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ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE HEALTH AT WORK ENVIRONMENT: AN EXPERIENCE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Health education is an important tool for developing health promotion in the work environment, valuing and contributing to the quality of life and health of workers. This work aimed to describe the experience in health promotion activities. This is a descriptive study, of the experience-report type about the activities of health promotion of federal government workers in the period from January 2016 to December 2018. Eighty-seven health promotion activities were carried out, highlighting health-focused wheels of conversations, lectures and workshops. Regarding the workers' participation, there was an expressive adherence during these activities, as well as actions regarding the measurement of blood pressure and body mass index. There stands out the importance of preventive activities in the work environment, since they facilitate the access of the worker to educational practices, allowing a moment to take care of their health.

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INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health education as "any combination of learning experiences designed to help individuals and communities to improve their health, increasing their knowledge or influencing their attitudes" (WHO, 2016). In addition, health education is considered a process of knowledge construction that aims at the thematic appropriation by the population through actions aimed at promoting health and quality of life, thus contributing to empowering of people in their care (Brazil, 2013a). The approach of health promotion should be holistically, empowering individually or collectively to ensure that each subject can act on their health through intersectoral actions aiming to build healthy public policies in all environments, including work spaces (Kumar and Preetha, 2012). Planning health education strategies compatible with the characteristics and needs of the target public in these places is essential, in addition to being able to promote healthy lifestyles, preventing

or managing diseases, contributing to the occupational health and improving the organizational environment (Santos *et al.*, 2017). The institutions need to develop tools to reach the health of their workers, developing educational strategies in the workplace itself, early anticipating risk situations and possible damage to health, there by improving the health and well-being of workers (Oliveira and Andre, 2016). In this way, considering the importance of valuing the government worker's health, the Public Management Department of the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management has established general guidelines for health promotion of federal government workers to be adopted as a reference in health promotion actions of bodies and entities that make up the Civilian Personnel System of the Federal Administration - SIPEC, aiming to improve the worker's quality of life (Brazil, 2013b). The planning of health promotion actions should prioritize the areas related to adult health, oral health, men's health, health of the elderly, mental health, women's health, health of disabled people and occupational health. In this way, these actions

should contemplate collective approaches that might influence or modify individual habits and organizational cultures, in order to encourage the spaces of coexistence and health production, strengthening workers' autonomy and contributing to their skills and abilities (Brazil, 2013b). In this context, the attention to the health of the federal civil service is a relevant health policy, since the care with the professional, in relation to prevention and monitoring of diseases, reflects in better working conditions and health, with lower costs, better productivity with decreased presenteeism and in the provision of services that meet the society's expectations (Brazil, 2017; Kocakulah *et al.*, 2016). In this way, this work aimed to describe the experience in health promotion activities of federal government workers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a descriptive study, of the experience-report type, about the activities of health promotion of federal government workers, organized by health professionals from the Federal Institute of Maranhão that comprise the team of Health Promotion of the Integrated Subsystem of Health Attention do the Federal Government Service - SIASS, in the period from January 2016 to December 2018, seeking to enhance workers' health. This study was developed through a project with articulated actions between accredited federal bodies through a technical cooperation agreement, aiming to develop actions directed to the care with government workers' health, using a set of methodological strategies previously selected by the team, encouraging active participation and strengthening the autonomy of each worker. The elaboration of the action plan based on a survey of health problems of workers' through meetings with representatives of health sectors of the Government Worker's Health of accredited federal agencies, seeking to understand their needs and peculiarities of work and illness. Then, after systematic evaluations of each reality, the proposals for actions with health education activities directed to the workers were created. After defining the action plan, the methodological proposals and selection of issues to be addressed were presented to the coordinators and, after the agreement, monthly schedules of actions were created to schedule activities and publicize to workers. The proposed activities were developed using active methodologies, such as wheels of conversations, lectures, pedagogical workshops and other educational activities, establishing partnerships with public services of the state and municipality and with health professionals in order to enable the development of the planned activities.

RESULTS

The multidisciplinary team developed 87 activities of health promotion to the workers, made possible through support from various professionals such as physicians, dentists, psychologists, physiotherapists, physical educators, nutritionists and nursing team, who acted as a facilitator of the health educative actions. These activities offered wheels of conversations focused on mental health and work, suicide, women's health and sexually transmitted infections (STIS), using active methodologies that are important tools for the reflective education of workers because they favor the involvement, autonomy, communication and curiosity of those involved. There were also lectures on breast cancer, oral health, men's health, sustainability and environment, violence

against women, sexual abuse, deafness, blood donation and records of voluntary donors in the bone marrow bank, arousing reflections and critical awareness about these important and current themes. Furthermore, there occurred pedagogical workshops on healthy eating and reuse of food, when the workers were able to interact collectively; art shows at work, with musical presentation, culinary production and handicrafts produced by the workers; occupational gymnastics, performed in the sectors; measurement of blood pressure, weight, height and body mass index (BMI), in which they received the relevant guidelines to care with their health.

