

REVIEW ARTICLE

Perspectives of the Advanced Practice Nursing in the gerontological care process: an integrative review

Perspectivas da Prática Avançada de Enfermagem no processo de cuidado gerontológico: revisão integrativa

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify the characteristics of the Advanced Practice Nursing in health care for the elderly. **Methods:** Integrative literature review to answer the question: “What are the characteristics of Advanced Practice Nursing in health care for the elderly?”. LILACS, Science Direct, PubMed, Web of Science, CINAHL and Scopus databases were used for the research, carried out in November 2020. **Results:** After reading and analysis, 17 articles comprised the final sample of this review. Data were analyzed using thematic categories. **Conclusion:** Advanced Practice Nursing in gerontological care encompasses all levels of complexity and includes the planning of care based on the accurate clinical assessment of the elderly patient, the implementation of health education to improve the quality of life of the elderly and education in health and professional training for geriatric care, as well as the use of theories and care models for care management.

Descriptors: Advanced Practice Nursing; Health of the Elderly; Geriatric Nursing; Nursing Care; Specialties, Nursing.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Identificar as características da Prática Avançada de Enfermagem na atenção à saúde da pessoa idosa. **Métodos:** Revisão integrativa da literatura para responder o questionamento: “Quais as características da Prática Avançada de Enfermagem na atenção à saúde da pessoa idosa?”. A busca ocorreu nas bases LILACS, Science Direct, PubMed, Web of Science, CINAHL e Scopus em novembro de 2020. **Resultados:** Após leitura e análise, 17 artigos compuseram a amostra final desta revisão. Os dados foram analisados por meio de categorias temáticas. **Conclusão:** A Prática Avançada de Enfermagem no cuidado gerontológico perpassa todos os níveis de complexidade e contempla o planejamento do cuidado com base na avaliação clínica precisa do paciente idoso, a implementação da educação em saúde para melhoria da qualidade de vida dos idosos e a educação em saúde e capacitação profissional para o cuidado gerontológico, assim como a utilização de teorias e modelos assistenciais para gestão do cuidado.

Descritores: Prática Avançada de Enfermagem; Saúde do Idoso; Enfermagem Geriátrica; Cuidados de Enfermagem; Especialidades de Enfermagem.

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INTRODUCTION

The aging process of population has been taking place in an accelerated way, which leads to an increasing demand for health care directed at the elderly population. Thus, reflecting on the health of aging people and their specificities inherent to this process is of fundamental importance for planning a resolute health care⁽¹⁾.

From this perspective, nurses are among the professions that are constantly evolving to meet the global challenges related to health. These professionals are increasingly prepared to offer quality care to people throughout their lives, as they are professionals on the front line of care and who use integrated and comprehensive approaches. Such as health promotion, disease and health prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care⁽²⁾.

Given the new demographic and epidemiological profile of elderly people, the actions of nurses require increasingly specialized care for health care for this population. Furthermore, the Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) is seen as a possibility for improving access to health services, as well as qualifying care, reducing morbimortality rates among the elderly population and using evidence-based practice to achieve better health outcomes⁽³⁾.

The APN started in Canada and the United States of America more than 40 years ago and has had important development in the United Kingdom. More recently, it was implemented in Germany, Australia and China, through important changes in legislation and professional regulation, transforming professional practice environments and nursing training. The APN is inserted in different levels of health care: in chronic care environments, long-term care — such as in Primary Health Care (PHC) — and in acute care environments, such as hospitals^(2,3).

In this sense, it is understood that the APN has seven characteristics, namely: use of knowledge in practice; critical thinking and analytical skills; clinical judgment and decision-making skills; professional leadership and clinical research; coaching and mentoring skills; and, research skills and change in care practice^(1,2).

Thus, the nurse who develops advanced practice must have a base of specialized knowledge. Complex technical-scientific skills for decision-making and clinical skills to provide a set of services. Such as care for people with acute or chronic health conditions — providing clinical-therapeutic follow-up with prescription of medications —, requesting diagnostic tests and autonomy to indicate treatments, decision making regarding health treatments and therapies, and being a reference for the users' first point of contact with health services⁽⁴⁻⁶⁾.

In the current context, it is clear that the aging of the population, as well as the need to promote health and prevent chronic diseases, lead the establishment of new models of

care, such as the introduction of the APN in care processes⁽¹⁾. Thus, the APN represents an expansion of the role of nurses in many countries, contributing to the improvement of care and cost-effectiveness of the most diverse health systems.

