

Health education through social media about home care for newborns In the COVID-19 pandemic

*Educação em saúde nas mídias sociais sobre cuidados domiciliares com recém-nascidos na
pandemia da COVID-19*

*Educación en salud en redes sociales sobre cuidados domiciliarios del neonato en pandemia del
COVID-19*

ABSTRACT

Objective: to describe the experience of health education through social media about home care for newborns in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Method:** experience report systematized in five stages according to Holliday (starting point, initial questions, recovery of the lived process, background reflection, arrival points) on the performance of a university outreach project in social media in the face of social distancing during the pandemic in the period from June/2020 to August/2021. The project is based on Freire's problematizing education, targeting pregnant women, postpartum women and family members. **Results:** a page was created on the social network Instagram and a channel on Youtube culminating in the adaptation of the project to the virtual environment, better academic training of outreach workers and idealization of scientific research. **Conclusion:** health education through social media was an efficient and low-cost strategy, whose implications can have significant impacts on the care of the newborn in the process of discharge from the maternity hospital.

Descriptors: Health Education; Social network; Community-Institution Relations; Newborn; Nursing.

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever a experiência de educação em saúde nas mídias sociais sobre cuidados domiciliares com recém-nascidos no contexto da pandemia da COVID-19.

Método: relato de experiência sistematizado em cinco tempos conforme Holliday (ponto de partida, perguntas iniciais, recuperação do processo vivido, reflexão de fundo, pontos de chegada) sobre a atuação de projeto de extensão universitária em mídias sociais, frente ao distanciamento social na pandemia, referente ao período de junho/2020 a agosto/2021. O projeto apoia-se na educação problematizadora freiriana, tendo como público-alvo gestantes, puérperas e familiares. **Resultados:** criou-se uma página na rede social *Instagram* e um canal no *Youtube*, culminando na adaptação do projeto ao meio virtual, melhor formação acadêmica das extensionistas e idealização de pesquisas científicas. **Conclusão:** a educação em saúde por meio das mídias sociais foi uma estratégia eficiente e de baixo custo, cujas implicações podem ter impactos significativos no cuidado do recém-nascido no processo de alta da maternidade.

Descritores: Educação em Saúde; Rede Social; Relações Comunidade-Instituição; Recém-Nascido; Enfermagem.

RESUMEN


Objetivo: describir la experiencia de educación en salud en redes sociales sobre cuidados domiciliarios con recién nacidos en la pandemia COVID-19. **Método:** relato de experiencia sistematizado en cinco etapas según Holliday (punto de partida, preguntas iniciais, recuperación del proceso vivido, reflexión de fondo, puntos de llegada) sobre la realización de un proyecto de extensión universitaria en redes sociales, frente el distanciamiento social en la pandemia, entre junio/2020 a agosto/2021. El proyecto se basa en la educación resolutive de Freire, teniendo como público mujeres embarazadas, puérperas y familiares. **Resultados:** se creó una página en Instagram y un canal YouTube, culminando con la adaptación del proyecto al entorno virtual, mejor formación académica de extensionistas y nuevas investigaciones científicas. **Conclusión:** la educación en salud mediante las redes sociales fue estrategia eficiente y de bajo costo, que puede tener impacto en el cuidado del recién nacido en el proceso de alta de la maternidad.

Descriptores: Educación en Salud; Red Social; Relaciones Comunidad-Institución; Recién Nacido; Enfermería.

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INTRODUCTION

The Brazilian social, political and economic context in the late 1980s promoted academic concern and reflections on the role of university outreach activities, culminating in the creation of the Forum of Pro-Rectors for the Outreach Program of Brazilian Public Universities (FORPROEX) in 1987. The concept of outreach activities changed and became more focused on meeting theory with reality, in order to democratize academic knowledge and allow community participation⁽¹⁾. Currently, university outreach activities in Brazil are recognized by the Brazilian Federal Constitution (1988) and by the Education Guidelines and Bases Law (Law 9,394 of 1996) as an essential attribution of universities, being inseparable from teaching and research⁽²⁾.

Outreach programs prove to be valuable because they approximate students to the country's social problems, in addition to benefiting the less favored classes, which strengthens the idea that the purpose of outreach programs is to act as a social policy instrument, aiming to overcome social inequalities⁽³⁾. Therefore, the exercise of educational actions by nursing students make them develop skills and attitudes for a qualified, ethical professional training in tune with social reality⁽⁴⁾.

