



Impact of vaccination on society's quality of life: Reflection based on the Self-Care Theory

Impacto da vacinação na qualidade de vida da sociedade: Reflexão à base da Teoria do Autocuidado

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ABSTRACT

The objective is to reflect on the continuous impact of vaccination on society's quality of life. In the light of the third central concept of Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory, which deals with the nursing system, we seek to analyze the role of the nursing team in promoting self-care through vaccination, highlighting its significant influence on the promotion of public health. This is a descriptive and critical reflection study, carried out after a search in the current scientific bibliography using as a source the scientific journals indexed in the *Google Scholar* and *PubMed* databases and databases grouped and indexed in the Virtual Health Library. Nursing staff play a vital role in promoting vaccination-related self-care. This involves empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their health, including the decision to get vaccinated, understand the vaccination schedule, and maintain up-to-date vaccination records. Therefore, the nursing team is recognized as a key player in ensuring the effectiveness of vaccination campaigns, especially in a scenario of rapid dissemination of information and growing challenges in the acceptance of vaccines, directly impacting the quality of life of society in the context of the immunization process.

Keywords: Vaccines, Immunization, Quality of life, Public health, Nursing.

INTRODUCTION

Vaccination is an unshakable pillar of promoting public health and improving the quality of life of societies around the world. In recent decades, the discussion around the value and

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efficacy of vaccines has reached new heights of relevance, driven by events of global magnitude, such as the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The COVID-19 emergency has undeniably underlined the critical importance of mass vaccination in protecting public health and addressing public health threats¹.

This study proposes a critical reflection on the continuous impact of vaccination on society's quality of life. In the light of the third central concept of Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory, which deals with the nursing system, we seek to analyze the role of the nursing team in promoting self-care through vaccination, highlighting its significant influence on the promotion of public health^{2,3}.

Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory represents a fundamental milestone in contemporary nursing practice, directing attention to people's intrinsic ability to take care of their own health, as well as the importance of care in facilitating and improving this self-care process. The third main concept of the theory, the nursing system, refers to the way nursing professionals interact with patients to help them achieve self-care. In this context, the nursing team plays a crucial role in health promotion, disease prevention and, more specifically, in the administration of vaccines to the community and health guidance¹⁻³.

In this context, the main objective of this research is to highlight the vital contribution of the nursing team in the system that involves the vaccination process, with special emphasis on their involvement in the administration of vaccines and in the promotion of self-care related to immunization. In addition, it is intended to recognize the nursing team as a key player in ensuring the effectiveness of vaccination campaigns, especially in a scenario of rapid dissemination of information and growing challenges in the acceptance of vaccines. This study aims, therefore, to highlight the continuous importance of vaccination as a vital tool in the promotion of public health, and the nursing team as an essential protagonist in this process.

In this context, three fundamental points deserve to be highlighted. First, the ability of vaccination to contain outbreaks of infectious diseases, preventing large-scale hospitalizations and deaths, demonstrating its direct impact on quality of life. Secondly, the increasing dissemination of information, often challenging and controversial, related to vaccination requires a more fruitful look at the importance of health guidance and education provided by the nursing team. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of rapid implementation of large-scale vaccination programs, highlighting the nursing team as the driving force behind these efforts¹.

Thus, the present study proposes a critical analysis of the impact of vaccination on the



quality of life of society, focusing on the third main concept of Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory, which refers to the nursing system. This study aims to highlight the work and importance of the nursing team in promoting the quality of life of society, especially in the context of vaccination.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive and critical reflection study, carried out after a search in the current scientific bibliography using as a source the scientific journals indexed in the Google Scholar and PubMed databases and databases grouped and indexed in the Virtual Health Library (VHL). To this end, the following Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) were used: "Vaccines", "Immunization", "Quality of Life", "Nursing" and "Nursing Theories". As a search strategy, the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" were used.

The search, selection, and reading of the studies were carried out in October and November 2023. The analysis of the results was qualitative, with the identification of trends and patterns in the reviewed literature and Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory was used as the basis for all critical reflection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory is one of the most influential theories in nursing and provides a conceptual framework for understanding the role of nurses in promoting self-care and patient care. Dorothea Orem, a renowned nurse practitioner and nursing theorist, developed this theory to describe how individuals can take care of themselves, as well as to identify the nursing care needed to promote self-care²⁻⁴.