Furthermore, there are gaps in the scientific literature regarding evidence on the APN in gerontology, which makes it difficult to visualize the different practices and care models for the aforementioned care⁽⁶⁾.

Although there are currently obstacles to a clear definition of the APN, because it encompasses a large and growing variability of nurses' performance, as well as different stages of implementation and regulation of practices⁽⁷⁾, it is believed that it is essential to reflect on the care needs of the elderly person focused on comprehensive health care, as well as about the introduction of the APN in this context.

This is justified given the global need for qualified gerontological care and the tiny number of studies that address this issue. The current discussions promoted between the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Federal Council of Nursing (Portuguese acronym: COFEN), in the perspective of notes on the future role of the EPA in Brazil, are also added to the justification. Based on the propositions described, the aim of this study is to identify the characteristics of the Advanced Practice Nursing used in healthcare for the elderly.

METHODS

This study is an integrative literature review following six methodological steps⁽⁸⁾: selection of the guiding question; determination of inclusion and exclusion criteria and literature search; definition of the information to be extracted and categorization of studies; evaluation of studies included in the integrative review; interpretation of results; and, presentation of the review with a synthesis of the knowledge produced.

The review was conducted according to the rigor and recommendations of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) tool. The guiding question of the study was developed through the strategy PICO⁽⁸⁾ (Patient: elderly; Intervention: Advanced Practice Nursing; Comparison: health care). Thus, we have the following guiding question: "What are the characteristics of Advanced Practice Nursing in health care for the elderly?"

Two of the authors carried out the search for studies aiming to answer the guiding question independently, in November 2020, through the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Portuguese acronym: CAPES) Journal Portal, with access validated by the Federated Academic Community (Portuguese acronym: CAFe). The electronic databases used were those belonging

to the health area: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), Science Direct, US National Library of Medicine (PubMed), and, finally, those belonging to the multidisciplinary area: Web of Science, Cummulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) and Scopus.

To carry out the exhaustive searches of the studies, controlled descriptors were used, selected through the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) electronic dictionary, from the LILACS database: “*Prática Avançada de Enfermagem*”, “*Idoso*”, “*Idoso de 80 Anos ou mais*”, “*Saúde do Idoso*”, “*Enfermagem*”, “*Enfermagem geriátrica*” and “*Cuidados de Enfermagem*”. For the PubMed database, the controlled descriptors were selected according to the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) electronic dictionary: “Advanced Practice Nursing”, “Nurse Clinicians/Clinical Nurse Specialists”, “Nurse Practitioners”, “Aged”, “Aged, 80 and over”, “Health Services for the Aged”, “Nursing”, “Geriatric Nursing/ Gerontologic Nurse Practitioners” and “Nursing Care”. In searches carried out in multidisciplinary databases, as they do not have their own electronic dictionary, the controlled descriptors selected in the Mesh were used in the value of keywords.

The Boolean operators “OR” and “AND” were used to structure the search strategies with the crossing of descriptors for each database, as described in Chart 1.

The inclusion criteria consisted of the original article categories, which addressed the development of geriatric

care only by advanced practice nurses. In addition, studies written in Portuguese, English and Spanish were used, with a publication period between 2013–2020.

The eligibility for this period is justified by the publication in 2013 of the PAHO and WHO resolution on Human Resources for Health. Which is contained in the Expanding Access to Qualified Health Workers in Health Systems based on PHC⁽⁹⁾. After this publication, the discussion on the need to implement the APN in developing countries was promoted.

To expand the sample, a supplementary manual external search was carried out based on the references of articles found in the initial search in the databases. The same inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selection of studies were adopted at this step. The Endnote web reference manager was used as a tool to store the search based on the crossings performed, and to organize the references.

As part of the execution of an integrative review, to assess the quality of studies that answer the guiding question, we chose to use the level of evidence proposed by Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt⁽¹⁰⁾.

Based on the inclusion criteria, the title and abstract of the publications identified in the databases and external search were initially read, obtaining the prior selection of articles. The authors performed the reading in pairs of the studies selected for full reading, and later obtained the final sample of this study, consisting of 17 articles, as shown in the PRISMA (2015) flowchart in Figure 1.

