THE NURSE FACING CHALLENGES IN LIBRAS COMMUNICATION: AN INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

O ENFERMEIRO FRENTE AOS ENTRAVES NA COMUNICAÇÃO EM LIBRAS: UMA REVISÃO INTEGRATIVA DE LITERATURA

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ABSTRACT: Objective: To identify the main challenges in deaf individuals’ access to healthcare in Brazil and how nurses can take a leading role in potential improvement actions for healthcare assistance to this group. Methods: This is an integrative literature review study, in which electronic data were surveyed on the Virtual Health Library (VHL). Articles with a time frame between 2018 and 2023 were selected to provide theoretical support for the study, based on two search strategies: the keywords "Libras in
Healthcare" and "Libras in Nursing Health" were entered into the VHL search field. Results: Fourteen studies were located following PRISMA recommendations. Discussion: The selected studies were divided into four distinct categories - investigative and informative studies on barriers in Libras communication in healthcare, studies discussing the academic training of health professionals related to Brazilian Sign Language, studies highlighting communication barriers with deaf patients from the perspective of healthcare professionals, and studies highlighting communication barriers with deaf patients from the perspective of deaf patients. Based on these found articles, it was possible to verify that most nursing professionals face challenges in providing quality care to deaf patients due to limited knowledge of Brazilian Sign Language (Libras). Additionally, there is a weakness in the training of these healthcare professionals regarding Brazilian Sign Language and low incentive and initiative for autonomous language study. Final Considerations: Effective communication in Libras is vital for inclusion in health. Nurses play a central role, but there is a shortage of studies. It is crucial to train nurses and promote inclusion to ensure quality healthcare for deaf patients.

**KEYWORDS:** Deaf, Communication, Health, Nurse.

**RESUMO:** Objetivo: Identificar as principais dificuldades do acesso à saúde ao surdo no Brasil e como o enfermeiro pode protagonizar possíveis ações de melhoria para a assistência à saúde a esse grupo. Métodos: Trata-se de um estudo de revisão integrativa de literatura, no qual foi realizado um levantamento de dados eletrônicos na Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde (BVS). Foram selecionados artigos com recorte temporal entre 2018 e 2023 para embasamento teórico ao estudo, a partir da realização de duas estratégias de busca: inseriu-se no campo de busca da BVS as palavras-chave “Libras na Assistência à Saúde” e “Libras na Saúde Enfermagem”. Resultados: Foram localizados 14 estudos a partir das recomendações PRISMA. Discussão: Os estudos selecionados foram divididos em 04 categorias distintas - estudos investigativos e informativos sobre as barreiras na comunicação em Libras na assistência à saúde, estudos que debatem a formação acadêmica dos profissionais de saúde relacionada à Língua Brasileira de Sinais, estudos que evidenciam as barreiras da comunicação com pacientes surdos na ótica dos profissionais de saúde e estudos que evidenciam as barreiras da comunicação com pacientes surdos na ótica dos pacientes surdos. Diante desses artigos encontrados, foi possível verificar que a maioria dos profissionais de enfermagem enfrenta desafios na prestação de assistência de qualidade a pacientes surdos devido ao limitado conhecimento em Língua Brasileira de Sinais (Libras). Além disso, há fragilidade na formação desses profissionais de saúde em relação a Língua Brasileira de Sinais e baixo
1. Introduction

Deafness represents one of the main diversities present in the global population, characterized by the impossibility or difficulty of hearing. This auditory condition can be categorized into different degrees, ranging from mild to profound deafness, and even cofose, which refers to the total absence of hearing. The causes of deafness are diverse, including genetic factors, prematurity, low birth weight, exposure to toxic substances, and congenital infections (Brazil, 2017).

According to the Aurélio Dictionary of the Portuguese Language (2010), two of the meanings of the word "communication" are:

(2) "The act or effect of emitting, transmitting, and receiving messages through conventionalized methods and/or processes, whether through spoken or written language, or other signs, symbols, or visual and/or auditory specialized technical equipment" / (6) "The ability to exchange or discuss ideas, to dialogue, to converse, with a view to good understanding between people."

The etymological definition of communication involves the use of signs as a method of discourse. In the Brazilian context, Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) is recognized as the mother tongue of deaf people, as established...
by Law No. 10,435/2002 and Decree No. 5,626/2005 (Brazil, 2005; Souza; Santos, 2019).

In Brazil, according to Decree No. 5,626 (December 22, 2005), a deaf person is one who interacts with the world through visual experiences and expresses a culture and identity of their own, centered mainly on the use of Libras. The term "hearing impaired" is considered outdated and pejorative, while the deaf person identifies themselves as part of a culture (Brazil, 2005; Mazzu-Nascimento et al., 2020).

