

OCCUPATIONS IN THE OLD AGE. REPRESENTATIONS OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION AND PRACTICE.

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The aging processes changed in recent decades. In addition to increased life expectancy, movements and declarations call for a better quality of life and opportunity for active aging from a rights perspective. About old age and aging, there are various types of information, beliefs, assumptions and contexts of production and consolidation. Many authors have shown that in representations of old age dominates a negative assessment. The study of social representations is a useful conceptual methodological tool for addressing the socially constructed knowledge to identify and review the values involved in professional practice and the training needed to train professionals in context of social transformations.

This paper presents partial results of an interdisciplinary research that takes place at the National University of Lanus (Argentina) whose overall objective is to identify the social representations of aging and old age in nursing students to rethink the training of health professionals crossed by a historical, social, and cultural background, in context with respect to the concepts and practices developed. It involves nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists, psychogerontologists with different postgraduate education.

The methodological design is exploratory-descriptive, not experimental, transversal. It triangulates primary and secondary sources from qualitative methods (focus groups, graphic techniques).

The results show that about the performance of daily occupations of elderly the images of students dominated an independent and active aging in ADL, including leisure activities allowed by the inclusion of technical aids in environments of own home nearby. This contrasts with the representation of older adults who health professionals work with, mostly characterized as people with high dependency on their daily activities, leaving outside work on preventive and promotional aspects.

The inquiry of representational and values aspects in the training of health professionals can enhance processes of review and adjustment of training practices regarding the changes and social emergents. The identification of the representations in respect of the occupations of seniors illuminates the analysis of the potential and limits of training and current professional practice for the promotion of active aging.