Chart 1. Crossings of descriptors used by database in data search. Natal, RN, Brazil, 2021.

| Base | Strategy |
|----------------|---|
| PubMed | (((((“Advanced Practice Nursing”[Mesh]) OR “Nurse Clinicians”[Mesh]) OR “Nurse Practitioners”[Mesh])) AND (“Aged”[Mesh] OR “Health Services for the Aged”[Mesh] OR “Aged, 80 and over”[Mesh])) AND (((“Nursing”[Mesh]) OR “Geriatric Nursing”[Mesh]) OR “Nursing Care”[Mesh]) |
| Web of Science | ((“Advanced Practice Nursing” OR “Nurse Clinicians” OR “Nurse Practitioners”)) AND (“aged” OR “Aged, 80 and” over OR “Health Services for the Aged”) AND (“Nursing” OR “Geriatric nursing” OR “Nursing care”) |
| Scopus | (TITLE-ABS-KEY (“Advanced Practice Nursing” OR “Clinical Nurse Specialists” OR “Nurse Practitioners”)) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY (“aged” OR “Aged, 80 and” over OR “Health Services for the Aged”)) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY (“Nursing” OR “Geriatric nursing” OR “Nursing care”)) |
| CINAHL | ((“Advanced Practice Nursing” OR “Clinical Nurse Specialists” OR “Nurse Practitioners”)) AND (“aged” OR “Aged, 80 and” over OR “Health Services for the Aged”) AND (“Gerontologic Nurse Practitioners” OR “Geriatric nursing” OR “Nursing care”) |
| LILACS | “PRÁTICA AVANÇADA DE ENFERMAGEM” [Words] AND ((“IDOSO” OR “IDOSO DE 80 ANOS OU MAIS”) OR “SAÚDE DO IDOSO” [Words] and (“ENFERMAGEM”) OR “ENFERMAGEM GERIÁTRICA” OR “CUIDADOS DE ENFERMAGEM” [Words] |

PubMed: US National Library of Medicine; CINAHL: Cummulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature; LILACS: Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature.

Source: Own authorship.