Libras has a unique grammatical structure, fundamental for the expression, understanding, and interaction of the deaf population (Souza and Santos, 2019). Despite the support provided by Decree No. 5,626 of 2005 for the training of healthcare professionals to deal with the deaf population, the Unified Health System (SUS) still faces significant challenges in this regard, given the lack of knowledge and training in Libras by most healthcare professionals.

The nurse, as a fundamental member of the healthcare team, plays an essential role in seeking quality care for deaf patients, requiring knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes aligned with ethical and legal principles and humanized care (Sanches et al., 2019; Marquete, Costa and Teston, 2018) However, the lack of preparation of the nursing staff to deal with the deaf population negatively affects the quality of care, contributing to the resistance of these patients to seek healthcare services.

Effective communication in Libras is crucial for proper diagnosis and treatment, with its absence being a concern for the health of deaf individuals, potentially resulting in disease complications and a lack of prevention and health promotion (Mazzu-Nascimento et al., 2020). In this context, it is imperative to investigate how nurses face challenges in Libras communication and promote inclusion and assistance to deaf patients.
This research seeks not only to highlight obstacles in Libras communication between nursing professionals and deaf patients but also to propose solutions that contribute to more inclusive and effective care, respecting diversity and promoting the autonomy of deaf patients. The aim is that the proposals presented in this integrative literature review can help overcome obstacles in Libras communication, promoting a significant improvement in healthcare for the deaf, with completeness and efficiency. In line with the words of Laborit (1994), in his book entitled "The Cry of the Seagull," the importance of valuing the uniqueness of deaf individuals is emphasized, serving as motivation for nurses striving to promote healthcare fairly, considering individual differences.

2. Method

Lima and Mioto (2007) define methodology as a form of discourse that highlights the chosen method as a fundamental approach to guide research. For the present study, the chosen research methodology is integrative literature review, defined by Mendes, Silveira, and Galvão (2008) as the systematic collection and synthesis of results from studies already published on a specific theme or question, organized to enrich the understanding of the subject under investigation. Literature review plays a crucial role in stimulating analyses that underpin decision-making based on scientific evidence, resulting in the improvement of clinical practice in the healthcare field.

The approach in this study aims to identify the social obstacles faced by the lack of proper communication between hearing nurses and deaf users of the Brazilian healthcare system, seeking to show how these healthcare
professionals can assist in advocating for rights for deaf individuals regarding healthcare.

To guide the research question, the PICo strategy was adopted, an acronym for Patient, Intervention, and Context, in which the population (P) under study is composed of deaf patients, the intervention (I) analyzed refers to nursing care for this group of patients, and the context (Co) is the healthcare service providers' environments (clinics, basic health units, emergency units, hospitals). Thus, the following research question was formulated: "What are the main challenges faced by nurses in communication with deaf patients who use Brazilian Sign Language as their means of communication?"

To achieve this objective, scientific articles available in journals listed in the databases of the Virtual Health Library (VHL) were consulted, including the following sources: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS), Nursing Database (BDENF), and Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (MEDLINE). The selection criteria adopted include searching for articles indexed in the last five years - 2018 to 2023, complete in Portuguese. Two distinct search strategies were chosen, inserting the keywords "Libras in Healthcare" and "Libras in Nursing Health." The article search strategies were listed according to Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Search</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BVS</td>
<td><strong>Strategy 1:</strong> &quot;Libras in healthcare&quot; AND la:(&quot;pt&quot;) AND (year_cluster:[2018 TO 2023])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Strategy 2:</strong> &quot;Libras in Nursing Healthcare&quot; AND la:(&quot;pt&quot;) AND (year_cluster:[2018 TO 2023])</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration (2023).
To conduct the review, the recommended steps by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines for systematic reviews (Galvão and Pansani, 2015) were adopted. Grey literature, including theses, dissertations, articles from event proceedings, and editorials, was excluded from this search. The selected texts were organized using Microsoft Excel to identify essential information, such as authors, title, research method, and the general objective of each study.

After the definitive selection of the material, the information was processed using the Content Analysis method, as established by Bardin (2016), covering three distinct stages: pre-analysis of the chosen material, categorization based on emerging themes identified in the reading of the texts, and interpretation of the results. Since this is a literature review study, the texts were properly referenced according to their respective authorships. Given that this research does not directly involve the participation of human subjects, it was not necessary to submit it to the Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects.
3. Results

Figure 1. PRISMA strategy for article selection.

Records identified on database:
- **Strategy 1** \((n = 15)\)
- **Strategy 2** \((n = 12)\)
- **Total** = 27

Duplicate records removed = 8
Grey literature removed = 2
Reports assessed for eligibility = 17
Reading the articles in full = 14
Did not meet the study objectives = 3

Studies included in review:
\((n = 14)\)

Source: Page *et al* (2021), adapted for the study.

