

Women with an open mind and chest: an experience report
Mulheres de mente e peito abertos: um relato de experiência
Mujeres con la mente y el pecho abiertos: un relato de experiencia

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Gabriela Oliveira Parentes da Costa

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9473-8986>

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Maranhão, Brasil

E-mail: gabiparentes@hotmail.com

Antonia Gonçalves dos Santos

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4073-9278>

Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Maranhão, Brasil

E-mail: antonia.santos@ifma.edu.br

Aclênia Maria Nascimento Ribeiro

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5582-9663>

Universidade Federal do Piauí, Brasil

E-mail: aclennya@hotmail.com

Francisca Maria Pereira da Cruz

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6631-6591>

Instituto de Ensino Superior Múltiplo, Brasil

E-mail: Francruz2@outlook.com

Nayara Vanele Ribeiro Pinto

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0901-0793>

Universidade Estadual do Piauí, Brasil

E-mail: najaravanele@hotmail.com

Ricardo Clayton Silva Jansen

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6392-8100>

Universidade Federal do Maranhão, Brasil

E-mail: ricardojansen_20@hotmail.com

Edildete Sene Pacheco

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5329-8037>

Universidade Federal do Piauí, Brasil

E-mail: edildete_sene@hotmail.com

Luciana Stanford Balduino

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5052-7607>

Instituto de Ensino Superior Múltiplo, Brasil

E-mail: lsbalduino@hotmail.com

Maria Tamires Alves Ferreira

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7822-9575>

Faculdade Estácio de Teresina, Brasil

E-mail: thammyaf@hotmail.com

Maria do Socorro Marques do Nascimento Filha

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1597-8023>

Hospital Universitário da Universidade Federal do Piauí, Brasil

E-mail: socorrofilha7@hotmail.com

Láise Virgínia Soares Senna

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0144-7763>

Hospital Universitário da Universidade Federal do Piauí, Brasil

E-mail: laisesenna@gmail.com

Fernanda Mendes Dantas e Silva

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3084-3263>

Universidade Federal do Piauí, Brasil

E-mail: fernandantass@gmail.com

Nadja Vanessa Dias de Oliveira

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9879-9997>

Hospital Universitário da Universidade Federal do Piauí, Brasil

E-mail: dranadja@hotmail.com

Elton Filipe Pinheiro de Oliveira

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0930-859X>

Universidade Federal do Piauí, Brasil

E-mail: helton-oliver@hotmail.com

Abstract

Objective: To spread knowledge about breast cancer to women in a vulnerable community.

Methodology: For the description of this research, we opted for the descriptive and qualitative approach, the type of experience report. The experience took place through the execution of an extension project developed in the city of Coelho Neto, in the state of Maranhão, Brazil,

with 40 women and 3 three men. The activities developed were based on Freirian thinking, since it describes that knowledge must be passed on in an integrative and interactive way, making education with the other and not for the other. To support the synthesis of the experience, articles published in the journal Research, Society and Development were selected. Results: When asked about which of the participants had already undergone the mammogram, only two said they had already undergone the exam, the others reported not even knowing where to go to request the referral. There are several factors that lead the individual to develop breast cancer. Invited to describe the AEM, with the support of the material made by them, none of the women (or men) present knew how to perform the technique. Conclusion: The lack of knowledge about breast cancer among women and men participating in the conversation circle showed the fragility of preventing this type of cancer in the municipality where the extension project was developed. There is a need for more spaces that promote health education in order to favor comprehensive community care, as it expands its knowledge.

Keywords: Breast neoplasms; Social vulnerability; Women's health.