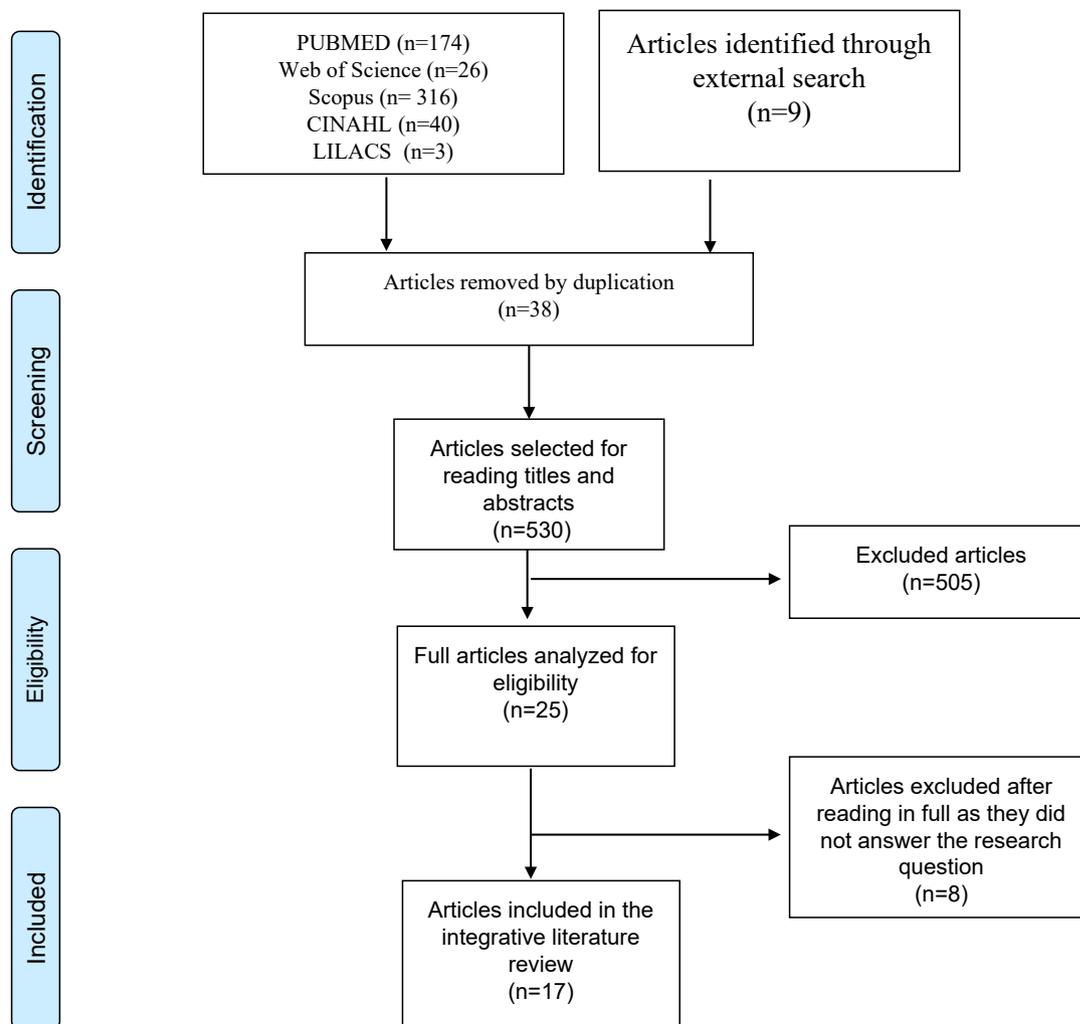


Figure 1. Integrative review sampling flowchart, adapted from the PRISMA Group. Natal, RN, Brazil, 2021.

Thus, the studies that made up this review had their information extracted and organized with the aid of a script to collect key information from the selected articles, such as objective, methodological characteristics, results and conclusions. After this step, the information from the studies was summarized to categorize similar information. Thus, the researchers created and named thematic categories that grouped the characteristics of the APN in the process of health care for the elderly. Ethical issues in research were respected, including copyright.

RESULTS

Seventeen studies made up the final sample. They were developed in eight countries, highlighting the United States, with 35.3% (n=6). When analyzing the number of works by continent, Europe stands out, with 47% (n=8) of the

production. Regarding the distribution of articles by year of publication, the highest proportion was in 2017, with 23.5% (n=4). As for the level of evidence, 70.6% (n=12) of the articles had levels of evidence VI.

Chart 2 presents the description of the studies in the sample, corresponding number, title, journal, country/year and level of evidence.

All studies were published in international journals, with 70.6% (n=12) of them in the nursing area. Thus, the studies identified in this review could indicate the characteristics of the APN in gerontological care in three categories: Use of accurate clinical assessment for the planning and implementation of nursing interventions, with 23.5% (n=4) of the studies; Health Education to promote care, with 35.3% (n=6); and, Use of theoretical and/or methodological tools for care management, with 41.2% (n=7).

Chart 2. Description of the studies identified in the integrative review, according to number, article title, authors, journal, country and year of publication, and level of evidence. Natal, RN, Brazil, 2020.

| N | Article title | Journal | Country/Year | Level of evidence |
|----|---|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | International practice settings, interventions and outcomes of nurse practitioners in geriatric care: a scoping review | International Journal of Nursing Studies | Switzerland 2018 | V |
| 2 | Characterizing the high-risk homebound patients in need of nurse practitioner co-management | Geriatric Nursing | United States 2018 | VI |
| 3 | Toward advanced nursing practice along with people-centered care partnership model for sustainable universal health coverage and universal access to health | Revista Latino-Americana de Enfermagem | Japan 2017 | V |
| 4 | The nurse's role in palliative care: a qualitative meta synthesis | Journal Clinical Nursing | Norway 2017 | V |
| 5 | Advanced nurse practitioners in municipal healthcare as a way to meet the growing healthcare needs of the frail elderly: a qualitative interview study with managers, doctors and specialist nurses | Ljungbeck and Sjögren Forss BMC Nursing | Sweden 2017 | VI |
| 6 | The role of the advanced Practice nurse in geriatric Oncology care | Seminars in Oncology Nursing | United States 2016 | V |
| 7 | Description of advanced practice nurses interventions through the nursing interventions classification in different care settings for older people: a qualitative study | International Journal of Nursing Knowledge | Spain 2016 | VI |
| 8 | Levine's conservation model: a framework for advanced gerontology nursing practice | Wiley Periodicals, Inc. | United States 2015 | VII |
| 9 | Implementation of advanced practice nurse clinic for management of behavioral symptoms in dementia: a dyadic intervention (innovative practice) | Dementia | United States 2014 | VI |
| 10 | Competence in advanced older people nursing: development of "Nursing older people – Competence evaluation tool" | International Journal of Older People Nursing | Norway 2014 | VI |
| 11 | The uniqueness of elderly care: registered nurses' experience as preceptors during clinical practice in nursing homes and home-based care | Nurse Education Today | Sweden 2013 | VI |
| 12 | Gerontology found me: gaining understanding of advanced practice nurses in geriatrics | Western Journal of Nursing Research | United States 2013 | VI |
| 13 | Advanced nurse practitioners can lead comprehensive geriatric assessment in acute hospitals | Nursing Older People | England 2019 | VI |
| 14 | Effect of nurse practitioner comanagement on the care of geriatric conditions | Journal of the American Geriatric Society | United States 2013 | VI |
| 15 | Japanese nurse practitioner practice and outcomes in a nursing home | International Nursing Review | Japan 2015 | VI |

