teams.	There is no specific therapeutic project for meeting / receiving and monitoring the demand in the mental health area. It recognizes the need for continuing education to expand the clinic of actions in primary care.
9	Descriptive with qualitative approach.	Understand the importance of mental health nursing consultation in Primary Health Care.	Nurses considered the nursing consultation in mental health as an important instrument for longitudinal follow up of the person with mental disorder.	The relationship between primary care and mental health proposes that care should be relational and collaborative. However, there is a weakness of nurses to point out ideas which can expand knowledge in this area.
10	Exploratory-descriptive, with qualitative approach.	To identify the care offered by the FHS nurses regarding mental health needs and to evaluate if they were based on the notions of integrality, welcoming / bonding and listening the individual.	The conceptions of the mental health-disease process were based on the biological model. Home visits, referral to specialized mental health services and orientation to community health agents to perform active search are the only nursing actions developed in this type of care.	The lack of interaction between the FHS and referral services in mental health is seen as a major challenge to be overcome.

Chart 1 shows the number of articles selected at both times in each database to reach the final sample. For the presentation of the selected articles, two charts were prepared: one containing the article title, author, database, journal in which it was published and the year; and another with the types of study, objectives, main results, conclusions/ recommendations.

RESULTS

In the database search process, 53 papers were identified. However, in this integrative review were analyzed 10 articles

cataloged in the following chart (Chart 2). The publication date of the articles ranged from 2008 to 2015. The studies were conducted with nurses, with the largest portion acting in the Family Health Strategy (FHS). Among the papers, the most found were from Brazil's southeastern (n = 6), followed by two articles from the northeast region and two from the southern region. Regarding the methodological nature, most of the analyzed studies were of qualitative approach (n = 8), being only two articles of quantitative approach. Considering the selected studies, some information were obtained to better synthesize the theme, providing a better understanding of the

type of study, its objectives, main results and conclusions/recommendations (Chart 3).

DISCUSSION

Following the analysis of the scientific evidence found, it was considered relevant to group the publications by similarity of themes, in order to synthesize the results found in a comprehensible pattern of the subjects focused on the studies.

The relevant data found in the sample were grouped into two themes: the challenges for the performance of nurses in Mental Health in Primary Care and the nursing actions in the care of patients with mental disorders at this level of attention.

Challenges for the performance of nurses in Mental Health in Primary Care: From the analysis of scientific productions, it was possible to verify a negative aspect regarding the nurses skills to work in mental health. Most of these professionals feel unprepared to work in this area in primary care, or even those who said they feel prepared to deal with these patients, few were able to detail this knowledge. According to Gonçalves RMDA, *et al.* (2013), among the main reasons, stands out inexperience, insecurity, lack of adequate knowledge, inefficient training, lack of training and qualification courses, difficulty in approach and guidance to people with mental disorder. These factors block the development of quality assistance and care actions aimed at individuals with mental disorders (WAIDMAN MAP, *et al.*, 2012). Although studies indicate nurses face difficulties in working with aspects related to mental health in primary care, it must not be forgotten that the need for care for individuals with mental disorders together with their families is a reality. Given this context, to overcome obstacles and limitations found in the relationship mental health/ primary care, it is necessary an appropriate training and qualification by the nurse, with interest and commitment to quality in mental health (GONÇALVES RMDA and PEDROSA LAK, 2009). . In this perspective, nurses education must be based on the principles of Psychiatric Reform and of SUS since graduation, in order to meet the demand in accordance with health policies, in a dignified and humanized way (AZEVEDO DM, *et al.*, 2014).

Nursing actions in the care of patients with mental disorders in Primary Care: Studies have shown that there are no specific activities aimed at promoting mental health, so that nursing care is restricted to the actions of the basic health units own routine. Prioritized nursing actions in this area are: control of the mentally impaired patient in moments of crisis through counseling, referral to the specialized mental health service and guidance on the use of psychiatric medication (CAIXETA CC and MORENO V, 2008). In spite of the changes proposed by the Psychiatric Reform and efforts to socially integrate the individual with mental disorder, still prevails the therapeutic tendency which favors the medicalization of the patient, seeking to alleviate the symptoms (CAIXETA CC and MORENO V, 2008). In accordance with Ribeiro LM, *et al.* (2010), with the nurses' unpreparedness to work in mental health, there is the transcription of medications without adequate clinical evaluation, which leads to the dependence of psychiatric drugs by the person with mental disorder and, consequently, limits the attendance to traditional psychiatric methods. Through this research it is noticed the situation is not consistent with the guidelines established by the National Mental Health Policy, which proposes the transformation of

traditional psychiatric care into an attention to the psychosocial aspects of the individual, so as to favor the process of social inclusion of the subject with mental disorder (BRAZIL, 2001). Thus, to change this reality, nurses need to know the guidelines of the Psychiatric Reform and be able to work with the person with mental disorder (WAIDMAN MAP, *et al.*, 2012). According to Ribeiro LM, *et al.* (2010), despite the barriers faced by these professionals, mental health practices in primary care are based on the bond, co-responsibility, involvement and knowledge of the family group. What is shown to be needed is, therefore, the greater preparation of nurses in this area, in order to provide resolute care to patients who require such assistance.