The selected studies were organized according to Table 2:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Authors and year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vianna et al (2022)</td>
<td>Deafness in Brazilian Health Policy: A Genealogical Analysis</td>
<td>Qualitative and documentary research.</td>
<td>To perform a genealogical analysis of deafness, that is, of knowledge and power practices, in Brazilian health policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Soleman e Bousquat (2021)</td>
<td>Health Policies and Conceptions of Deafness and Hearing Impairment in SUS: A Monologue?</td>
<td>Documentary research.</td>
<td>To identify how these conceptions were expressed in health policies for people with hearing impairment/deafness in the Unified Health System (SUS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mazzu-Nascimento et al (2020)</td>
<td>Fragility in the Training of Health Professionals Regarding Brazilian Sign Language: Reflection on Deaf Health Care</td>
<td>Descriptive and cross-sectional study, developed with secondary data collected from the Ministry of Education's electronic database.</td>
<td>To identify the training of health professionals regarding Brazilian Sign Language (Libras).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bernardo et al (2021)</td>
<td>Powers and Limits in the Daily Life of Academic Training in the Health Care of Deaf Individuals</td>
<td>Qualitative and interpretative study, based on Comprehensive and Everyday Sociology.</td>
<td>To understand the powers and limits in the daily life of undergraduate students in the care of deaf individuals during their training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Moura et al (2019)</td>
<td>Brazilian Sign Language as a Mandatory Discipline in Nursing Graduation: Opinions of Students</td>
<td>Quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional study.</td>
<td>To describe the opinions of nursing undergraduates about the mandatory Libras discipline during their training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Neponucemo et al (2022)</td>
<td>Nursing Care for a Hospitalized Deaf Patient: Reflective Report of an Experience</td>
<td>Descriptive study of the reflective experience report type.</td>
<td>To report, from a reflective perspective, the experience lived by nursing interns in their practical training process in nursing care for a hospitalized deaf patient.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration (2023).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Method</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ferreira et al (2019)</td>
<td>Care for Deaf Pregnant Women: Communication Barriers Encountered by the Health Team</td>
<td>Exploratory descriptive study of a quantitative nature.</td>
<td>To identify the main barriers and forms of communication between the health team and deaf pregnant women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cunha, Pereira e Oliveira (2019)</td>
<td>Nursing and Care for Deaf Patients in the Hospital Setting</td>
<td>Literature review.</td>
<td>To describe the difficulties faced by nursing professionals in providing care and communication with deaf patients in a hospital unit and to show improvement strategies for communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Soares et al (2018)</td>
<td>How Do I Communicate with You? The Nurse’s Communication with Deaf Users</td>
<td>Descriptive exploratory study with a qualitative approach.</td>
<td>To describe the knowledge and practices of nurse professionals in primary care in helping deaf users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sanches et al (2019)</td>
<td>The Role of the Nurse in Dealing with Deaf Patients</td>
<td>Descriptive study, a type of experience report.</td>
<td>To report the experience lived by nursing undergraduate students in an extension activity focused on raising awareness about the nurse’s role in attending to the deaf and the importance of using sign language in their field of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Marquete, Costa e Teston (2018)</td>
<td>Communication with Hearing-Impaired Individuals from the Perspective of Healthcare Professionals</td>
<td>Quantitative investigation, with a descriptive character.</td>
<td>To describe the knowledge and training of healthcare professionals regarding communication with hearing-impaired individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Costa et al (2018)</td>
<td>Welcoming and Listening to Silence: Nursing Care from the Perspective of Deaf</td>
<td>Descriptive exploratory study with a qualitative approach.</td>
<td>To identify the perception of deaf women regarding nursing care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the puerperium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women During Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Puerperium</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Marquete et al (2019)</td>
<td>Challenges of Care for Deaf People Experienced by Hearing Family Members: An Exploratory Study</td>
<td>Exploratory study, qualitative.</td>
<td>To identify the difficulties experienced by hearing family members in the healthcare of deaf individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Santos e Portes (2019)</td>
<td>Perceptions of Deaf Subjects Regarding Communication in Primary Health Care</td>
<td>Cross-sectional observational study.</td>
<td>To analyze the perceptions of individuals with deafness regarding the communication process with healthcare professionals in Primary Health Care in the State of Rio de Janeiro.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration (2023).
4. Discussion

After an exhaustive review of the material, the information was categorized into 4 topics, with the titles of each research mentioned in each category in the following list, duly referenced at the end of this article: a) Barriers in Libras communication in health care; b) Academic training of health professionals related to Brazilian Sign Language; c) Communication barriers with deaf patients from the perspective of health professionals; d) Communication barriers with health professionals from the perspective of deaf patients.