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Chart 2. Continuation.

| N | Article title | Journal | Country/ Year | Level of evidence |
|----|---|---|------------------|----------------------|
| 16 | Profile and results of frail patient assessed by advanced practice nursing in an emergency department | Enfermería Clínica | Spain 2017 | VI |
| 17 | Rural geriatric glue: a nurse practitioner–led model of care for enhancing primary care for frail older adults within an ecosystem approach | Journal of the American Geriatric Society | Canada 2014 | VI |

N: number.

Source: Own authorship.

For better elucidation, Chart 3 shows the categories, the articles discussed, as well as the APN care performed by nurses in the health care of the elderly.

DISCUSSION

With the aging process, there is a greater risk for the development of chronic health conditions in elderly people, which requires prolonged health care⁽¹¹⁾. In many countries, the APN is used to address long-term care and to act as a catalyst for better health outcomes and quality of care. The APN also serves to offer sustainable health care models, by achieving cost reductions by reducing the length of hospital stay and the number of readmissions of elderly people, in addition to enhancing the process of transition from hospital to residence⁽²⁾.

According to one of the studies⁽¹²⁾, elderly people who received care from an advanced practice nurse in outpatient care for the treatment of dementia or chronic heart failure had reduced mortality rates and better health outcomes related to depression, aggressive behavior, to incontinence and pressure injury. Thus, characterizing positive points that reinforce the contribution of the APN in the care of the elderly.

In this perspective, studies belonging to the category “Use of accurate clinical assessment for planning and implementing nursing interventions” addressed the use of accurate clinical assessment of elderly patients for the planning and implementing nursing care.

In the first study, nurses developed the screening of health risks, such as the risk of falls. Screening took place through clinical assessment and risk classification; thus, interventions could be implemented, such as environmental management to minimize the potential for falls⁽¹³⁾.

With this, it is noted the role of nurses with an emphasis on clinical reasoning and critical thinking, who can guide diagnostic and therapeutic decision-making. Thus, in the

development of the APN, the nurse reconciles theoretical knowledge, experience acquired in practice and the capacity for clinical and critical reasoning⁽¹⁴⁾.

In another study, French advanced practice nurses working in PHC⁽⁶⁾ screened the health conditions of elderly people based on accurate clinical assessment, in this case, looking for signs and symptoms of frailty. For this, nurses implemented actions aimed at identified health needs, promoting the qualification of care, as well as improving the cost-effectiveness of the health system.

It is noticed an expansion of the functions of nurses in PHC with the APN, with greater investments in assessment and conduct for clinical aspects from nursing consultations for diagnosis and prescription of drug therapy, especially for people with chronic conditions.

In view of the aging of the population worldwide, the important role of the advanced practice nurse in providing care in PHC is reinforced, considering that it remains at the level of care to which, at its core, prevention and health promotion actions belong. In this context, chronic conditions receive special attention, as there is evidence of increasing incidence and prevalence in the population. Therefore, preventive actions collaborate with the reduction of hospitalizations due to PHC-sensitive conditions, as seen in the results of studies 15 and 16.

In addition, mention is made of the use of evidence-based care protocols for the practice of case management in PHC, for example, in countries such as England. In which protocols are used to standardize and structure the flow of nursing practices for diagnoses, procedures, treatment, drug therapy, guidelines for changes in lifestyle and health monitoring⁽¹⁵⁾.

Consequently, the Nursing Consultation is considered an instrument capable of covering not only clinical needs. However, it is also a space for diagnosing other demands, such as stigmas and cultural barriers to some diseases and even the process of human aging. The overvaluation of physical and biological

Chart 3. Analytical synthesis of studies according to thematic categories. Natal, RN, Brazil, 2021.

