**Original Research Article**

**KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE IN FIRST AID BY PROFESSIONALS’ BASIC EDUCATION AT A SCHOOL IN BELÉM, PARÁ, BRAZIL**

**ABSTRACT**

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| **Introduction:** School is an environment where accidents can occur with children, due to the exponential grouping in the school environment for a relatively significant period of time. Because of this, First Aid must be the immediate care provided to a victim after an accident. This initial care generally occurs by professionals who work in schools, making them responsible for correct and effective care actions. **Methods:** This is descriptive fieldwork, with a quantitative basis for data analysis, whose collection period took place in October 2023. In a private school, all employees who worked at the educational institution were interviewed. **Results and discussion:** Teachers and staff at the educational institution where the research was carried out found that more than 50% of professionals did not have the training to provide First Aid assistance, although a significant percentage (56%) of these professionals had already witnessed a school accident. Thus, it was observed that in accidents, they are normally the first to provide immediate care to children, making it necessary for them to feel confident and able to carry out an appropriate intervention. Regarding the existence of a first aid kit at school, 5 (9.43%) responded yes and 11 (14.86%) said it did not exist. Furthermore, when asked where to find this kit, 5 (9.43%) responded that they knew where to find it and 11 (14.86%) responded that they did not know where it was found. **Conclusion:** Training education professionals with effective first aid assistance techniques is a prevention strategy that will contribute to a safer childhood. It is important to promote discussions and actions for the implementation of a preventive public policy, which guarantees the professional qualification of professionals working in basic education, and/or the insertion of nursing professionals in the school environment. |

**keywords:** Nursing; First Aid; Teacher Training.

**1. INTRODUCION**

First aid (FI) is the care and procedures provided immediately to a victim after an accident or in situations that put them at risk and is essential to maintain the victim's health status before professional care is provided. For these procedures to be performed correctly, it is necessary to have knowledge of the appropriate techniques, so that this care is of quality (Aguirre; Ricardo; Andrade, 2021).

An accident is an event that causes damage, harm or even death, and it happens unexpectedly and quickly (Grimaldi, et al., 2018). According to the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics (SBP), 90% of accidents involving children can be prevented. Among the main causes of accidents involving children, the most frequent are suffocation, falls, poisoning, burns, drowning, transport accidents, poisoning and electric shocks (Brazil, 2022).

The Mortality Information System (SIM) in 2018 showed that external causes were one of the main reasons for the deaths of children between zero and nine years of age in Brazil. Traffic accidents stood out (19.86%), followed by drowning (19.76%) and other respiratory risks. These unintentional events occur unexpectedly, causing accidents (Brazil, 2018).

These eventualities are recurrent in schools because there is a large flow of children and adolescents and also because they are a more vulnerable population, due to restlessness and curiosity that can cause accidents at any time, especially during break or mealtimes. Due to this factor, teachers and school professionals need to be guided and trained to provide first aid (Ferreira; Borges; Schwiderski, 2019).

Teachers and other school staff are the first to witness emergencies in the school environment, which imposes on them the responsibility of providing emergency care (Antunes, et al., 2022). Therefore, it is essential to train them in basic emergency care knowledge, as these professionals are closest to the victim at that moment. This assistance can be provided by a lay person who receives appropriate training and education (Rodrigues, et al., 2022).

This training was established and sanctioned through Law 13.722, of October 4, 2018, known as the Lucas Law, which “makes training in basic first aid mandatory for teachers and staff of public and private elementary schools and children's recreation establishments” (Brazil, 2018). Despite the mandatory nature of the Lucas Law in Brazil, the lack of technical-scientific knowledge of ED and adherence to this Law leads to an increase in injuries in schools. Therefore, it was necessary to identify the knowledge of teachers and staff of a school about basic ED care in an emergency situation (Moreno; Fonseca, 2021). In this process, nurses have a strategic position, given the holistic nature of their training and their participation in the School Health Program (PSE) (Ilha, et al., 2021). Due to accidents in the school environment, there is a great demand to address the topic of HP in schools, especially in early childhood education, considering that most teachers, staff, and principals demonstrate unpreparedness and lack of knowledge to offer adequate support to students in the event of an emergency (Alvim, et al., 2019). Accidents have contributed significantly to the increase in deaths in all age groups. Worldwide, on average 25% of these deaths occurred in people between the ages of 0 and 18 (Costa, et al, 2021).

In Brazil, school accidents are the leading cause of infant death, as they affect a younger population, children aged 1 to 14, mainly in daycare centers and preschools (Silva et al., 2018).

With few exceptions, the curriculum of undergraduate courses does not include a subject that teaches basic emergency procedures. Consequently, teachers do not know how to act in situations that compromise the health of children, creating a risk to the vital state of the school (Silva et al., 2017).

