



Self esteem in elderly people who practice physical activity in a group of the third age in the municipality of Montanha - ES

Autoestima em idosos que praticam atividade física em um grupo da terceira idade no município de Montanha – ES

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The practice of physical activity in the elderly is associated with a life with greater self-esteem and self-confidence, especially when this activity is carried out in a group, with this, this elderly to have a healthier life, promoting greater functional independence, improvement of the social aspect and with greater autonomy in decision making as they age. **Objective:** to observe the level of self-esteem in elderly people who practice physical activity belonging to the Alegria de Viver Group, in the Service of Coexistence and Strengthening of Bonds for the Elderly, located in the municipality of Montanha - ES, Brazil. **Methodology:** This is a quantitative, exploratory and descriptive research, which was applied in the Service of Coexistence and Strengthening of Bonds for the Elderly. For data collection, a questionnaire with 10 questions with 4 alternatives each was applied to 40 elderly people aged between 56 and 97 years who are part of the Alegria de Viver Group, on May 4, 5 and 8, 2023. **Results:** 100% of the elderly reached a score above 15, presenting a high level of self-esteem and self-image. **Conclusion:** It was concluded that the regular practice of physical exercises performed by the elderly can have a positive impact on their self-esteem. Physical activity provides physical and mental well-being, especially in raising their self-esteem and confidence for a more active life.

Keywords: Elderly, Physical activity, Self-esteem, Rosenberg scale.



1 INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is an essential factor in the lives of older people as it plays a significant role in their emotional, mental and social well-being; it refers to the way older people see themselves, recognizing their own value. As people age, they may experience a number of physical and emotional changes that can affect their self-esteem. The practice of physical exercises in old age helps older adults to maintain their routine activities in a balanced way, contributing to quality of life, improved self-confidence, functional independence and prevention of pathologies as they age.

It is important to highlight that self-esteem can be worked on and strengthened at any age, mainly through exercises. There are several means for these older adults to adopt and promote high self-esteem, such as self-acceptance, being able to recognize and accept the changes that accompany the aging process. This includes accepting the physical limitations and defending the skills and experiences acquired throughout life.

Self-esteem is fundamental at all ages, but it becomes even more important as people age. Therefore, the realization of this work is justified, because it is believed that by promoting the health of the elderly, we seek to improve their quality of life, through physical exercise associated with a healthy diet, allowing them to enjoy a more active and healthy aging. This includes the ability to perform trained activities, participate in social activities, maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships and enjoy daily well-being.

Participating in social activities and interest groups such as social groups that practice physical activities can help improve self-esteem as well as mental and physical health. Finally, to encourage a sense of autonomy, it is important that older people are encouraged to make decisions and take responsibility in their lives. This can include managing their own health and well-being, such as making their own lifestyle decisions and choices about medical treatments.

The objective of this study was to observe the level of self-esteem in elderly people who practice physical activity belonging to the Alegria de Viver Group, in the Service of Coexistence and Strengthening of Bonds for the Elderly, located in the municipality of Montanha - ES, Brazil.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 SELF-ESTEEM IN OLDER PEOPLE

Old age is not a unique moment in which the elderly have only one way of living. On the contrary, there is a dichotomy, in which the difference in valuing life and/or devaluing it according to the lifestyle of the elderly is explicit. Thus, older people who live a passive life have health problems, leading to an increasingly limited life. On the other hand, those who practice physical



activity are able to exceed standards, so that they can be associated with young and active people. Thus, older people have a very high self-esteem, due to the practice of physical activity (ASCENCIO and PUJALS, 2015).

The practice of physical activity by older people is fundamental in the self-image of these people as well, because there is a concern with this group regarding physical appearance and self-esteem. This shows an existing relationship between physical appearance and self-esteem, since this is also part of the concern of the elderly, especially those who live an old age through physical activities (BAVOSO *et al.*, 2017).

The benefits for health and self-esteem in the elderly are high when they participate in physical activities developed collectively. In addition to providing benefits to the physical body, making it more resistant to diseases, they also contribute considerably to self-esteem, and especially to the quality of life of the elderly (BAZELLO *et al.*, 2016).