| N | Use of accurate clinical assessment for planning and implementing nursing interventions |
|----|---|
| 4 | Advanced practice nurses in Norway, in assisting elderly patients in palliative care, carried out effective communication through dialogue with the family and patients. Professionals also provided direct home care to the elderly, with body and oral hygiene care, emotional and physical comfort care, paying attention to the clinical management of pain based on the assessment of the pain sensation for the prescription and administration of analgesics, aiming at adequate pain relief and symptom management. |
| 14 | In the United States, the effectiveness of a model for monitoring the elderly with co-management by advanced practice nurses in the management of geriatric conditions was assessed. Such as falls, urinary incontinence, dementia and depression; all this from the clinical assessment and necessary referrals. It was also observed that the co-management of advanced practice nurses is associated with. |
| 15 | In Japan, an advanced practice nurse in gerontological care in a nursing home revealed the development of care from the clinical assessment through the performance of a nursing interview and/or physical assessment for a situational diagnosis of the health of the elderly. Subsequently, with interventions such as requests for medical examinations, prescription and administration of medication, exchange of gastrostomy tubes or removal of a decubitus ulcer. The hospitalized resident rate and the emergency ambulance transfer rate decreased after advanced practice nurse interventions. Rates of various precipitating factors for hospitalization were significantly reduced for fever, bone fracture, disturbance of consciousness, chest pain, and high/low blood pressure ($p < 0.05$). |
| 16 | In Spain, advanced practice nurses, working on the front line in the urgency and emergency service, play a prominent role in screening and counseling in advanced management nursing. These nurses carry out the clinical assessment of the elderly patients and refer them to the most suitable service for the elderly's health situation. Thus, advanced practice nurses referred elderly patients with greater complexity and associated comorbidity for outpatient care or home hospitalization, thus avoiding hospitalization, providing lower rates of re-hospitalization compared to the rest of the patients treated. |
| N | Health education to promote care |
| 2 | In the United States, advanced practice nurses developed, in transition care, a role of co-management of patients' cases through home visits after hospital discharge, with health education actions for patients about their diseases and the importance of adherence to drug treatment and general care. They also carried out an assessment of health conditions with an emphasis on acute complications that needed care that is more urgent. These interventions reduced the symptoms/complications and the re-hospitalization of patients. |
| 3 | In Japan, advanced practice nurses, in the context of home care, performed actions to prevent falls in frail elderly people or those with neurocognitive disorders and dementia. Therefore, clinical assessment was used, as well as the implementation of health education actions. In this sense, caregivers and family members were instructed on risk prevention and themes about health promotion from the perspective of care focused on the elderly. |
| 7 | In a study carried out in Spain, advanced practice nurses provided guidance on the management of the home environment, preparing the environment for the safety of elderly patients, prevention of falls through risk screening. In addition, they performed immunization through home vaccination and prescription of medications for the clinical management of pain. The actions promoted self-care to improve the psychosocial functioning and self-care of elderly patients to preserve their quality of life. |
| 9 | In a study carried out at a clinic specializing in monitoring people with dementia in the United States, advanced practice nurses intervened with caregivers of elderly people with dementia. Interventions were categorized into five domains: environmental, behavioral, pharmacological, physical, and internal for caregiver self-care. In most cases, multiple interventions were suggested and discussed with a focus on making patient-caregiver interactions more positive. |
| 11 | In Sweden, as the spectrum of performance and competence of nurses who provide care in the APN for the elderly, professionals played the role of preceptors for monitoring undergraduate nursing students who developed practical activities in geriatric and end-of-life care based on a respectful approach to the elderly, creative and independent work. |
| 12 | In the United States, as an inherent competence of nurses who develop the APN in gerontological care, professionals have strengthened collaborative relationships with generalist nurses to promote the concept of successful aging. From this, they shared didactic and clinical experiences in teaching gerontological nursing content in bachelor's degrees in nursing in partnership between educational institutions and geriatric services. The purpose was to ensure that nursing students were trained to provide the geriatric care required by the elderly. |

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Chart 3. Continuation.