According to Souza et al., (2020), a study was carried out in Pará, in which it was found that 81% of teachers stated that they had not received any training in first aid techniques. This demonstrates the low level of knowledge, skill and lack of care preparation, and there is a need to qualify and train schools and staff for extra-hospital care. Nursing is the one who provides health care, using clear and common language to teachers, students and everyone involved in the school environment, disseminating theory and practice, raising awareness and minimizing the risks and harm caused by the school environment or even at home, offering greater safety for children (Amadigi, et al., 2022).

In view of this, the question was asked: What is the knowledge and practices of basic education professionals regarding first aid?

**2. Methodology**

This research was configured with a quantitative approach, with which it was possible to analyze the data for the best evaluation of knowledge and practices regarding first aid of the professionals of the institution of this study. It was carried out in a school in the city of Belém- PA, Pará. The sample of this study was composed of teachers and employees of an educational institution that has a total of 13 teachers and 3 assistants in the morning and afternoon work shifts. According to the current data of the semester, there were 250 regularly enrolled students in the age range of 03 to 15 years. To implement, analyze and interpret the data obtained in the research, the following methodological path was followed: the information was stored in a database in the software, where a spreadsheet was developed to organize the distribution of the data. The research complied with the ethical precepts established in Resolution No. 466-2012, of the National Health Council (CNS), which considers respect for human dignity and the protection of participants in scientific research involving human beings (BRASIL, 2012), having received a favorable opinion from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Amazon.

**3. Results and discussion**

16 professionals who work at the early childhood education institution participated in this study. There was a predominance of 16 females (100%), the majority of whom were aged between 31-49 years old (81.25%), followed by those under 30 years old (12.50%) and over 50 years old (6.25%). As for the professional training variable, there was a predominance of pedagogues 10 (62.50%). Regarding the time of experience, there was a predominance of time less than 5 years (62.50%), as seen in table 01.

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| **TABLE 01** – **Profile of employees who work at the private educational institution, Belém, PA, 2023.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables** | N° | % |
| **Sex** |  |  |
| Feminine | 16 | 100% |
| Masculine | 0 | 0% |
|  |   |   |
| **Age** |  |  |
| <30 | 2 | 13% |
| 31-49 | 13 | 81% |
| >50 | 1 | 6% |
|  |   |   |
| **Professional Training** |  |  |
| pedagogue | 10 | 63% |
| Historian | 1 | 6% |
| room assistant | 1 | 6% |
| Administrative Assistant | 1 | 6% |
| Neuropsychopedagogue Professor | 1 | 6% |
| Cleaning assistant | 1 | 6% |
| Physical Education Teacher | 1 | 6% |
|  |   |   |
| **Professional experience** |  |  |
| <5 | 10 | 63% |
| 06-10 | 3 | 19% |
| >11 | 3 | 19% |
| **Sample Total** | 16 | 100% |

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In table 02 it is possible to identify first aid knowledge and practices, demonstrating that 9 (12.16%) professionals responded that they had not received any specific training and 7 (13.21%) that they had already received it. Despite the potential risk of accidents associated with the school environment, the majority of respondents, 56%, do not feel safe providing first aid and only 7 (44%) responded that they feel capable. Regarding the existence of a first aid kit at school, only 5 (31.25%) were aware of it and 11 (68.75%) were unaware. Furthermore, when asked where to find the kit, 5 (31.25%) responded that they knew where to find it and 11 (68.75%) responded that they did not know. When asked whether they had ever witnessed any sudden illness (fainting, dizziness, partial loss of vision or seizure), most of the interviewees responded that not 9 (56%), but 7 (44%) had already seen it. However, 44% feel afraid to provide care, the majority, with 10 (62.5%) reporting that they never had training during their time at work and 6 (37.5%) answered yes.

**TABLE 02 – First Aid Knowledge and Practices Questionnaire.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
| **QUESTIONS** |   |   |   |   |
| **Nº** | YES | % | NO | % |
| Q1-First Aid Training | 7 | 44% | 9 | 56% |
| Q2- Have you ever witnessed a sudden illness? | 7 | 44% | 9 | 56% |
| Q3- School Accident | 9 | 56% | 7 | 44% |
| Q4- First Aid Training Offered by the School | 6 | 38% | 10 | 63% |
| Q11- Is there a first aid kit at school? | 5 | 31% | 11 | 69% |
| Q12- First Aid Kit Location at School | 5 | 31% | 11 | 69% |
| Q14- Fear of Providing Care | 7 | 44% | 9 | 56% |
| Q15 - Do you feel qualified to provide first aid? | 7 | 44% | 9 | 56% |

Table 3 shows that the interviewees have already taken a specific first aid course outside their work environment in person (43.75%) and blended (12.50%). The majority of respondents (87%) were unsure about carrying out an emergency intervention in the following situations: fractures, bruises, hemorrhages and fainting. Regarding choking intervention, (68.75%) responded that they would perform the unblocking maneuver; Fainting (56.25%) loosening clothes and raising legs; fracture, 11 (68.75%) responded not to move, and regarding seizures, 10 (62.50%) responded to move the child away from dangerous places and protect the head, but 6% did not know how to proceed. Based on the knowledge and learning of professionals who work at the early childhood education institution, they were asked how important it is to have knowledge of first aid in a school from 0 to 5. There was a predominance of 16 (100%), in which 5 is extremely important.