Faced with the numerous possibilities of outreach activities, health education with pregnant women, puerperal women and their families regarding home care with the newborn in the process of discharge from the maternity ward emerges as an essential component of nursing care, since birth of a baby causes a significant change in the entire family environment⁽⁵⁾. Thus, the transition of newborns from hospital to home requires educational actions by health professionals, considering the real needs of families, in a truly dialogic relationship⁽⁶⁾.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the world was facing a pandemic caused by coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)⁽⁷⁾. In addition to directly affecting the health of the population, the new virus also impacts other areas such as education and work. Therefore, the current reality brought the need for adjustments in academic training, including in nursing⁽⁸⁾. Prevention against this disease has become a priority worldwide and protective measures to contain transmission have been

established⁽⁹⁾, and social distancing and isolation have become necessary⁽¹⁰⁾.

Outreach actions are often carried out at strategic points to reach the target audience, such as squares, parks, Basic Health Units, schools, among others. But, in the face of the pandemic, teachers and students went into confinement due to the suspension of face-to-face classes at universities. In addition, Brazilian regions implemented restrictive measures for circulation and public spaces and non-essential services were closed. Therefore, it was necessary to reinvent and adapt outreach activities in the face of social distancing through digital tools, an innovative and creative alternative for the continuity of projects⁽¹¹⁾.

The internet is an exceptional resource as it is the most complete source of information today, being accessible at anytime and anywhere, easily and quickly. Moreover, virtual communities are the cradle not only of information and knowledge, but also of the formation of support social networks. Thus, the internet can be a great ally in the construction of spaces for health promotion⁽¹²⁾. It is known, however, that health education should not be based on the mere transmission of information, but, on the contrary, emphasize the social participation of individuals, producing critical knowledge about their own reality and making possible the real transformation of the determining factors of the lived condition⁽¹³⁾.

As the world is organized from the point of view of communication and information networks, digital social networks are conditioning elements of contemporary human existence. As a subject of a social process, the individual becomes a participant in the communicative process, which reinforces the idea that these networks can have a positive impact on social participation⁽¹⁴⁾. Thus, the great convergence of people to social networks confirms that they can be a potential educational resource, facilitating the teaching-learning process and stimulating new forms of interaction⁽¹⁵⁾.

In this line of argument, educational actions in health, including in social media, are essential because they work as disseminators of knowledge, helping to change concepts, transform the way of acting in health, and, thus, improve the quality of life of the population. Therefore, the outreach project analyzed here aims to share knowledge about home care with newborns among pregnant women, postpartum women and family members, in addition to nursing professionals and academics,

envisioning quality and safety in care practices at home.

In times of social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to invest in outreach actions on social media, due to the need to share quality and reliable guidelines to families of newborns in the face of the large volume of information, sometimes incorrect, dispersed on the internet. Furthermore, research on the use of social media with this vulnerable group by health professionals, including nurses, from the perspective of health education is still rare and constitutes an important knowledge gap to be filled. This justifies the realization of the current study. In this context, in view of the current pandemic scenario, which required the modification and adaptation of outreach projects, the objective was to describe the experience of health education in social media on home care with newborns in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHOD

Systematized experience report following the systematization method of Oscar Jara Holliday⁽¹⁶⁾. The experience refers to the period from June 2020 to August 2021, on the process of acting, in times of a pandemic, of an outreach project that develops educational practices in health related to the care of the newborn with families carried out in a procedural and continuous way since 2016. The group is formed by a coordinating professor, a collaborating professor and 12 undergraduate nursing students, and the target audience is pregnant women, puerperal women and family members of newborns. In short, the project's actions that previously took place in person through conversation circles in a hospital unit and in Basic Health Units in the city of Rio das Ostras, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, began to occur through digital means due to the social distancing imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project aimed to reach families, seeking an important transformation in reality, in order to reduce infant morbidity and mortality through guidance on safe home care for newborns and health promoters, who collaborate for healthy and harmonious growth and development.

The act of systematizing refers to entering the dynamics of concrete practical experiences, involving elements in living and complex social processes and going through their different stages, extracting enriching knowledge for theory and practice. For this, Holliday points out five stages:

starting point, opening questions, recovery of the lived process, background reflection, and arrival points. The first half has as its main characteristic the participation of the members and the recording of the experience; the second takes into account three aspects: Why do we want to systematize? What experience do we want to systematize? What central aspects of this experience are we interested in systematizing? The third is based on the reconstruction of history, in order to sort and classify the information; the fourth concerns the analysis, synthesis and critical interpretation of the experience process; the fifth and last stage is the time to formulate conclusions and communicate the learning resulting from the experience⁽¹⁶⁾.