| N | Use of theoretical and/or methodological tools for care management |
|----|---|
| 1 | In a study developed in Norway, advanced practice nurses in Primary Health Care performed assessment, diagnosis and treatment of health problems and previously undiagnosed risk conditions through the implementation of the Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA). Thus, generating care that is better or not inferior to that provided by other health professionals. |
| 6 | Advanced practice nurses in a US study developed care throughout cancer development in elderly patients, ranging from prevention and screening actions to assistance in diagnosis, treatment and, if necessary, end-of-life care. In particular, for the elderly undergoing chemotherapy, nurses performed the CGA to track down weaknesses, and developed health education actions to combat age-related prejudice when choosing treatment. Thus, they indicated the need for standardized implementation of the CGA in oncology services for better health outcomes based on evidence-based gero-oncology care. |
| 5 | In Primary Health Care in Sweden, nurses developed an assessment of the health of the elderly by requesting laboratory and imaging tests. After that, they prescribed medication and nursing care centered on health assessment, which could conform it to the work protocol. Thus, the research individuals indicated that the assessment met the health needs of frail elderly people; thus, improving patient safety during care, ensuring its continuity by being based on personalized and person-centered care. |
| 8 | In the United States, advanced practice nurses caring for elderly patients with chronic illnesses used Levine's conservation model for nursing, which provides a clear framework for caring for older adults in the context of long-term care. The use of the Model promoted person-centered care, thus remaining the focus on the performance of gerontological nursing, emphasizing the importance of using nursing models/theories to guide professional practice. |
| 10 | In Norway, using the Delphi Method, the skills of advanced practice nurses in caring for the elderly were listed. They encompassed health promotion and disease prevention actions through screening for the risk of falls and pressure injuries, in addition to the treatment of diseases in acute and chronic symptoms, with drug prescription and non-pharmacological interventions. The method also contributed to the diagnosis of conditions prevalent in this population, such as infections, diabetes, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Parkinson's disease and dementias. Thus, they developed care management with joint action and cooperation between professionals, caregivers and the elderly. |
| 13 | A team of intermediate care advanced practice nurses at Neath Port Talbot Hospital developed a tool based on the elements of what constitutes a CGA. Another team, this time from Princess of Wales Hospital, adapted the tool for use in an acute care context. Neath staff were trained on how to use the tool, layout and key assessment requirements. Patients who were assessed by nurses using the CGA tool had a reduced mean overall length of stay and there were fewer unscheduled readmissions within a 28-day period. |
| 17 | In Canada, advanced practice nurses in geriatrics (NP-Geri) were introduced to Primary Health Care. These nurses performed the follow-up of the elderly in a rural area through home visits and follow-up through tele-nursing. The numbers of outpatient visits decreased and the numbers of home visits increased, as well as visits to nursing homes. The percentage of patients who were discharged increased from 19% to 31% and the average length of hospital stay decreased over time. |

N: number.

Source: Own authorship.

aspects results from the influence of the traditional and still hegemonic care model, which is focused on the disease and prioritizes the biological and physical aspects of the patient⁽¹⁶⁾.

Regarding the category "Health education to promote care", the articles addressed the practice of Health Education as APN interventions to promote health care for the elderly. In the United States⁽¹²⁾, nurses from a clinic specializing in

monitoring people with dementia performed actions aimed at health education. Interventions were aimed at environmental changes, to better guide the elderly in terms of time and space. In addition, they were directed towards behavioral interventions by the caregiver when dealing with the elderly during the manifestations of dementia and with internal changes, in this case, for the caregiver self-care.

In another study⁽¹⁷⁾, advanced practice nurses, also from the United States, developed health education actions for elderly patients. They used their specific knowledge and training regarding the health conditions of the elderly, their illnesses, drug treatment and general care. The result was the implementation of changes in lifestyle habits to improve health, thus developing the role of co-management of patients' cases, especially in situations of transitional care.

Furthermore, it is interesting to mention that educational actions bring professionals and patients closer by valuing the construction of critical thinking, promoting the fight for health rights and expanding the understanding of the health/disease process⁽¹⁸⁾.

Thus, Health Education is one of the main aspects in promoting active aging. In which the specifics of old age seek a healthy and active lifestyle, in this case, through the articulation of technical and popular knowledge and through the mobilization of individual and collective resources. From this perspective, health education is understood as a practice for transforming individuals' ways of life to promote quality of life and health. In this sense, considering that the contents and actions come from popular knowledge and the context in which users live, greater meaning is generated for the developed actions⁽¹⁹⁾.

Health Education also emerges as an important role of advanced practice nurses for gerontological care. In the studies^(20,21), these professionals acted as preceptors in monitoring undergraduate nursing students in practical activities in gerontology and as professors who shared didactic and clinical experiences in teaching gerontological nursing content in bachelor's degrees in nursing. In addition, these professionals developed collaborative relationships with generalist nurses to promote the concept of successful aging.

Therefore, the advanced practice nurse must integrate research, education, care practice and management. In addition, when reflecting on nursing in health care for the elderly, it is clear that this nurse participates in the process of professional training at undergraduate and graduate level with the skills and abilities necessary from a specialized and high-resolution perspective⁽⁵⁾.

Therefore, the training of advanced practice nurses at the professional master's or doctoral level is a requirement for acquiring this title, as it enables the development of intellectual capacity, educational competences and evidence-based clinical skills⁽⁴⁾.

Thus, it is relevant to observe the reformulation of the graduate curriculum components, with the implementation of professional masters and doctorates, which envision the APN, as, for example, subjects that work on evidence-based practice.