**TABLE 03 – First Aid Knowledge and Practices Questionnaire.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **QUESTIONS** | N | % |
| **Q5- Have you ever taken a specific first aid course outside of your country?** **your work environment, if so, what type of work?** |  |  |
| In person | 7 | 44% |
| Blended | 2 | 13% |
| EAD | 0 | 0% |
| I didn't take any course | 7 | 44% |
| **Sample Total** | 16 | 100% |
| **QUESTIONS** | N | % |
| **Q6 – Among the situations below, which do you feel confident in carrying out an emergency intervention?** |  |  |
| Fracture | 2 | 13% |
| Bruises | 4 | 25% |
| Bleeding | 2 | 13% |
| Fainting | 4 | 25% |
| None | 4 | 25% |
| **Sample Total** | 16 | 100% |
| **Q7- Choking** |  |  |
| Try to remove the object by hand | 0 | 0% |
| Perform unblocking maneuver | 11 | 69% |
| Ask the child to cough | 0 | 0% |
| Raise your arms | 5 | 31% |
| **QUESTIONS** | 16 | 100% |
| **Q8- Fainting** |  |  |
| Try to wake the victim | 0 | 0% |
| Check Vital Signs | 7 | 44% |
| Loosen clothing and elevate legs to return blood flow | 9 | 56% |
| **Sample Total** | 16 | 100% |
| **Q9- Fracture** |  |  |
| Immobilize, check if the fracture is open or closed | 4 | 25% |
| Don't move | 11 | 69% |
| I didn't know how to answer | 1 | 6% |
| **Sample Total** | 16 | 100% |
| **Q10- Convulsion** |  |  |
| Hold the person and the tongue | 1 | 6% |
| Keep the child away from dangerous places and protect their head | 10 | 63% |
| Protect your mouth with an object to avoid biting your tongue | 3 | 19% |
| I didn't know how to answer | 2 | 13% |
| **Sample Total** | 16 | 100% |
| **Q16- The importance of knowledge in first aid scales from 0 to 5** |  |  |
| 0 to 4 | 0 | 0% |
| 5 | 16 | 100% |
| **Sample Total** | 16 | 100% |

In schools, professionals are the first to provide immediate assistance to children, making it necessary for them to feel confident and able to provide appropriate intervention. A study carried out in Turkey, with 331 teachers, demonstrated that professionals at the early childhood education institution had information about first aid, but did not feel confident and qualified to provide assistance (Schmitz, et al., 2018). Associated with this, it was found in the current research data that the majority of education professionals did not undertake First Aid training, as guided by the Lucas Law. In comparison to another study, which indicated the relevance in order to preserve their lives (Lima, et al., 2021). According to Cabral, et al., (2020), they emphasize that it is essential to have a first aid kit, containing at least gauze, bandages, tape, saline solution, disposable gloves.

The researchers sought to investigate care situations in the face of a convulsive crisis. During a convulsive crisis, there is still knowledge among lay people that one should place a finger or some object in the victim's mouth, which is not considered correct. The correct procedure is to move the person away from dangerous places and protect the head, in order to make them safe from the possible damage that the seizure can cause (Britoet al.,2020).

However, despite this popular attitude, around 62.50% of those interviewed responded to the correct attitude of caring for a victim who is suffering a seizure. The knowledge of professionals at early childhood education institutions about fractures is limited, as it is not a skill that anyone can perform or act effectively. Therefore, it is necessary to have a quick assessment, knowledge and necessary care, since handling a fractured arm or leg incorrectly can cause injuries to the limbs (Silva, et al., 2023).

However, the present study proves this statement, as 68.75% of those interviewed chose not to touch the victim, for fear of causing harm. Choking is one of the most common accidents in the school environment, and is considered the most fatal if there is no quick and effective intervention in its care. In accordance with this, it was analyzed in the present study that the interviewees know how to perform the clearance maneuver (Heimlich Maneuver), but the smallest number (31.25%) of the interviewees still have the knowledge of raising their arms (Olasveengen, et al., 2020).

**4. CONCLUSION**

The results obtained in this study highlight the importance of training early childhood education professionals, with the main purpose of ensuring that all school employees know how to act in an emergency situation. This situation is weakened by the lack of professional training in terms of providing fast and effective first aid.

As a contribution, this study allowed to expand several discussions on the topic and the importance of first aid training through educational actions, with the purpose of preventing injuries and accidents involving health professionals, including nurses, for infant mortality due to preventable causes.

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