The experiences of the outreach project lived and described, from the stages proposed by Holliday⁽¹⁶⁾, were analyzed and interpreted in the light of Paulo Freire's theoretical conceptions of problematizing education, which defends a transversal and dialogic relationship between the subjects. For Freire, knowledge must be constructed, experienced and articulated collectively, education being a communicative and co-participated act that privileges dialogicity seeking to meet the real needs of individuals, making them active subjects in the teaching-learning process. Problematizing education is essentially reflective and implies a constant critical questioning of reality⁽¹⁷⁻¹⁸⁾.

As it is an experience report, which aims to deepen theoretical situations that emerged spontaneously from the outreach practice, submitting the project to an Ethics Committee was not necessary, according to Resolution 510, of 04/07/2016 of the National Health Council. It is also noteworthy that the confidentiality of individual information and the anonymity of users of social media of the outreach project were guaranteed throughout the description of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The starting point of this report was the idealization of the continuity of the project as a response to the need for reinvention and adaptation brought about by COVID-19. During the months of June to July 2020, the group of outreach workers reorganized their actions to the virtual format, with the purpose of maintaining the activities and objectives of the project, as well as contributing to the fight against the pandemic. To this end, the members met through the Google

Meet online platform in order to discuss and evaluate the new possibilities and determine the goals for this period of interruption of face-to-face activities. The existing group in the WhatsApp messaging application was also used. The main goal established was to create a page on the social network Instagram and a weekly schedule of posts to be made there, as face-to-face conversations with the target audience were unfeasible at the time.

Other important goals were determined, namely: defining how to reach the target audience; determination of the default color, post templates and images to be used, in order to establish a visual identity for the project; decision on the frequency of the group's online meetings; and, establishment that at each new meeting, a member would be elected to present two scientific articles related to newborn care practices at the next meeting.

As for the initial questions, the intention to systematize the path traced by the outreach project in social media came from the need to report the experience to the scientific community, serve as a model for other outreach projects to continue their actions during the pandemic, encourage professionals and students to seek new health education strategies that are in line with the current world and verify the impacts arising from the new model of action.

About the recovery of the process experienced, on July 22, 2020, the page of the outreach project was created on the social network Instagram. Soon after, the dissemination began to reach the target audience (pregnant women, puerperal women and family members). To this end, firstly, the outreach workers used their personal Instagram and Whatsapp apps to spread the page to their private contacts. In addition, the Instagram page of the project was used to follow users who fit the profile of the target audience and who could be interested in the content presented. In addition, a Google account was created, which gave access to a Gmail and also a Google Drive, in order to save files such as scientific articles, educational materials, PowerPoint presentations, videos, images and everything else of interest to the project, which can be fully accessed by any member of the outreach working group.

In December of the same year, the project channel was created on the video sharing platform Youtube, where it was possible for the public to interact through likes and comments. Initially, a video with a cartoon was released, produced by one of the students of the project with the

guidance of the coordinating teacher, which demonstrates in a didactic way how to bathe the newborn at home. The plans for the channel are still being improved by the outreach team, with the aim of presenting new videos of demonstrations and simulations of correct practices of home care with newborns.

It is noteworthy that in order to obtain information to be used in the posts and in the group meetings, scientific articles were consulted mainly in different information resources (Cochrane Library, SciELO, PUBMED, LILACS), in addition to other reliable sources such as the Ministry of Health and the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics, which brought scientific basis to all the questions presented. Such content reached the target audience through publications on the Instagram page posted in the periods when followers are most active on the network: 12, 18 and 21 hours.

In this guideline, a weekly schedule was established, in order to organize posts and maintain the level of engagement, bringing new content daily. On Mondays: "Right X Wrong" dynamics with polls placed in the story (publication that lasts 24 hours) so that each follower could vote according to his/her understanding of whether a particular product or practice was right or wrong. On Tuesdays: response to polls from the previous day's on feed (permanent publication), explaining why each practice or product is right or wrong. On Wednesdays: post in the feed about some practice related to the care of newborns. On Thursdays: "Baby size per week compared to food" story, demonstrating the baby's growth during pregnancy. On Fridays: motivational story with inspiring texts, phrases and/or images. On Saturdays: "Chat" in the story about the care of the newborn in order to expand the exchange between families and the outreach group. Another strategy was recording videos for reels (videos of up to 30 seconds) and for IGTV (videos of up to 15 minutes) related to the themes.

