


THE FAMILY HEALTH STRATEGY AS A PILLAR FOR A PREVENTIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The Family Health Strategy (FHS) has been one of the main public health policies in Brazil, focusing on health promotion, disease prevention, and comprehensive care of populations, especially in areas of social vulnerability. This study aims to analyze the contributions of the Family Health Strategy to the promotion of preventive health and comprehensive care, highlighting its impact on the quality of life of the population and the barriers faced in its implementation. The research follows a qualitative approach, using literature review as the main method. The selection of sources was made from articles published between 2019 and 2023, obtained from academic databases such as PubMed, Scielo, and Redalyc. The analysis was carried out using the content analysis technique, categorizing the main contributions of the FHS and the barriers to its implementation. The results indicate that the Family Health Strategy has contributed significantly to the reduction of chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes, by providing continuous monitoring and health education. In addition, the integration of multiprofessional teams has shown effectiveness in the management of complex diseases, improving access to primary care and reducing the demand for hospital services. The constant training of professionals and the strengthening of the infrastructure of health units are essential to maximize the results of the ESF. The Family Health Strategy is consolidated as an effective model to promote preventive and comprehensive health, reducing the burden on the hospital system and improving the quality of life of the populations served. However, for this model to be fully effective, it is necessary to overcome the challenges related to lack of resources, training of professionals, and inadequate infrastructure. Strengthening public policies and continuous investment in training and resources are essential to ensure the expansion and sustainability of the ESF as a pillar of a more equitable and efficient health system.

Keywords: Family Health Strategy. Comprehensive Care. Preventive Health.

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INTRODUCTION

The Family Health Strategy (FHS), implemented in Brazil as one of the pillars of the reorganization of the public health system, is essential in strengthening primary care. This model seeks to promote health and prevent diseases through integrated and territorial actions, guided by the fundamental principles of the Unified Health System (SUS): universality, equity, and comprehensiveness of care. According to Brito et al. (2020), the FHS is crucial to expand access to basic services, especially in areas of social vulnerability, contributing to the reduction of inequalities and the improvement of population health indicators. Ribeiro et al. (2022) add that the FHS's role in health promotion goes beyond curative care, integrating preventive practices focused on the quality of life of the communities served.

Since its creation, the ESF has proven to be an indispensable tool for the reorientation of the health system, prioritizing proximity to the community and continuous and personalized care. Brito et al. (2020) point out that the multiprofessional structure of the FHS, composed of doctors, nurses, nursing technicians, and community health agents, allows the construction of lasting bonds with patients, favoring continuous monitoring and the promotion of educational actions. Ribeiro et al. (2022) highlight that this humanized approach has contributed to the reduction of morbidity and mortality due to avoidable conditions, especially in remote regions.

However, despite significant advances, the ESF faces structural and operational challenges that limit its full potential. Brito et al. (2020) identify inequality in access to health services as one of the main barriers, especially in rural and peripheral areas, where infrastructure is precarious and the distribution of health professionals is unequal. Ribeiro et al. (2022) emphasize that the scarcity of financial resources and the insufficiency of technical training for primary care professionals compromise the quality and continuity of the services offered, hindering the consolidation of the model.

These challenges are aggravated by the complexity of the social determinants of health, which directly influence the living conditions of the populations served. Brito et al. (2020) highlight that factors such as income, schooling, housing, and basic sanitation significantly impact the effectiveness of interventions carried out by the FHS, requiring intersectoral strategies to address inequalities. Ribeiro et al. (2022) reinforce that the integration between public health policies and other areas, such as education and social assistance, is essential to expand the results achieved by primary care.

In this context, understanding the role of the FHS as a pillar of a preventive and comprehensive health system is indispensable for proposing evidence-based policies and interventions. Brito et al. (2020) argue that strengthening primary care is the basis for building an equitable and sustainable health system, capable of meeting the growing demands for quality services. For Ribeiro et al. (2022), the development of innovative practices within the ESF, combined with increased funding and professional training, can generate significant advances in health promotion and the reduction of inequalities.

The analysis presented in this study is based on a theoretical-analytical approach that integrates a review of the recent literature and the critical evaluation of data related to FHS practices. Brito et al. (2020) point out that the existing literature shows the positive impacts of the FHS on the quality of life of the populations served, while Ribeiro et al. (2022) highlight the need to expand the production of scientific knowledge about the challenges and potentialities of the model. Thus, this work seeks to contribute to the reflection on the relevance of the FHS in strengthening the SUS, with a focus on promoting a more inclusive, efficient and problem-solving health system.

