WORLDVIEW OF YOUNG SCHOOLCHILDREN FROM A MUNICIPALITY IN THE STATE OF PIAUÍ-BRAZIL

Visão de mundo de jovens escolares de um município do estado do Piauí-Brasil

Visión de mundo de jóvenes escolares de un municipio del estado de Piauí-Brasil

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to analyse the vision of the world that the young school children of a municipality of the northeast region of Piauí, Brazil have based on their reality. Method: qualitative, exploratory, conducted between April and September of 2016, with 10 mothers and 10 adolescents between 12 and 15 years old, from the sixth year of elementary school. The data collection included semi-structured interview; home visit and free observation in the interval between the classes; the analysis of the maps and association tree of ideas of Spink. Results: they need spaces and leisure like playing, cycling and playing football. They feel their parents’ absence; many do not live in the same house or work all day. We have seen the school as a space for socialization, but it does not offer activities for this purpose. Conclusion: the need for leisure, play and an ambience for these activities were highlighted and interfere with the promotion of adolescent health.

Keywords: adolescent; family health; health promotion.

RESUMO

Objetivo: conhecer a visão de mundo que os jovens escolares de um município da região nordeste do Piauí – BRA têm sobre sua realidade. Método: qualitativo, exploratório, realizado entre abril a setembro de 2016, com 10 mães e 10 adolescentes entre 12 e 15 anos, do sexto ano do Ensino Fundamental. A coleta de dados, foi entrevista semiestruturada, visita domiciliar e observação livre no intervalo das aulas, na análise os mapas e árvore de associação de ideias de Spink. Resultados: necessitam de espaços e lazer como brincar, andar de bicicleta e jogar futebol. Sentem a ausência dos pais; muitos não residem na mesma casa ou trabalham o dia inteiro. Vemos a escola como espaço de socialização, porém, não oferece atividades para tal. Conclusão: a necessidade de lazer, de brincar e de uma ambigidade para essas atividades, foram evidenciados e interferem na promoção da saúde dos adolescentes.

Descritores: adolescente; saúde da família; promoção de saúde.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence can be defined in different ways. It is a stage of growth and development of the human being marked by great physical, psychic and social transformations. Understood as a period of development between childhood and adulthood, chronologically delimited by the World Health Organization as the range of age between 10 to 19, is defined the same way in Brazil by the Ministry of Health. It is a period of discovering one’s own limits, being curious about new experiences, questioning family values and norms, and adhering to friends’ values and norms. This is a stage characterized by the need for social integration, the pursuit of self-affirmation and individual independence.

The adolescents’ world experience consists of socialized expressions, fruits of the contradictions that permeate their daily lives, both individually and collectively. They are, at the same time, “illusory, contradictory and true” and considered as raw material for the development of the Paulo Freire Method. They portray reality, although not in conformity, and cannot be taken as scientific truth or reduced to conception that social actors make of it.

Planning actions aimed at young people is not an easy task, as it requires coordination of multiprofessional strategies in order to contemplate adolescence in all its biopsychosocial, cultural, political and spiritual complexity. Thus, teamwork that allows exchanges in the field of competence and creative potential is necessary.

National Health Promotion Policy (PNPS) is based on the expanded concept of health and presents its promotion as a set of strategies and ways of fostering health, individually and collectively, with responsibilities for the three entities. The concept of health promotion is broad and debated since the international conferences on this theme. Multiple conceptions of its meaning are observed, as it involves not only the health sector, it is not restricted to an individual, nor a specific community.

The concept brought about by the Ottawa Charter resulting from the First International Conference on Health Promotion in Canada in 1986 defines health promotion as “the process of empowering the community to improve quality of life and health”, emphasizing the need for participation and social control for its realization. Thus, health promotion aims to ensure equal opportunities for people to realize their health potential. Individuals and communities must know and control the determinants of their health.

This proposal supports this study, using part of the Paulo Freire method to promote adolescent health. Paulo Freire defends the development of educational processes and not just literacy, his assumptions go beyond the field of education and approach the field of health sciences, especially public health. The concepts brought by Freire and introduced in the routine of the Health Sector are: autonomy, freedom, humanization, awareness, dialogue, culture, critical reflection and problematization. Therefore, we aim to analyse the world view that young students from a municipality in the northeast region of Piauí - Brasil have about their reality.

METHODS

This is an exploratory study with a qualitative approach, corresponding to the first stage of the method of Paulo Freire and coming from a larger study entitled: “The Paulo Freire Method for Promotion of Adolescent Health in the Family Health Strategy”.

The research scenario consisted of a municipality in the northeast region of Piauí, Brazil. The study included ten parents and ten adolescent students from one school unit, who were attending the sixth grade of elementary school in the afternoon shift. The students were aged between 12 and 15 years and met the inclusion criteria: were properly enrolled in the school unit where research was conducted; live in the main town of the municipality; were between 12 and 15 years old.