2.2 THE PRACTICE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN OLD AGE

The practice of physical activity can provide several benefits to the human being, especially to the elderly. Group activities can contribute not only to the physical aspect, but also to the mental aspect. People who exercise physical activities tend to have a better quality of life in relation to several factors, such as: pain, functional capacity and health status at all levels (SOUSA *et al.*, 2019).

In today's context in which sedentary life has affected all age groups, especially the elderly, physical activity plays a primary role in combating this practice of human immobility in old age, contributing greatly to the physical and motor performance of the elderly. More than combating sedentary lifestyles, the practice of physical activity develops various functionalities of the elderly (FAUSTINO and NEVES, 2020).

The practice of physical activities by older people allows significant improvements in several aspects. Doing this in a group provides numerous benefits, such as overcoming loneliness, a feeling so common in many elderly people who live in seclusion, physical and especially mental well-being, even longevity, thus making a person capable of socializing (PETYK *et al.*, 2011).

The practices of group activities is an effective mechanism to ensure the healthy development of the elderly person, with regard to the aging process. Thus, such activities provide an active and participatory life on the part of the elderly group. It is not about wanting to rejuvenate or not face old age, but to offer people of advanced age the possibility of having a dignified life that can enjoy social well-being in all its dimensions (FELIX and VALDUGA, 2020).



There is a need to survey the elderly population about changes they undergo during aging, as well as to know the various manifestations of diseases in the elderly, which may require a high cost or even not be feasible in a budget with few resources. Therefore, the activities proposed through physiotherapy, in addition to being easy to apply, can be carried out at little cost (SOFIATTI *et al.*, 2021).

The characteristics of socialization or friendliness are associated with characteristics of people who have socially pleasant behaviors and reflect the satisfaction in the social environment of those who have them, such as older people living with others of the same age group, involved in group activities (FARINA *et al.*, 2016).

2.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY OLDER PEOPLE

Some obstacles can act as obstacles to the elaboration and practice of any project that aims to improve the quality of life of the elderly. However, it is necessary to combat the different manifestations of age discrimination, a fact that physiotherapy can also contribute, in the sense that the elderly feel valued for their coexistence in harmony in society (SIQUEIRA *et al.*, 2015).

Ageism is related to the ageing process and is mostly related to the various manifestations of age prejudice. This is done in such a way that there is a counterposition between feelings of shame, disgust and ridicule, which are associated with older people. As feelings of positive values are attributed to young people, this requires public policies to combat and include people who suffer this type of prejudice in society (KÜCHEMANN, 2012).

It is necessary that the elderly person needs guidance, observation and monitoring of a qualified professional in the execution of activities and in the practice of physical activities, especially those performed in a group of people with the corresponding age group (BERZINS *et al.*, 2016).

The view that aging is always accompanied by diseases and limitations on the part of society is not normal, especially by professionals, whose theoretical and technical knowledge, in theory, can subvert any subjective view about the issue of old age. In this context, several aspects must be observed in the health of the elderly (SANTOS *et al.*, 2016).

2.4 THE NEED TO MEASURE ISSUES RELATED TO OLD AGE FROM AN ACTIVE LIFE

In this sense, an appropriate procedure is needed to measure self-esteem in older people. In this wake, human beings who have high self-esteem have more confidence in the possibilities of what they can do, so that feelings such as stress are caused by insecurity, when pessimism is



the feeling they have. Thus, self-esteem in the elderly contributes to the development of other positive aspects, as well as teaches the elderly to have purposes in life as well (MARTINS and FERREIRA, 2020).

The analysis and knowledge obtained from the observation of the quality of life of the elderly can serve the planning and survey of strategies of the health professional, to be able to effect an active life and the provision of a healthier experience. In addition, living spaces for the elderly have other advantages for the elderly to live as interactively as possible (FERREIRA *et al.*, 2017).

There is a relationship between the family issue and the perception of life of the elderly, as well as the existence of a enjoyment of old age or a life marked by problems ranging from falls at home to the development of diseases, or even the worsening of symptoms that can become serious diseases. This satisfaction or not with life amplifies the notion of health for older people (MARZOLA *et al.*, 2020).