To assemble the publications, themes suggested by the participants of the project and also by the followers of the page (through interaction via story) were considered. So far, the following topics have been addressed: breastfeeding (including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic), bathing and hygiene care, colic management, sleep and rest, use of repellents, care during visitation, neonatal omphalitis, use of alcohol gel in babies in times of a pandemic, clothing care, activities to encourage

child development, prematurity, sudden infant death syndrome, prevention of domestic accidents, immunization, types of crying of babies, among others. All guidelines were disseminated through texts with accessible, simple and quick reading language, accompanied by illustrative images, in addition to the indication of bibliographic references.

As a background reflection, it is highlighted that the transition of the outreach project to the virtual environment brought uncertainties at first, since it required the change of some specific objectives, previously aimed at the circles of face-to-face conversations that took place in a hospital unit and in some Basic Health Units in the city of Rio das Ostras, in order to maintain educational activities during the pandemic. Thus, new needs emerged, such as, for example, reaching the target audience in the virtual environment, creating a bond with it, generating engagement in social media, creating quality and attractive content and managing digital tools and applications.

However, the greatest tensions that arose in this process were related to the capture and engagement of the public in this transition. Such concerns, in a way, will remain, since the search for new participants in social media will always exist. However, the social commitment of the outreach actions in the formation of critical and reflective individuals and the desire to continue contributing to the improvement of the reality of the families made the group choose to face all the challenges. Thus, with all the planning and mutual support of the members, the process of adapting to social media became pleasant and beneficial for all involved. It can also be said that migrating to digital means did not require new financial expenses on the part of the outreach workers, which facilitated this transition.

It should be noted that some factors influenced greater autonomy and propositional capacity for the project members, among them, the freedom to act as a subject in the teaching-learning process by sending messages and solving doubts at any time and the gaining of relevant information previously unknown in academic training. Among the limiting factors, it is highlighted that not all individuals in the target audience had access to social media and those who had did not always interact and give their opinion on the content, restricting the analysis of the full reach of the results achieved by the project.

As for the arrival points, 684 followers were registered on Instagram in ten months (August

2020 to June 2021), with 76 publications, in addition to a reach of 4,150 people, 13,550 views and 509 profile visits in the last month. The followers are concentrated in the following cities: Rio das Ostras (31.4%), Rio de Janeiro (13.3%), Macaé (9.0%), Cabo Frio (4.7%) and Niterói (1.8%); and in the following countries: Brazil (97.1%), United States (1.0%), Portugal (0.6%), Germany (0.2%) and India (0.2%).

Most of the followers were female (91.6%), with the age group from 25 to 34 years being the most present (44.5%). There was great public participation in the publications both in the feed and in the story, with interaction through comments, tagging other profiles and sharing the publications. In addition, several people sent messages directly through the direct tool (direct message exchange tab), in order to answer questions, interact with project participants or praise the published content. On Youtube, a total of 18 subscribers have been observed so far. The published video "How to bathe the newborn at home" has 86 views. This video was also released on the Instagram page, on the IGTV tab and has 365 views and 22 comments.

With the high demand for guidelines to be disseminated, the academics had the opportunity to research and debate several subjects that were not discussed in previous situations during graduation. Thus, the group became more instrumental, including on the main coping strategies against COVID-19. In addition, the ease of meeting virtually enabled more frequent meetings, which were attended by the majority of members on all occasions. From 08/03/2020 to 06/03/2021, the group held ten online meetings, all with discussion of scientific articles selected by the student previously drawn to present to the other participants. It is also noteworthy that a great amount of information was shared and discussed through the WhatsApp group throughout the experience process.

Finally, experiencing dialogic educational actions, addressing the best practices for home care for newborns, applying the concepts of Freire's problematizing education, provided the outreach workers with the opportunity to analyze the results and contributions arising from the performance through social media, seeking to identify the response of the target audience, and also of nursing students, to this type of health education. In this sense, the group of outreach workers understood that this new model of action enabled the exchange of knowledge between

pregnant women, puerperal women and family members and the members of the group. In addition, it expanded the project's possibilities beyond the face-to-face field, making it possible to carry out health education in order to cover many individuals at once and function as permanent consultation material, which can be accessed from anywhere, at any time, by any of the participants in the teaching-learning process.

COVID-19 is the first pandemic of the digital age and it has provided opportunities for the rapid distribution of information on social media. The internet thus enables the dissemination of scientific, economic and historical knowledge and, together with this, makes it essential for health professionals to share reliable information through it⁽¹⁹⁾. In this perspective, given the pandemic context, it was necessary to use educational strategies in social media in order to continue the outreach actions and the exchange of knowledge between pregnant women/puerperal women/family members and nursing professionals/academics.