Resumo

Objetivo: Propalar o conhecimento sobre o câncer de mama às mulheres de uma comunidade em situação de vulnerabilidade. Metodologia: Para a descrição dessa pesquisa, optou-se pela abordagem descritiva e qualitativa, do tipo relato de experiência. A vivencia se deu por meio da execução de um projeto de extensão desenvolvido na cidade de Coelho Neto, no estado do Maranhão, Brasil, com 40 mulheres e 3 três homens. As atividades desenvolvidas tiveram como fundamentos o pensamento Freiriano, pois este, descreve que o conhecimento deve ser repassado de modo integrador e interativo, fazendo-se educação com o outro e não para o outro. Para o subsidiar a síntese da vivência, foram selecionados artigos publicados na revista Research, Society and Development. Resultados: Quando indagadas sobre quais das participantes já havia realizado a mamografia, apenas duas afirmaram já ter feito o exame, as demais, relataram nem ao menos saberem onde ir para solicitar o encaminhamento. Vários são os fatores que levam o indivíduo a desenvolver câncer de mama. Convidadas para descrever o AEM, com o apoio do material confeccionado por elas, nenhuma das mulheres (ou homens) presentes sabiam como executar a técnica. Conclusão: A falta de conhecimento sobre o câncer de mama entre as mulheres e os homens participantes da roda de conversa evidenciaram a fragilidade da prevenção deste tipo de câncer no município onde foi desenvolvido o projeto de

extensão. Necessita-se de mais espaços que promovam a educação em saúde para favorecer o cuidado integral da comunidade, à medida em que amplia seu conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: Neoplasias de mama; Vulnerabilidade social; Saúde da mulher.

Resumen

Objetivo: Difundir el conocimiento sobre el cáncer de mama entre las mujeres de una comunidad vulnerable. Metodología: Para la descripción de esta investigación se optó por el enfoque descriptivo y cualitativo, el tipo de relato de experiencia. La experiencia tuvo lugar a través de la ejecución de un proyecto de extensión desarrollado en la ciudad de Coelho Neto, en el estado de Maranhão, Brasil, con 40 mujeres y 3 tres hombres. Las actividades desarrolladas se basaron en el pensamiento freiriano, ya que describe que el conocimiento debe transmitirse de manera integradora e interactiva, haciendo educación con el otro y no para el otro. Para apoyar la síntesis de la experiencia, se seleccionaron artículos publicados en la revista Research, Society and Development. Resultados: Cuando se les preguntó sobre cuál de las participantes ya se había sometido a la mamografía, solo dos dijeron que ya se habían sometido al examen, las otras dijeron que ni siquiera sabían a dónde acudir para solicitar la derivación. Hay varios factores que llevan al individuo a desarrollar cáncer de mama. Invitada a describir la AEM, con el apoyo del material elaborado por ellas, ninguna de las mujeres (u hombres) presentes supo realizar la técnica. Conclusión: El desconocimiento sobre el cáncer de mama entre mujeres y hombres que participaron en el círculo de conversación mostró la fragilidad de prevenir este tipo de cáncer en el municipio donde se desarrolló el proyecto de extensión. Se necesitan más espacios que promuevan la educación para la salud con el fin de favorecer la atención comunitaria integral, ya que amplía sus conocimientos.

Palabras clave: Neoplasias de la mama; Vulnerabilidad social; Salud de la mujer.

1. Introduction

Breast cancer is the type of cancer with the highest incidence among women, in addition to being the second leading cause of death of this gender (Prolla et al., 2016). This disease had its rate increased in the 1980s, in women exposed to risk factors related to urban lifestyle, and its incidence declined in the 1990s.

However, there was an increase in annual death rates among women in municipalities in the interior of the North and Northeast. In 2007, the mortality rate reached a percentage of 1.94%, in contrast, in 2016, there was an increase of 0.38% in relation to the percentage of the

year mentioned above, marking the rate of 2.32% of deaths among Northeastern women (Pereira et al., 2020).

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In order to awaken women about breast cancer, in October, all over the world, actions are carried out in allusion to the prevention and early screening of this cancer. Strategically, this month became known as “Outubro Rosa” and interventions aimed at the prevention of breast cancer have been encouraged, through awareness and guidance on the subject.

Screening consists of early detection of the tumor through mammography, clinical breast examination (ECM) and the practice of breast self-examination (AEM) by the woman herself. The Ministry of Health (MS) recommends carrying out activities that guide and encourage the self-examination of the breasts by the women themselves, encouraging them to self-care and bearing in mind that this procedure has no costs, is fast and easy to perform, enabling women to have greater knowledge of their breasts (Mattos et al., 2020).