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This is a quantitative, exploratory and descriptive research, through which the level of self-esteem of the elderly who perform group physical activities was observed, using the application of the Rosenberg scale that evaluated how self-confidence and self-esteem of this age group is. This questionnaire has 10 questions with 4 alternatives for each question presented. It was applied to 40 elderly people aged 56 to 97 years who are part of the Alegria de Viver Group, in the service of coexistence and strengthening of bonds for the elderly, located in the municipality of Montanha - ES, Brazil, held on the 4th, 5th and 8th of May 2023.

In order to assess the self-esteem of the elderly group, the measurement of self-esteem that has been carried out worldwide through the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), conceptualized by the author with the objective of using this type of instrument capable of classifying the degree of self-esteem from low levels to higher levels. Low self-esteem is expressed by the feeling of incompetence, Portuguese version used, translated and presented by Sbicigo *et al.*, (2010). This original scale was created and developed to evaluate adolescents with ten closed questions, five referring to positive "self-image" and five to "negative self-image".

The sentences are arranged in a four-point format, namely: 4) Strongly agree, 3) Agree, 2) Disagree, 1) Strongly disagree. After the sum of items: 1, 3, 4, 7 and 10, it is classified with 15 to 20 points indicating a good self-esteem and, with the sum of items 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9, it is possible to classify with 15 to 20 points a low self-esteem.

All respondents completed the informed consent form that contains the necessary information regarding the research. The researched data are protected by the confidentiality of professional ethics required by COFFITO (Federal Council of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the table below, the level of self-esteem was observed in 40 elderly people, aged 56 to 97 years, who practice physical activity in a group of the elderly in the Alegria de Viver community center in the municipality of Montanha- ES, on May 4, 5 and 8, 2023.

It was observed that 92.5 % totally agree that they are satisfied with themselves, 95 % totally disagree that they sometimes feel they are useless, 92.5 % totally agree that they have a lot of good qualities, 70 % totally agree that they do things as well as most people, 82.5 % totally disagree that they do not feel satisfaction in the things they have done, 92.5 % totally disagree that they sometimes, feel worthless (unable to do things), 92.5% totally agree that they are a person of value, at least on an equal level with other people, 70% totally disagree that they would like to have more respect for themselves (value themselves more), 95% totally disagree that they are almost always inclined to failure and 95% totally agree that they have a positive attitude (positive thoughts, actions and feelings) towards themselves.

Table 1 - Self-esteem in elderly people who practice physical activity in a group of the elderly in the municipality of Montanha ES

	4.Strongly agree	3.Agreed	2.Disagree	1.Strongly disagree
Overall (despite everything), I am satisfied with myself.	92,5 %	7,5%	-	-
Sometimes I think I am good for nothing (unqualified or inferior to others).	-	-	5 %	95 %
I feel that I have quite a few (a number) of good qualities.	92,5 %	7,5%	-	-
I am able to do things as well as most other people (as long as I am taught).	70%	30%	-	-
I don't feel satisfaction in the things I have accomplished. I feel I don't have much to be proud of.	5 %	5 %	7,5 %	82,5 %
Sometimes I really feel useless (unable to do things).	-	2,5 %	5 %	92,5 %
I feel that I am a person of value, at least on an equal plane (on the same level) as other people.	92,5 %	5 %	2,5 %	-
I would like to have more respect for myself (value myself more).	5 %	15 %	10 %	70 %



I am almost always inclined to think that I am a failure.	-	2,5 %	2,5 %	95 %
I have a positive attitude (positive thoughts, actions and feelings) towards myself.	95 %	5 %	-	-

Source: Survey data, 2023.

Elderly people belonging to a group practicing a series of physical activities aim to promote their well-being and self-esteem. With the performance of these exercises they feel more able to perform activities developed in the group and the feeling of pride in themselves when performing daily activities, influencing self-esteem to be in a higher way contributing to the decisions of their personal life, providing greater autonomy and independence making these elderly do things as well as other people (MEURER *et al.*, 2011).

The activities carried out in the groups of elderly people bring a physical and psychological development in a beneficial way, promoting a healthy aging, with greater functional capacity, through self-confidence and self-love. Thus, they feel better about themselves, thus having a feeling of self-esteem, and with that they are able to do countless activities, giving themselves more self-value. These various aspects together keep the elderly in a more active way and with greater personal satisfaction (CASTRO, 2022).