DISCUSSION

Health promotion strategies in the workplace require special attention by the health team, since adult individuals spend much of their time in these environments, exposed to occupational diseases that may impair their quality of life. The actions related to workers' health education are already established in technical standards, but there is still need to develop methodological strategies that encourage the participation of employees, thus contributing to the worker's health and a good labor capacity, and retirees with less risk of injuries arising from work activity. The activities proposed and developed in the workplace achieved satisfactory results, where the workers showed interest in the subjects, were free to speak, expose their life experiences, developing skills such as empathy and sharing their difficulties, clarifying doubts regarding the explored themes. Among the participatory methodologies, the wheels of conversations seek to sensitize and mobilize the participants to reflect on their relationship with the world, work and their life project. They can also help disseminate and clarify health-related aspects, favoring reflections and contributing to the effective practice of health promotion (Dias *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the wheels of conversations allowed the workers to express themselves, to listen to their colleagues and themselves by the reflective exercise, in addition to sharing knowledges, with their collective interaction.

In relation to the topics covered in the wheels of conversations, the theme on mental health with an emphasis on suicide in occupational health stands out due to the great social and economic impact that mental pathologies may cause in workers' life. The behavioral disorders are the major causes of absenteeism, including among Brazilian government workers, highlighting the relevance of addressing the subject in workplaces (Carlotto *et al.*, 2019). Studies show variations in costs from US\$ 221.23 million to US\$ 187 billion related to decreased productivity due to stress triggered by labor activities (Hassard *et al.*, 2018). In relation to the developed lectures, they are also one of the strategies that can be used to allow discussion on any subject of interest in the group, facilitated by a professional with extensive knowledge, socializing experiences, allowing for the dialog and exchange of knowledge, in order to enlarge the knowledge about any topic (Leão, Dutra and Alves, 2018). The lectures sought to stimulate and engage the workers in the discussions, in which participants showed satisfaction with the opportunity to reflect and enrich their knowledge, contributing to positive behaviors in relation to the solidary actions and care with their health. The pedagogical workshops appear as an opening for knowledge construction, based on collective tasks, through contextualization, planning and reflection, discussing the topic, researching the problem situation and systematizing the

knowledge acquired, thus integrating theoretical knowledge with its practical application (Do Carmo *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, strategies that prioritize the dialog and actions that allow for sharing ideas and experiences constitute privileged actions to build the health knowledge. Through the workshops on healthy eating and reuse of food, the workers had the opportunity to understand the importance of the appropriate choice and preparation of foods for their health, clarifying the doubts with nutritionists, besides receiving the incentive for adherence to these practices in their routine, including the workplace. Initiatives undertaken by the multidisciplinary team addressing topics on nutrition in working environments have demonstrated satisfactory results, contributing to improving the anthropometric profile of workers and reducing the risk of obesity (Arruda, Fujimori and Lima, 2016). The art shows at work sought to value the talents of these workers, sharing their skills and abilities in other areas that also bring personal fulfillment. There also stands out the accomplishment of labor gymnastics in the work environment, bringing body relaxation and making the workers aware of the need for stretching the body and the importance of correct posture for health, especially during their working hours. Considering the prevention of occupational diseases and aiming to improve the workers' fitness, the occupational gymnastic becomes a necessary and important modality of physical activity practiced in the workplace (Galliza and Goetten, 2010). Concerning the measurement of blood pressure, weight, height and BMI, there was also a significant adherence of the workers, who were involved and interacted in these actions more directed to health, receiving professional guidelines relevant to the case. Adopting methodological strategies that encourage the participation and the exchange of experiences among the participants are more attractive and improve collective participation. The choice of the methodology requires using principles and educational tools directed to education of adult people who already have some empirical knowledge about the subjects to be developed with the group. In this context, the practice of these activities of health promotion was considered positive, contributing to a reflection of the workers about the importance of care with their health, allowing effective moments for this care in their work environment, in order to prioritize their quality of life.

Conclusion

Health education represented an important tool for the development of health promotion in the work environment, valuing and contributing to the quality of life and health of workers that participated in the proposed activities, thus reaching the expected goals. Groups allowing for the discussion of topics related to health education represent one of the main resources used for knowledge construction, since they allow the exchange between professionals' scientific knowledge and popular knowledge, valuing the experience of workers, making it appropriate for the health education, being capable of arousing reflections on the need for empowering these individuals. The activity promoted a space for reflection and mobilization for the health care with federal workers, thus contributing to strengthening educational activities for adult individuals in their workspaces. The health professional is fundamental to this process of empowerment, demonstrating their role in society for the idealization of more active and critical subjects regarding the care with their own health.

Therefore, health promotion teams are essential for the development of educational actions in the work environment, always seeking methodological strategies that arouse the interest of workers, raising awareness about the importance of preventive care with health for a good quality of life.

Conflicts of interest: None.

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