The information was obtained from interviews with adolescents, home visits, in which parents also participated through informal speeches, school visits, through which we observed and recorded the world where they live and how they feel in a universe charged with desires, feelings and emotions.

For data analysis, we use the meaning production that proposes the organization of the data through idea association maps and the construction of the tree. We follow the steps detailed by Spink and we elaborate association tree which is another resource for understanding how a given argument is built in the drive to produce meaning in a dialogue. It allows to view the flow of links from ideas to actions provoked by the interviewer’s question and ending the process with their synthesis. Enabling the understanding of the singularities of producing a meaning, linked both to each person’s history and to the intrinsic dialogue of the interview process.

The idea association tree was composed, complementing and improving the analysis of information and visibility of interpretations. For its elaboration we used CMAP tools 6.01 Software.
In order to comply with all ethical and legal precepts of research involving human beings, in light of Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council,8 this study was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the State University of Vale do Acaráu (UVA), and was approved on March 14, 2016 under Opinion No. 1,450,323. The parents/guardians signed the Informed Consent Form (ICF) and the participants, the Free Informed Consent Form (TALE).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For better understanding and visualization of the vocabulary universe of adolescents, we sought to build the conceptual tree, elaborated from the maps of associations of ideas of each adolescent.

The conceptual tree presents the perceptions of daily life, curiosities about health, preferences and needs of adolescents, themes that allowed the extraction of generating words. These themes were prioritized because they are more evident in the speeches of young people, are aspects addressed in the proposals of the National Policy for Health Promotion,9 and relate to the rights guaranteed to adolescents through the Statute of Children and Adolescents.10

**Figure 01 - Conceptual tree of the world view of young students from a municipality in the state of Piauí. Parnaíba, PI, Brazil, 2016**

The themes derived from the conceptual tree analysis are described below:

**Situations experienced by young people in Brazil and in the world**

In adolescence there are intense body changes due to puberty related to the biological, psychological and social maturity of the individual. It is a period of crisis, due to the various mental and organic transformations that mean important and peculiar experiences for this age group.11

Notably adolescence is the milestone of the process of development and transformation, it is the beginning of sexual life, beginning the reproductive trajectory and leading to situations of vulnerability such as unwanted pregnancy and abortion.12

In recent decades, teenage pregnancy has been considered an important public health issue, due to its prevalence. Early pregnancy is usually associated with the onset of sexual activity, not using contraceptive methods, dropping out of school, suffering and lower adherence to prenatal care, in addition to alcohol and drugs abuse.13

It is in adolescence that most users have their first contact with alcohol and other drugs. This is considered a priority phase for scientific investigations and the development of intervention strategies aimed at preventing and distancing adolescents from involvement with drugs. The causes for the beginning of consumption are the lack of life purpose during the transition to adulthood, school difficulties, absence of leisure options and work opportunities, as well as problems related to family life.14

Teenagers have been suffering the impact of social differences manifested in violence, prostitution and drugs. This reality is in line with the provisions of the Child and Adolescent Statute,10 which provides for the guarantee of: education, social policies, food and citizen rights.15

With regard to diet, adolescence is a critical period to initiate or aggravate pre-existing obesity, due to the physiological increase in adipose tissue that occurs mainly in females, caused by irregular diet and frequent emotional instability at this stage.8

The prevalence of obesity is increasing intensely in childhood and adolescence and tends to persist into adulthood. In addition, scientific evidence has shown that atherosclerosis and hypertension are pathological processes that begin in this age group and are related to eating habits and physical activity.16

We understand that although the situations described here are not part of the reality of life of the participants of this research, they correspond to problems experienced by adolescents both in Brazil and worldwide, relating to subjects that are considered curious for the study participants.

**Young people and family relations**

Talking about your own family relationships represents an act of trust by exposing individual and collective intimacy. The adolescents in this research felt comfortable about the subject, expressing through their speeches the absence of parents and the desire to be with them daily.

We highlighted the importance of the presence of the family for “Left Side”, clearly a need of his, because he mentioned this feeling:

[...] I miss being with my family, my father lives in another house and my mother works all day, I spend my day alone, then I’ll play bila in the street and kill birds. (Left Side)

Left Side Mother’s report during home visit reveals a reality experienced by many mothers in our society. The responsibility
for the support and care of the family often demands from the woman a triple workload, interfering with the quality of the relationship with the children. The Left Side's mother confesses that she is unable to meet the demand that the family has been expressing, generating the conflict:

*I have a lot of difficulty with him, being always on the street. I'm stressed and when I talk to him, I'll be aggressive right away, I'm tired of taking care of the children without the support of the father.* (mother of Left Side)

Regarding the role of the mother, research indicates that even though women have entered the labor market and their number of out-of-home activities and their economic power has increased, domestic duties and, especially, the care and education of their children, continue to be performed mainly by them.17

Regardless of the transformations that the family has been undergoing, we realize that traditional roles and roles based on gender stereotypes remain, and it is primarily up to women to be the caregiver of the home and children.18

Most adolescents reported feeling lonely because their parents do not have the necessary time for family life, being consumed by work and household chores, leading to negative repercussions. Thus, children end up isolating themselves in their world, whether on television, on the computer, or on the street, and home turning into an uninteresting environment. We noted the lack of affection and attention in the speeches and behavior of the research participants.