This theory is composed of three main concepts or pillars⁴⁻⁶:

- **Self-care:** Self-care is the central concept of Orem's theory. It refers to people's inherent ability to take care of themselves by maintaining their health, preventing disease, and engaging in activities that promote well-being. This includes everyday tasks such as eating, hygiene, rest, and physical activity. Self-care is key to maintaining independence and autonomy;
- **Self-Care Deficit:** This concept recognizes that in some situations, people may not be able to perform self-care due to physical, psychological, or cognitive limitations. In these cases, a self-care deficit occurs, and individuals need external assistance, such as nursing intervention, to meet their self-care needs. The nurse assesses the self-care deficit and



develops personalized care plans to help the patient achieve as much independence as possible;

- **Nursing System:** The third pillar of Orem's theory is the nursing system, which refers to how the nursing staff interacts with the patient to provide nursing care. This involves assessing the patient's self-care needs, planning and implementing nursing interventions, as well as evaluating care outcomes. The nursing system plays a critical role in promoting self-care by providing guidance, education, and support to help the patient meet their self-care needs.

In short, Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory highlights the importance of self-care as a vital component of promoting the health and well-being of individuals. She recognizes that in some situations, people may require assistance to meet their self-care needs, and this is where nursing staff play a key role. The theory provides a comprehensive model that guides nursing practice, emphasizing the importance of helping patients reach their maximum potential for self-care and independence and, in the context of this study, nursing plays a key role in the immunization process, directly impacting the quality of life of individuals belonging to society^{5, 6}.

After understanding the Self-Care Theory and the great relevance of nursing in the process of promoting public health, let's fit the context of vaccination and immunizations. Undoubtedly, there is no talk of public health without the immunization process.

Vaccination is one of the most effective public health interventions to prevent infectious diseases. It plays a key role in promoting society's quality of life, as it reduces the incidence of serious illness, hospitalizations, and mortality. However, the efficacy of vaccination depends on the competent and qualified performance of the nursing team⁷.

Nursing staff play a multifaceted role in the vaccination process. This includes identifying target groups for vaccination, administering vaccines according to established protocols, educating the population about the importance of vaccination, monitoring possible side effects, and collecting data to assess vaccination coverage and vaccination efficacy^{1,8}.

In a current scenario of political, social, and ideological divergences, what was one of the products of Science for the benefit of all, began to be questioned. Science accompanies Ethics and, today, we see moral questions based on the common sense of social groups, without any academic, technical and/or scientific link, transforming into a wave of obstacles to guarantee the protection of society with the great weapon that Science has made possible: the vaccine^{1,7}.



Given the above, nursing staff play a vital role in promoting vaccination-related self-care. This involves empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their health, including the decision to get vaccinated, understand the vaccination schedule, and maintain up-to-date vaccination records⁸.

In this context, Orem's Self-Care Theory provides a useful theoretical framework to reflect on how the incorporation of educational materials and the use of Educational Technologies (ET) can contribute to the promotion of vaccination and, consequently, to the improvement of society's quality of life^{5,8,9}.

First, it is highlighted that the activities of health professionals become richer when they incorporate educational materials. In the context of vaccination, this is particularly relevant. The availability of clear and informative educational materials about vaccines, their benefits, and the importance of immunization can directly impact people's decision to get vaccinated. A practical example of this would be the creation of information leaflets that explain in an accessible way the benefits of vaccines, the risks of preventable diseases and the recommended vaccination schedules. These educational materials can be distributed in health clinics, schools, workplaces, and online, reaching a wide audience^{8,9}.

In addition, it is emphasized that nursing plays a fundamental role in the promotion of educational practices in health. The nursing team can use ET in several ways^{8,9}:

- **Hard technologies:** Nursing staff can utilize electronic patient record systems to track vaccination status and ensure that people are up-to-date with their vaccinations. This allows for more effective follow-up and notification of individuals when they are properly due to receive a vaccine;
- **Soft-hard technologies:** ETs include structured knowledge, such as clinical protocols and guidelines for administering vaccines. For example, nursing can follow strict protocols to ensure the safe and effective administration of vaccines while complying with public health recommendations;
- **Lightweight technologies:** ETs can also be used to improve communication between nursing staff and patients. Health apps that provide real-time information about vaccines, including reminders to update vaccines, can be helpful. This ensures that people are aware of what vaccines they need and when they should receive them.

The participation of the target audience in the construction of ETs is highlighted as a crucial step. For example, collecting *feedback* from patients about the vaccination experience



and the usability of educational materials can lead to significant improvements. This can include tailoring materials for different demographic groups and creating targeted awareness campaigns⁹.

The incorporation of educational materials and the effective use of ETs play a vital role in promoting vaccination and, by extension, improving society's quality of life. The application of Self-Care Theory in this context highlights the importance of empowering people with relevant and timely information, enabling them to make informed decisions about protecting their health and preventing infectious diseases. The engagement of the public in the construction and improvement of these ETs further strengthens the positive impact of health education strategies^{4,9}.