Among the technologies involved in health work, light technology, which does not depend on equipment or care protocols, has as its incessant duty the attribution of welcoming, making responsible, solving and empowering care. When associated with digital social networks, it qualifies as a powerful means of collective communication about a given moment, since, through the networks, it is possible to record how we express and elaborate strategies to face the adversities of a time⁽²⁰⁾. In this directive, the experience reported used, in an innovative and creative way, different technologies as a means of educating in health in the face of social distancing, with guidelines regarding home care for the newborn and also information on the necessary care in the face of the new coronavirus.

A study about online education and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) revealed that using available technological tools to promote education results in the sharing of information, communication and the achievement of goals, benefiting the public-target⁽²¹⁾. Thus, it is assumed that the use of social media in the practice of health education provides a greater reach of the knowledge elaborated, in view of the speed of dissemination of information, which was ratified in the project, that reached a large number of followers in the media in a few months, allowing participants to have free access to quality scientific content.

Digital pages are effective tools that house information with which users can interact by replying, leaving asynchronous messages and participating in online discussions, a method that reduces the levels of stress and anxiety of individuals who are not comfortable with face-to-face interactions⁽²²⁾. This could also be seen in the comparison with the face-to-face activities carried out previously, in which the individuals present did not always interact or participate in the dynamics, due to shame or withdrawal. Also, on Instagram more people were reached, leading to increased interaction.

In this logic, health professionals must become more competent to administer education through digital means. One of the ways to optimize these activities is through the evaluation of the process, carrying out the measurement of the factors that influence the success or failure of social media. Data from the evaluation of the process allow decision makers to monitor messages, number of followers, number of likes and number of comments left on social media⁽²³⁾. The Instagram application itself provides such data to those responsible for the account, showing the number of people reached, interactions with the content and visits received to the profile, which is of great value, as it allows modifications to be made in order to achieve the desired results. In this context, there was active participation of the target audience on the outreach project page, through comments on publications, withdrawal of doubts and feedbacks by direct messages and sharing of content with other users of the networks.

Research also reveals that the participation of students in university outreach activities supports the development of dialogue and communication skills with society, which is an important tool in the mediation of information based on scientific evidence in different contexts⁽⁷⁾, including on social media. For Paulo Freire, training is much more than training the student for life, as it requires an ethics that is committed above all to the human being, in the sense of promoting citizen awareness that knows their rights and duties as a social being⁽¹⁷⁻¹⁸⁾. In fact, the outreach group linked to the problematizing education process aims to meet the real needs of individuals in each family nucleus, which contributes to a greater bond and, consequently, a greater humanization of nursing care.

As a limitation of the study is the need to adapt the dynamics of face-to-face meetings to the

new proposed model and the scope of participants, in the sense that access to the internet and social media for the entire Brazilian population is not yet a reality, not being possible to reach all people. Furthermore, there is no way to gather and interact with all participants simultaneously. Another limitation was the one-sidedness of experiences in this report, since the experiences of the students and teachers of the outreach project were presented, rather than those of the followers of social media, directly.

CONCLUSION

The experience reported was an innovative strategy with a positive impact, insofar as it allowed the adaptation of the project to the virtual environment in the context of the pandemic, making it possible to disseminate scientifically based information to the target audience, in order to equip families with to home care for the newborn. In addition, it contributed to the academic training of members of the outreach project, adding technical, scientific, ethical and social values, and enriched the idealization of scientific research on educational health practices that improve people's quality of life, specifically the newborn and the family from transition from the maternity hospital to the home.

The dissemination of information through the Internet proved to be a good ally, as it was observed an expressive visualization of the shared contents, all of which were elaborated with a scientific basis, essential for the adequate orientation of the population. In addition, individuals began to participate actively and had greater autonomy in the pursuit of knowledge. On the other hand, the creation of the content to be published allowed the project members to be connected with research, teaching, and the community and with each other.

Health education through social media was a low-cost strategy, whose implications can have significant impacts on the care of the newborn in the process of discharge from the maternity hospital, whose importance was demonstrated by the feedback obtained through the messages of the followers. It is intended, at the end of the pandemic, to resume face-to-face activities and keep the project pages on social media active in order to expand the reach of its objectives, being in line with the modern digital world and serving as a model for other outreach projects.

On the other hand, this form of health education is limited and brings challenges, because

despite facilitating the dissemination of important and reliable information, there is still difficulty in maintaining the interest of the target audience and evaluating the learning. Therefore, it is necessary to expand research about to satisfaction and knowledge gain by the subjects involved in teaching-learning processes via social media.

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