From home visits, we observed that most parents showed feelings of anguish, saying that they had no time to devote to family, to talk with their children, claiming the lack of quality time. However, they stressed the need to work to help provide for the household.

It is necessary to emphasize that the transition process of the adolescent affects not only them, but also those who live directly with them, especially their families, thus constituting a difficult and painful process. This is because major changes that take place at this stage allow the emergence of factors and issues that affect all family members.

We understand that the family is fundamental for the adolescent at this stage of life, corroborating what was emphasized by the participants, who miss their parents, either because they do not live in the same house or because they do not have time due to work. Given this, we find that the home represents an extremely valued institution, even when living together is not perceived as a positive experience.

**Young people and the perception of their daily needs**

For most teenagers, reporting what they think of their daily lives did not seem difficult, and it was perceived as good because they were with their family, attending school, and watching television; and monotonous because nothing different happens. We realize that activities such as walking, playing ball, traveling and even playing and talking with friends are leisure activities, which are part of the research participants' desire for world experience.

Adolescence is linked to a normal process of identity formation, self-affirmation, development, growth, new experiences and new behaviors. In this transition, they seek identity references and try to live them from collective experiences.19

Among the needs of adolescents, we observe desire to practice physical activity, stay longer with family, travel, walk. Regarding exercise, we found that adolescents are aware of the importance of physical and leisure activities. However, we believe that on many occasions this population has limited options for physical and/or leisure activities, which leaves them in idleness that they fill by staying at home or on the street with drugs and crime.20

The right to leisure for adolescents has been ensured by the Statute of Children and Adolescents.20 In its Article 59, the Statute defines that municipalities, with the support of states and the federal government, should encourage and facilitate the allocation of resources and spaces for children.

**Cultural, sports and leisure programs geared towards children and youth**

Although leisure is assured as a right of the adolescent, it has not yet been consolidated. The participants of this research do not have access to leisure having identified activities that occupy their free time as a necessity for their daily.

Considering the broad concept of health, we understand the practice of physical activities and the opportunity for leisure as elements that ensure health. The National Health Promotion Policy9 considers physical activity as an influence that improves the quality of life and health. The needs of adolescents and young people in this study are in line with what is proposed by the policy, dealing with elements that need to be met in their realities.

The National Adolescent Policy8 addresses adolescent participation, community life, social inclusion, cultural and sporting activities, emphasizing that these must come from local manifestations. Health services may have the initiative to develop actions that seek this participation. It understands the school as a social equipment that concentrates a large number of teenagers, and that it can be a great ally but, at the same time, one should not be limited to this space alone.

Although the school did not appear in the discourse of adolescents as a leisure space, we believe that for some their daily life is summarized in the journey from home to school, denoting the importance of living in these spaces, with the school being the place where they spend most of their time. A school20 is not just a place to study, but to meet, talk, confront each other, discuss and make friends, hence it is a space for socialization. Therefore, each school is unique, as a place of people and relationships, it is also a place of social representations, contributing to both maintenance and social transformation.
In surveys conducted with adolescents, an ambiguous reference about the school in which the criticism permeates is common, emphasizing its importance. This is one of the basic references for young people, not only for the idea that it is needed for the job market, but also for peer relations and peer sociability, as well as interaction with teachers.

We believe that the adolescents in this research are not enjoying their rights as citizens, and it is up to the Family Health Strategy professionals to seek the development of intersectoral actions, focusing on the pursuit of health promotion of this population.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights a greater understanding between the field of health promotion and Paulo Freire method. Its most relevant finding is the access to the students’ worldview as an aid for designing interventions guiding professionals in their actions. We understand that health and education professionals should provide attention, a more effective and participative education for adolescents, enabling each of these young people to express their thoughts, share their opinions, their points of view or even silence.

Therefore, we emphasize that the main limitation and implication for this practice to be performed is at the municipality and school level, since they do not provide an environment with adequate spaces for games and physical activity, among other strategies. This reality leads to a state of nostalgia, monotony and disinterest in school activities. We also believe that the school needs to be strengthened as a favorable space for socialization, opportunity for meeting and dialogue with colleagues. Thus, we consider that the study will serve as an input to health and education professionals suggesting more effective practices and may encourage new research in the area of adolescent health promotion including other sectors of the municipality in order to analyze the reality and the needs of adolescents.

REFERENCES


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