The nursing team, being a key player in promoting public health and ensuring the effectiveness of vaccination campaigns, must ensure health education, which plays a fundamental role in this process, as it helps to inform and involve the community, clarify doubts and dispel myths and misinformation about vaccines. The following are some health education strategies that the nursing team can adopt to strengthen the immunization process⁸⁻¹⁰.

- **Effective communication:** Nursing staff should be trained to communicate effectively with patients, responding to their questions and concerns in an understandable and accessible manner. It is essential that nurses know how to explain the benefits of vaccines, the risks of preventable diseases, and information about the vaccination schedule. Communication should also be culturally sensitive, taking into account patients' cultural needs and beliefs;
- **Educational material:** Nursing staff can create or use educational materials, such as brochures, posters, and videos, that clearly and visually explain the importance of immunization. These materials can be made available in clinics, hospitals, schools, and other health care settings. They serve as reference tools for patients and their families;
- **Education programs for healthcare workers:** Nursing staff should stay up-to-date on immunization guidelines, new vaccines, and best practices in administering vaccines. Continuing education is critical to ensure that nurse practitioners are well-prepared to counsel patients and administer vaccines safely;
- **Clarification sessions and discussion groups:** Holding clarification sessions and discussion groups can be an effective strategy for engaging the community. Nursing staff can organize lectures, workshops, and public discussions to address issues related to immunization, providing a space for questions and answers. These sessions can be



especially helpful when specific concerns arise regarding a particular vaccine;

- **Use of technology:** Nursing staff can leverage technology to disseminate information about immunization. This includes creating health apps that provide information about vaccines, reminders of vaccination dates, and answers to frequently asked questions. In addition, social media and websites can be used to share up-to-date and reliable information about immunization;
- **Partnerships with schools and communities:** The nursing staff can establish partnerships with schools and community organizations to promote immunization. This can include conducting vaccination clinics in schools, churches, and community centers, as well as collaborating with educators to disseminate information about the importance of vaccination.

Overall, the nursing staff plays a multifaceted and essential role in the immunization process. In addition to vaccine administration, health education is a key part of their work, helping to ensure that the community is informed and confident in their decision to get vaccinated, enabling self-care through immunization. Through these strategies, the nursing team can strengthen the acceptance of vaccination and, thus, contribute significantly to public health and the prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases^{9,10}.

CONCLUSION

The nursing system, as defined by Orem's Self-Care Theory, is the organizational structure and staff that supports and facilitates the individual's self-care. In the context of vaccination, this framework is essential to ensure that the population receives the necessary vaccines efficiently and safely. This involves coordinating, planning, and implementing vaccination programs, as well as collaborating with other health professionals and public health authorities.

The study highlights the importance of the nursing team in promoting society's quality of life through vaccination, based on Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory. Nursing staff play a key role in the nursing system, ensuring that vaccination is administered effectively, safely, and educationally. This contributes significantly to the prevention of diseases and improvement of the quality of life of society.

Promoting immunization and ensuring a healthier society depends crucially on the nursing staff. Its role as a key player in the immunization process is undeniable, with a profound



impact on the quality of life of the community. Through the application of Educational Technologies (ET) and health education strategies, the nursing team plays a multifaceted role that goes far beyond administering vaccines.

The utilization of ET, such as electronic patient record systems and healthcare apps, makes the immunization process more effective and efficient, ensuring that people are up to date with their vaccinations. In addition, ETs provide a means for ongoing communication and education, strengthening understanding of vaccines and their importance. The active participation of the public in the construction and improvement of these ETs is a fundamental aspect, allowing the adaptation of health strategies to the specific needs of the community. Health education strategies, such as effective communication, the creation of educational materials, education programs for health professionals, information sessions, and the use of technology, allow the nursing team to reach a broad spectrum of audiences, from school-age children to adults and the elderly.

The tireless work of the nursing team in promoting immunization contributes directly to the protection of public health and the prevention of infectious diseases. By empowering the community with relevant and timely information, the nursing team enables people to make informed decisions about protecting their health. Their role in ensuring the effectiveness of vaccination campaigns and disseminating reliable information is invaluable.

In summary, the nursing team is not only a key player in the immunization process, but is also a driving force in promoting society's quality of life through vaccination. Their health education strategies are essential to ensure that the community is well-informed, aware, and committed to self-care through immunization, thereby strengthening public health and contributing to a healthier world protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.



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