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study is characterized by a qualitative approach, based on a review of scientific literature published in the last five years. The data sources were selected from high-impact academic databases, such as PubMed, Scielo and Redalyc, using keywords such as "Family Health Strategy", "Primary Health Care" and "Preventive Care". The inclusion criteria included articles published between 2019 and 2023, with full text available and a focus on the analysis of the ESF in the Brazilian context.

The analysis was conducted using the content analysis method, with categorization of the main contributions of the FHS in relation to the promotion of preventive health and comprehensive care. In addition, the research considered the ethical aspects of the publication, including the proper citation of all references used.

RESULTS

The results observed throughout the implementation of the Family Health Strategy (FHS) indicate significant advances in the promotion of preventive health and comprehensive care, especially in the most vulnerable communities. The analysis of the

data collected from various studies reveals that the FHS has been a crucial pillar to ensure universal and equal access to health services, allowing the coverage of areas of difficult access and with scarce resources (FONSECA; MENDES, 2019).

Recent studies show that the FHS contributes to the reduction of chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes, by facilitating continuous monitoring and health education. Regular interaction with trained professionals in primary care, such as doctors, nurses, and community health agents, has promoted a model of care that prioritizes prevention, rather than curative treatment alone (BRITO et al., 2020).

In addition, the integration of multiprofessional teams has demonstrated effectiveness in the management of complex diseases, such as chronic non-communicable diseases and infectious diseases. In areas with a greater presence of the FHS, there is a notable reduction in the rate of hospital admissions, which reflects the effectiveness of the model in terms of comprehensive care. The work of the Family Health Support Center (NASF) has been essential in this context, acting directly in the training of teams and in the promotion of educational and preventive strategies, especially in the areas of mental health and women's health (RIBEIRO et al., 2022).

On the other hand, limitations in the implementation of the ESF, such as the shortage of professionals and work overload, have negatively impacted efficiency in some locations. The lack of financial and logistical resources also compromises the implementation of preventive actions in a comprehensive and continuous manner, which makes the strategy more vulnerable to the structural difficulties of the Brazilian health system (FONSECA; MENDES, 2019).

DISCUSSION

The discussion of the results reinforces the fundamental role of the Family Health Strategy in strengthening the public health system in Brazil. As a model of primary health care, the FHS seeks not only to treat diseases, but to prevent and promote health in a continuous and comprehensive manner, which is crucial in a health system in which social and regional inequalities are still predominant (VIEIRA; BOCCARA DE PAULA, 2021).

The analysis of the data confirms that the FHS has been effective in reducing the demand for hospital services, since preventive care is able to identify and treat diseases in their early stages. This is evidenced by the decrease in the rates of avoidable hospitalizations, which are a reflection of the regular follow-up carried out by the FHS

teams. In addition, the improvement in the quality of life of the populations served, with emphasis on mental health and maternal and child health, is also a positive indication that the integrated care model works satisfactorily, especially when the teams are properly trained and qualified (FONSECA; MENDES, 2019).

However, the discussion also highlights that the full implementation of the FHS still faces considerable challenges, especially with regard to the physical structure of health units, the constant training of professionals and the scarcity of resources for full compliance with health policies. The resistance in some regions to adherence to primary care and the excessive dependence on the hospital system reveal that the FHS needs to be better structured to respond to a growing and diversified demand (FONSECA; MENDES, 2019).

The interdependence between the FHS and the social determinants of health is an important factor to be discussed. The success of the strategy is closely linked to addressing socioeconomic inequalities that hinder access to care, in addition to being associated with factors such as health education and the strengthening of community awareness. Initiatives for social mobilization and team training, such as those carried out by the NASF, have shown potential to overcome barriers to access and foster social inclusion, but public policies still need to provide substantial support to ensure that the ESF reaches its full effectiveness in all regions of the country (VIEIRA; BOCCARA DE PAULA, 2021).

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the Family Health Strategy represents a fundamental model for the implementation of a preventive and comprehensive health system in Brazil. The strategy has proven effective in reducing chronic diseases, improving quality of life, and reducing the demand for emergency services and hospital admissions. Integrated and multiprofessional action, with the active participation of the community, strengthens collective health and contributes to the construction of a healthier society.

However, the implementation of the FHS still faces significant structural challenges, such as the lack of adequate resources, the need for more trained professionals, and the overload of work, which directly impact the quality of the service provided. Improving infrastructure and ensuring continuous resources are essential to ensure that ESF teams can function fully and effectively.

Therefore, strengthening the ESF requires not only a close look at the external factors that influence public health, such as adequate funding and efficient management, but also a continuous commitment to the training of trained professionals and the improvement of working conditions. Only in this way will it be possible to consolidate the ESF as a pillar of a health system that prioritizes preventive and comprehensive health, bringing substantial benefits to the populations served and, consequently, to the health system as a whole.

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