Conclusion

This integrative review showed that most nurses do not feel able to deal with people with mental disorders. This condition largely justifies why specific mental health actions are not promoted in primary care, as they are restricted to the actions of the basic healthcare units routine itself. It was evidenced in the studies analyzed that, despite the difficulties faced, nurses working in primary care recognize the need for permanent and continuing education in the area of mental health for the integrality of care and, above all, for the creation of unique therapeutic projects in the provision of new ways of caring. Regarding the expansion of nurses' performance linked to primary care, it is essential to include in their practice mental health actions, seeking care integrality for people with mental disorders and family support. For this reason, it is necessary to have since graduation, a concern with this aspect of education, in addition to the instrumentalization of nurses already inserted in primary care, through training and use of a problematizing methodology which seeks to articulate the knowledge produced in the daily services with the scientific ones. In view of this, it is aimed greater interaction with the community who looks for basic service and the implementation of more effective techniques involving mental health. It is hoped, with this study, to encourage future professional nurses and those who already work in Primary Care to conduct research on this subject in order to support their practice with greater level of evidence, which consequently will contribute to the elaboration and implementation of new actions which expand mental health activities in the care of people with mental disorders at this level of attention.

REFERENCES

- AMARANTE AL, *et al.* As estratégias dos enfermeiros para o cuidado em saúde mental no programa saúde da família. *Revista Texto & Contexto Enfermagem*, Florianópolis, 2011; 20(1): 85-93.
- AZEVEDO DM, *et al.* Atenção básica e saúde mental: um diálogo e articulação necessários. *Revista de APS - Atenção primária à saúde*, 2014; 17(4): 537-543.
- BOLSONI EB, *et al.* Consulta de enfermagem em saúde mental na atenção primária em saúde. *SMAD, Revista eletrônica saúde mental álcool e drogas*, Ribeirão Preto, 2015; 11(4): 199-207.
- BRAZIL. Presidência da República. Lei n. 10.216, de 06 de abril de 2001. Dispõe sobre a proteção e os direitos das pessoas portadoras de transtornos mentais e redireciona o modelo assistencial em saúde mental. *Diário Oficial da República Federativa do Brasil*, Brasília (DF) 2001.

- BRASIL. Presidência da República. Portaria nº 3.088, de 23 de dezembro de 2011. Institui a Rede de Atenção Psicossocial para pessoas com sofrimento ou transtorno mental, incluindo aquelas com necessidades decorrentes do uso de crack, álcool e outras drogas, no âmbito do Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS). Diário Oficial da República Federativa do Brasil, Brasília (DF) 2011.
- CAIXETA CC, MORENO V. O enfermeiro e as ações de saúde mental nas unidades básicas de saúde. Revista Eletrônica de Enfermagem, 2008; 10(1): 179-188.
- GONÇALVES RMDA, *et al.* Promoção da saúde mental: Ações dos enfermeiros inseridos na atenção primária. Revista Portuguesa de Enfermagem de Saúde Mental, Porto, 2013; 10.
- GONÇALVES RMDA, PEDROSA LAK. Perfil dos enfermeiros da estratégia saúde da família e suas habilidades para atuar na saúde mental. Revista Ciência, Cuidado e Saúde, 2009; 8(3): 345 - 351.
- MENDES KDS, *et al.* Revisão integrativa: método de pesquisa para a incorporação de evidências na saúde e na enfermagem. Texto & Contexto - Enfermagem, Florianópolis, 2008; 17(4): 758-764.
- MERCES AMF, *et al.* Práticas de Enfermagem em Saúde Mental na Estratégia de Saúde da Família: revisão integrativa. Revista Cogitare Enfermagem, 2015; 20(2): 417-25.
- OLIVEIRA FB, *et al.* O trabalho de enfermagem em saúde mental na Estratégia de Saúde da Família. Revista Rene, Fortaleza, 2011; 12(2): 229-237.
- RIBEIRO LM, *et al.* Saúde mental e enfermagem na estratégia saúde da família: como estão atuando os enfermeiros? Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da USP, 2010; 44(2): 376-382.
- SILVA APM, *et al.* Saúde mental no trabalho do Enfermeiro da Atenção Primária de um município no Brasil. Revista Cubana de Enfermería, 2015; 31(1): 70-83.
- SILVA PO, *et al.* Cuidado clínico de enfermagem em Saúde Mental. Revista de Enfermagem, UFPE, Recife, 2018; 12(11): 3133-46.
- SOUZA J, LUIS MAV. Demandas de saúde mental: percepção de enfermeiros de equipes de saúde da família. Acta Paulista de Enfermagem, São Paulo, 2012; 25(6).
- WAIDMAN MAP, *et al.* Assistência de enfermagem às pessoas com transtornos mentais e às famílias na Atenção Básica. Acta Paulista de Enfermagem, 2012; 25(3): 346-51.
