

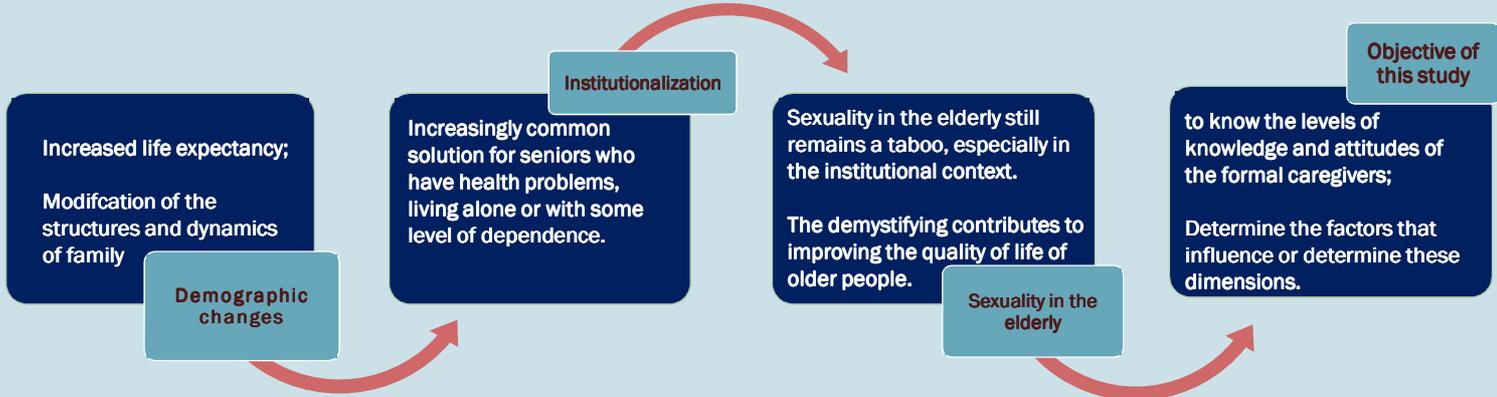
Sexuality in the elderly: Knowledge and attitudes of professional caregivers



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Key Words:
 Sexuality, Elderly, Knowledge, Attitudes, Formal Caregivers

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METHODS	
Study	cross-sectional, quantitative, exploratory, comparative and correlational study
Sample	convenience sample of 329 professional caregivers that work in nursery houses and others organizations (private and social) who provide care to older people
Instrument	translated version (with a pre-test) of the Aging Sexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale (ASKAS), which allowed the knowledge and attitudes measure about sexuality in the elderly (White, 1982). a sociodemographics characteristics form.

RESULTS	There is a positive correlation between the knowledge levels and the attitudes and, generally, the caregivers present good knowledge levels and the attitudes about sexuality in the elderly are permissive
	There is a statistical significant difference between the qualified technicians (better knowledge and more permissive) and the auxiliary staff
	The individuals with higher educational qualifications also present higher knowledge levels and more permissive attitudes
	About the educational regimes, the individuals that attended the 'Novas Oportunidades' regime present lower knowledge levels and less permissive attitudes
	None of subjects referred attending any kind of training or education in this area.
	Single individuals present better knowledge levels and more permissive attitudes than the married ones
	The older individuals present less permissive attitudes as well as the more experienced caregivers

No statistical differences were found between the different types of institutions.

Conclusions	
knowledge is related with the attitudes about sexuality in the elderly. This topic remains a delicate subject for many of the individuals, especially for who work in an institutional context	The sociodemographic profile, educational qualifications and professional experience have significant relationships with the knowledge and attitudes about sexuality in the elderly.
The results reinforce the need for formal training of caregivers in the area of sexuality in old age.	Education and training of these caregivers and a continuous research play a key role in the quality of life of the elders, in the quality of the provided services and in the recognition of the elderly rights