Health guidelines are of great relevance, since the lower a woman's education level, the lower her ability to prevent a disease. In poorly developed regions, mainly, little knowledge interferes with the protective factor (Gomes et al., 2020).

Considering the factors of disinformation, underdevelopment and low education, the extension project that culminated in this article aimed to spread knowledge about breast cancer to women in a vulnerable community. The specific objectives were, guidance on breast self-examination, guidance on the appearance of the breast, signs and symptoms, information on the importance of early detection and screening for breast cancer.

2. Methodology

For the description of this research, we opted for the descriptive and qualitative approach, the type of experience report. The experience report is a modality for cultivating the

knowledge of qualitative research, characterized by multiple theoretical and methodological options. This type of research allows the reporter to scientifically systematize the lived experience (Daltro & Faria, 2019). The qualitative approach allows the reporting of situations experienced by the authors and aims to build and deconstruct scientific and practical knowledge (Pereira et al., 2018).

The experience took place through the execution of an extension project approved by the continuous flow Notice N°01 / 2018 - PROEXT / IFMA, and was developed in the city of Coelho Neto, in the state of Maranhão, located in the northeast of Brazil.

The city mentioned is 371km from the capital of Maranhão and has a population estimate of 49,621 people for 2020. In 2010, the percentage of the population's monthly income was 1.2 minimum wages for 51.9% of Coelho-Neteans. The Municipal Human Development Index (MHDI) in 2010 was 0.564. In 2018, there were only five high schools registered, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2020).

One of the schools that offer high school in the aforementioned municipality is the Federal Institute of Maranhão, a multi-curricular, multicampi and decentralized education institution that encourages teaching, research and extension. This school promoted the execution of the project “Women with an open mind and chest” in October 2018. The proposed activity was the conversation circle, led by a nurse and project coordinator and by a teaching professional.

The project was planned to be developed with 35 women, who were invited to participate in a conversation about breast cancer, in the institution's area of experience.

The activities developed were based on Freirian thinking, since it describes that knowledge must be passed on in an integrative and interactive way, making education with the other and not to the other, assuming that all the actors involved share the knowledge. It was based on this assumption that it was decided to develop the action through a conversation circle. Therefore, this modality allows the construction of opinions shared by the community (Mattos et al., 2020).

To support the synthesis of the experience, articles published in the journal Research, Society and Development were selected.

3. Results and Discussions

The project was carried out with the purpose of advising women in a deprived neighborhood in the city on the prevention of breast cancer. On the occasion, 35 invitations

were made to be delivered to the Specialized Reference Center for Social Assistance (CREAS) in the city, so that those responsible could deliver to women in vulnerable situations registered and accompanied by the public unit.

The event took place on October 30, 2018, in the morning, in the living area of the institute and was attended by 40 women and 3 men. The number of participants planned for the activity had been only 35, as it corresponds to the number of basic baskets collected for delivery, at the end of the activity. However, the other people who were present were received and shared the same health information.

The drivers took advantage of the presence of men to inform them that gender can also have breast cancer, even if it corresponds to 1% of cases.

Male breast cancer is rare, however, actions on the theme must also involve this gender, since negligence and lack of information can contribute to the increase in mortality rates among them. It is known that in 2013, data from the Mortality Information System (SIM) recorded 181 deaths from male breast cancer (National Cancer Institute, 2013; Lorenz et al., 2019).

For the development of the activity, a banner was used as illustrative and informative material, containing guidelines such as the concept of cancer, types of cancer, healthy and sick form of the breasts, risk factors for developing it and forms of prevention (Figure 1). Some materials were also used, such as scissors, colored papers, brushes, pens, colored pencils, white glue, colored ribbons and string.

Figure 1. Guidelines on breast cancer, Coelho Neto-MA, Brazil.



Source: Authors.

During discussions at the roda and with the support of the banner, it was mentioned about the main risk factors for breast cancer. When asked, it can be seen that most of the

guests were unaware of them. When asked about which of the participants had already undergone the mammogram, only two said they had already undergone the exam, the others reported not even knowing where to go to request the referral. Taking advantage of the opportunity, the conductors asked the participants who were already doing the screening to explain the process for the mammography exam, for greater interaction and relaxation between them. It is worth mentioning that most of the women present were over 40 years old.