Vianna et al. (2021) discusses two discourses addressing deafness: the clinical-therapeutic model, which sees it as a pathological sign and a disability, and the socioanthropological model, which perceives it as a difference, with its own identity and culture, highlighting Brazilian Sign Language (Libras). This perspective on uniqueness legitimizes the deaf as citizens who experience the world visually, transforming what would be considered "abnormality" into simple difference (SOLEMAN; BOUSQUAT, 2021).

Soares et al. (2018), Soleman and Bousquat (2020) agree with this view of deafness, emphasizing it as a unique characteristic that distinguishes the deaf, strengthening the formation of a social group with its own identity, based on gesto-visual language. The importance of not labeling the deaf as disabled but recognizing them for their difference is emphasized.

Mazzu-Nascimento et al. (2020) highlight that building strong bonds is crucial to ensuring effective communication, being a pillar of accessibility. In the context of health, the promotion of accessibility not only raises awareness but also drives the construction of inclusive societies. However, the deaf population still faces significant challenges in accessing health information.
Soleman and Bousquat (2021) expand the discussion about the identity of deaf people, highlighting that it goes beyond sign language, involving the presence of a means that allows their existence as "speakers," influencing their social relationships. In a context where oral language predominates, society and health professionals are often unprepared to receive the deaf population.

Santos and Portes (2019) state that, despite support for the training of health professionals in Libras provided by Decree No. 5,626/2005, this offer has not yet materialized for most of the deaf community. The lack of specific training in Libras for health professionals, including nurses, is evident, even though it is a crucial skill to promote inclusion.

In this scenario, the discussion about making Libras mandatory in Nursing courses emerges as a relevant alternative to promote inclusion and nurse training in the care of deaf people (NAPOMUCENO et al., 2022). However, the scarcity of literature and research on the subject presents a significant challenge, indicating the need for encouragement for the study of the language and for research that contributes to a deeper understanding.

In addition to the gap in the training of nurses in Libras, there is a lack of interpreters in health contexts, exacerbating difficulties in communicating with deaf people (Sanches et al., 2019; Marquete, Costa, and Teston, 2018). The mandatory presence of interpreters, as provided by law, has not been effectively implemented, exacerbating inadequate communication.

Ferreira et al. (2019) highlight the challenges faced by deaf pregnant women in the health system, including the lack of interpreters, dependence on family members during appointments, and the lack of professionals' knowledge in Libras. The lack of effective communication understanding negatively affects the quality of care provided to this population.

Cunha, Pereira, and Oliveira (2019) point out the need to integrate inclusion into the health process for deaf patients, emphasizing educational
discourses directed at health professionals and deaf communities. They also highlight the importance of complying with legislation that provides for the minimum presence of health professionals proficient in Libras to ensure proper access for the deaf to health services (MARQUETE et al., 2019).

In conclusion, the effective inclusion of the deaf population in health services requires a comprehensive approach, involving both the training of health professionals in Libras and the effective compliance with current legislation. Incentives for research and literature production on the subject are also essential to improve understanding and promote inclusive and quality care for the deaf population.

5. Conclusion

Effective communication is the fundamental basis of any healthcare system that aims to be inclusive and accessible to the entire community. In this context, knowledge of Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) is an essential component to ensure that healthcare services are truly available to deaf individuals. While all healthcare professionals have the responsibility to integrate Libras communication into their practice, it is undeniable that nurses, representing the largest portion of this professional group, play a central and irreplaceable role in this action, being protagonists in the pursuit of comprehensive care for deaf individuals.

This article explored the complexities of communication in Libras in the provision of healthcare services and highlighted the crucial role of nurses in this process. The integrative literature review and analysis of 14 studies allowed for the identification of challenges faced by nurses and deaf patients, the strategies used to overcome these obstacles, and the implications for the quality of healthcare provided.
The findings underline the imminent need for continuous training and awareness for nurses, making the acquisition of Libras skills not just an option but a fundamental competence for the nursing profession. It became evident that the availability of research on the role of nurses in overcoming communication barriers in Libras is limited, emphasizing the importance of encouraging studies in this area to promote more inclusive and equal healthcare.

It is essential to emphasize that breaking communication barriers in Libras goes beyond simply learning a new language: it involves understanding the unique needs of deaf patients, respecting their culture, and providing a care environment that promotes dignity and autonomy. Ultimately, communication in Libras in the provision of healthcare services is a challenge that, when overcome, not only improves the quality of care but also strengthens the bonds between healthcare professionals and the deaf community.

This article aims to inspire nurses and, consequently, all healthcare professionals, to embrace the commitment to breaking communication barriers in Libras, aiming for a healthcare system that is accessible and inclusive for all citizens, regardless of their individual differences. Through this collective commitment, it is possible to ensure that no one is excluded from accessing healthcare services.
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