Furthermore, the importance of nursing education for the APN is registered, not only in universities, but also in

health services in communities, discussing the paradigms that emanate from health care, without neglecting evidence-based nursing, which is essential for the APN in gerontology⁽²²⁾.

On the other hand, unsatisfactorily, situations such as opposition from the medical profession have been identified as one of the main barriers to the development of the APN. Which is related to potential overlap in the scope of practice and loss of activities, increased autonomy and independence of nurses, and greater coverage and qualification of health services⁽⁶⁾.

Another barrier to the comprehensiveness of the applicability of the APN is its recognition, or lack of it, in academic-professional communities in different regions of the world. Because there is still no consensus on the acceptance of this perspective of the role of nurses in the Councils and Collegiate of Nurses of different countries.

Finally, the category "Use of theoretical and/or methodological tools for care management" presents studies that demonstrate the use of theoretical and/or methodological tools by advanced practice nurses to structure care management. For example, in a study developed in the United States⁽³⁾, nurses caring for elderly patients with chronic diseases used Levine's Conservation Model for Nursing to structure and operationalize the Nursing Process (NP).

In Nursing, the action takes place according to a method, a scientifically based care model that leads to reflective action and improvement of the care provided. Thus, to be more effective, nursing care needs to be theoretically and methodologically based, to guide the Systematization of Nursing Care (SNC)⁽²³⁾. For this, it is necessary to define a nursing theory that is consistent with the reality of the target audience of care and support the NP⁽²⁴⁾.

In other studies^(11,25,26), advanced practice nurses developed the use of tools aimed at clinically assessing the health condition of the elderly, such as the Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA). The use of the tools took place both in the contexts of PHC and in hospital care, which guided the planning of nursing interventions and promoted a reduction in the rates of depression and pressure injuries in the elderly. In addition to these benefits, there was an improvement in the satisfaction of families and elderly people attended by health services.

Considering the results of the included studies, the use of technological tools for health care, such as the CGA, and the multidimensional assessment of the elderly with the use of standardized and validated tests and scales subsidize the practice of nurses. Thus, directing care towards the identification of aspects that are related to human responses and the establishment of useful nursing interventions for these needs⁽²⁷⁾. Furthermore, it becomes an interesting tool for the SNC and care management.

It is important to highlight that the use of tools is part of the work process of advanced practice nurses, and part of

the NP, with an emphasis on critical thinking and clinical reasoning. The use of these tools should be understood as a guiding resource for professional practice and as a control mechanism for the possibilities of care innovation⁽²⁸⁾.

However, authors still report a lack of studies describing the use of theoretical and methodological references and instruments to guide nursing care for the elderly. This reinforces the need for nurses to provide quality care to this population.

In addition to having knowledge about the aging process, the theoretical-scientific-professional knowledge that an advanced practice nurse has is important, in this case, to meet the health needs of the elderly population. However, there is a lack of harmony between the growing demands of the elderly population and nursing education⁽²³⁾.

Therefore, the development and implementation of the APN is dependent on the different laws that regulate and standardize the practice of nursing in each country. As well as the health context of these places, considering that these practices are different in each country. Thus, in this review, it was decided not to analyze the APN in isolation by context of each country of the studies mentioned, thus avoiding generating confusion.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we sought to identify the characteristics of Advanced Practice Nursing in the health care process for the elderly, making it possible to highlight the applicability and importance of the APN, more specifically in this population.

It was possible to notice the predominance of development of studies about the APN in European and North American countries. On the other hand, there is a shortage of studies on the subject in Latin America, Asia and Africa, where there is a different social/economic reality from the continents where the studies were carried out.

As a characteristic of the APN, the study revealed that the use of clinical assessment needs the elderly patient for the planning and implementation of nursing interventions. In addition, Health Education is needed to promote care and use theoretical and/or methodological tools for care management.

Based on the considerations made so far, considering the studies analyzed, the benefits of the APN stand out in the gerontological care process for the prevention of chronic non-communicable diseases, for the prevention of worsening of the clinical condition, especially in PHC contexts and for the provision of specific care consistent with clinical behaviors that are competent for advanced practice nurses. Furthermore, its applicability to obtain better results in mental health and for training in the care and training of nurses was evidenced.

Finally, reflections on strategies for the insertion of the APN in different realities regarding sociopolitical, cultural and

human development contexts are necessary. For this reason, it is recommended that research be carried out to analyze the standardization of the APN in different countries, providing more in-depth knowledge of the legal provisions that support the activities of advanced practice nurses.

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