There are several factors that lead the individual to develop breast cancer. In addition to endocrine, genetic, behavioral and environmental factors, it can be mentioned that disinformation (Silva et al., 2020) contributes to society not seeking health services, since they do not, in fact, know the actions and service flowcharts of the Unified Health System-SUS.

Proceeding, the materials were divided so that all those present could make the design of a breast, coloring and decorating to taste, ending with a string in each mini poster with a breast design and all the participants hung it around the neck (Figure 2). Afterwards, the participants were invited to describe the AEM, with the support of the material made by them. Unfortunately, none of the women (or men) present knew how to perform the technique.

Figure 2. Design of a breast made by women participating in the conversation circle, Coelho Neto-MA, Brazil.



Source: Authors.

Performing the AEM is recommended for all women, and should be performed once a month, ten days after the end of menstruation. In amenorrheic women, it is necessary to set a fixed date in the month for self-examination. The health professional has the duty to guide women in the correct technique for conducting self-examination. In addition to the correct form, women need guidance on the importance of observing the characteristic of their breasts,

touching and getting to know each other, and thus, being attentive to any changes (Mattos et al., 2020).

The conductors provided guidance on how to perform the AEM technique correctly (Figure 3) and then invited someone from the circle to speak up to show the learned technique (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Guidance on the technique for performing the AEM, Coelho Neto-Ma, Brazil.



Source: Authors.

The breast design strategy served as a support so that women (and men present) did not feel embarrassed when training the correct form of self-examination. Some women came forward to show what they learned and, to the surprise of the project's idealists, one of the gentlemen present also spoke. It can be seen that the information was absorbed by the participants of the conversation circle. At the end of the activity, the basic baskets collected by the Federal Institute of Maranhão - Campus Coelho Neto were distributed to those present.

Figure 4. Participant in the breast cancer conversation wheel showing how to perform AEM, Coelho Neto-Ma, Brazil.



Source: Authors.

The making of the breast design was a strategy of the conductors of the conversation circle to make learning more playful, dynamic and associative. It is known that playfulness is applied in the pedagogical strategy with a methodological instrument in the approach of taught contents. For health education actions, the adoption of a multi-methodological approach, facilitates the understanding of the subject addressed and contributes to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, positively impacting the change in health behavior (Costa et al., 2020).

The extensionists' goals were achieved by uniting art with education and science. Freire (2011) stated that these three had the capacity to open doors and build the basis for a liberating education, capable of transforming reality.

4. Conclusion

The lack of knowledge about breast cancer among women and men participating in the conversation circle showed the fragility of preventing this type of cancer in the municipality where the extension project was developed.

However, the conductors of the action propagated knowledge, while they encouraged self-care and the prevention of breast cancer, reaching the proposed objective.

The AEM should be guided by health professionals in any institution, be it hospital or teaching, since knowledge contributes to contain the increase of a disease and the

implementation of health education actions is a pedagogical political proposal to promote health. Cheers.

There is a need for more spaces that promote health education in order to favor comprehensive community care, as it expands its knowledge.

With the publication of this experience, it is expected that there will be more attention on the part of women, with regard to the topic addressed, because only with information can the statistical reality of a devastating disease be changed. It is also expected that further studies will be carried out to contribute to the theme, since breast cancer is the type of cancer that most leads women to death in Brazil.

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Percentage of contribution of each author in the manuscript

Gabriela Oliveira Parentes da Costa	20%
Antonia Gonçalves dos Santos	20%
Aclênia Maria Nascimento Ribeiro	5%
Francisca Maria Pereira da Cruz	5%
Nayara Vanele Ribeiro Pinto	5%
Ricardo Clayton Silva Jansen	5%
Edildete Sene Pacheco	5%
Luciana Stanford Baldoino	5%
Maria Tamires Alves Ferreira	5%
Maria do Socorro Marques do Nascimento Filha	5%
Laíse Virgínia Soares Senna	5%
Fernanda Mendes Dantas e Silva	5%
Nadja Vanessa Dias de Oliveira	5%
Elton Filipe Pinheiro de Oliveira	5%