Elderly people with regular exercise associated with group socialization show a positive self-image and self-esteem in relation to themselves. They demonstrate that they can take self-care in relation to their own body by seeking to know more about themselves, living a life of persistence, optimism and confidence, always evaluating themselves and seeking changes in habits that are not good for them, improving both physical and mental health, due to high self-esteem and the search to live well. Thus, seeking to have positive thinking and actions, moving away from negative thoughts and depression (COPATTI *et al.*, 2017).

Physical exercises provide a decrease in the aging process, offering improvement of the body, improvement of the physiological system and improvement of the psychomotor system, due to the influence of physical activity. With this, the physical fitness acquired raises self-esteem, self-acceptance and self-image, making this elderly can face the day to day with more confidence and positivity with better appreciation of yourself (CUNHA, 2012).

Motivation is something that must be valued and cultivated daily, because it makes people produce more in their daily lives in a more autonomous and independent way, always improving their skills with great persistence and enthusiasm, this is due to the self-esteem and self-determination acquired by the environment attended and the regular practice of exercises,



generating motivation and better ability to perform the activities in which one is involved (NETTO, 2020).

Self-esteem is linked to a more active life, regular exercise is always helping and maintaining this self-esteem in a higher way. It shows an inverse panorama of depression, and as this esteem for oneself is increased, the symptoms of depression are reduced. So the importance of continuing the exercises, keeping as healthy as possible with an increased level of self-confidence and self-motivation (FERREIRA *et al.*, 2014).

The present data prove psychological benefits in the realization of exercises in the elderly. So that there is a distinction of self-esteem and symptoms of depression for those who practice and do not practice physical exercise on a regular basis. With improved quality of life, self-esteem and self-confidence are accentuated and feelings of isolation are reduced, providing the development of social, functional and mental interaction. The exercises in addition to preventing diseases it adds higher levels of self-esteem (TEIXEIRA *et al.*, 2016).

Com the practice of exercises in a constant way among the various exercises, the execution of variations of aerobic activities tends to decrease anxiety, restlessness, depression and its symptoms present in the elderly, resulting in well-being, thus keeping the elderly person active with a higher possible level of self-esteem in their daily lives, providing greater self-care and a more balanced life (RODRIQUES *et al.*, 2015).

The routine of the elderly who practice physical activity, results in the accentuation of the positive effects on their psychomotor organism, causing an increase in the level of self-image and self-esteem of this age group. Therefore, they are more motivated and encouraged to continue active in their daily activities (ROSÁRIO *et al.*, 2015).

The reduction of depression and its effects on the elderly is related to the daily practice of exercise, improving their quality of life, in addition to promoting better autonomy, a factor that becomes important to the elderly. Physical activity results in a decrease in depression and loneliness, contributing to their self-esteem (SANTOS and BATISTA, 2022).

Physical exercise contributes positively to the motivation and self-esteem of older people. This series of activities improves the state with which this age group finds itself, providing better enthusiasm and contentment, causing loneliness and depression levels to decrease as confidence and self-esteem are being gained (PEREIRA, 2016).



5 CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the regular practice of physical exercise by the elderly can have a significant impact on their self-esteem. Exercise not only improved the physical health of older adults, but also brought psychological benefits, including strengthening self-esteem. It is important to note that older adults should seek medical advice before starting any physical activity program, taking into account their health conditions and individual resources. Health professionals, especially those specialized in gerontology, can provide adequate and safe guidance to help older adults achieve good health, physical well-being and a positive and high self-esteem.

Promoting health, physical education and self-esteem in older people is key to healthy ageing. By adopting a healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activity and health care, they can enjoy a better quality of life, preserve autonomy and emotional well-being, and make the most of this phase of life.

The practice of physical exercises in old age has helped the elderly to maintain their balanced routine activities, in addition to contributing to the body and mind, maintaining a harmony in relation to their actions and developments, improving their cognitive functions, ensuring maximum functional independence, preventing diseases as they age, increasing self-esteem and self-confidence, in addition to contributing to the training or reestablishment of adequate levels of physical body performance, aiming at the acquisition of a better quality of life, and the well-being of the individual.



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