

Pain management by the nursing team in in-hospital emergency care*Manejo del dolor por el equipo de enfermería en urgencias hospitalarias**O manejo da dor pela equipe de enfermagem no atendimento de emergência intra-hospitalar***Andre Paschoa Pinto Junior^{1*}**

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This study aims to describe pain management by the nursing team in in-hospital emergency care. To this end, an integrative literature review was conducted, based on the analysis of articles published between 2018 and 2023, collected from the databases Virtual Health Library, Capes Journals, SciELO, ScienceDirect, and PubMed. The collection resulted in 543 articles, of which eight were selected for analysis. The results show that the level of experience of the nursing team, associated with the degree of collaboration of the interdisciplinary team and the application of methods for continuous pain reassessment, constitutes an important factor in the provision of qualified care to pain patients. Finally, it is concluded that continuing education and in-service training are fundamental elements for raising awareness among professionals regarding the suffering of these patients.

Descriptors: Hospital Care; Pain; Emergency Nursing; Humanization of Assistance; Pain Management.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo describir el manejo del dolor por parte del equipo de enfermería en la atención de emergencias hospitalarias. Para ello, se realizó una revisión bibliográfica integradora, basada en el análisis de artículos publicados entre 2018 y 2023, recopilados de las bases de datos Biblioteca Virtual en Salud, Revistas Capes, SciELO, ScienceDirect y PubMed. La recopilación resultó en 543 artículos, de los cuales ocho fueron seleccionados para su análisis. Los resultados muestran que el nivel de experiencia del equipo de enfermería, asociado al grado de colaboración del equipo interdisciplinario y a la aplicación de métodos para la reevaluación continua del dolor, constituye un factor importante en la prestación de cuidados cualificados a los pacientes con dolor. Finalmente, se concluye que la educación continua y la formación en servicio son elementos fundamentales para la sensibilización de los profesionales respecto al sufrimiento de estos pacientes.

Descriptoros: Atención Hospitalaria; Dolor; Enfermería de Emergencia; Humanización de la Atención; Manejo del Dolor.

Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo descrever o manejo da dor pela equipe de enfermagem no atendimento intra-hospitalar de emergência. Para isso, foi realizada uma revisão integrativa da literatura, a partir da análise de artigos publicados entre 2018 e 2023, coletados nas bases de dados Biblioteca Virtual de Saúde, Periódicos Capes, SciELO, ScienceDirect e PubMed. A coleta resultou em 543 artigos, dos quais oito foram selecionados para análise. Os resultados mostram que o nível de experiência da equipe de enfermagem, associado ao grau de colaboração da equipe interdisciplinar e à aplicação de métodos para reavaliação contínua da dor, constitui importante fator na execução de um atendimento qualificado aos pacientes algícos. Por fim, conclui-se que a educação continuada e o treinamento em serviço consistem em peças fundamentais para a conscientização dos profissionais quanto ao sofrimento desses pacientes.

Descritores: Assistência Hospitalar; Dor; Enfermagem em Emergência; Humanização da Assistência; Manejo da Dor.



question: "What are the best nursing interventions for analgesia during in-hospital emergency care?"

Introduction

Pain is defined as an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage to body tissues and is one of the most common complaints leading to emergency room visits^{1,2}. Even though it has been recognized as a vital sign since 1996, it is not always treated adequately, which may be a consequence of the workload of healthcare professionals, negatively affecting the quality of life and patient satisfaction during and after treatment³⁻⁵.

Although pain management in emergency care can involve both pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods⁶, there is still a dilemma in the use of non-pharmacological approaches, as there are still few studies that prove their effectiveness⁷.

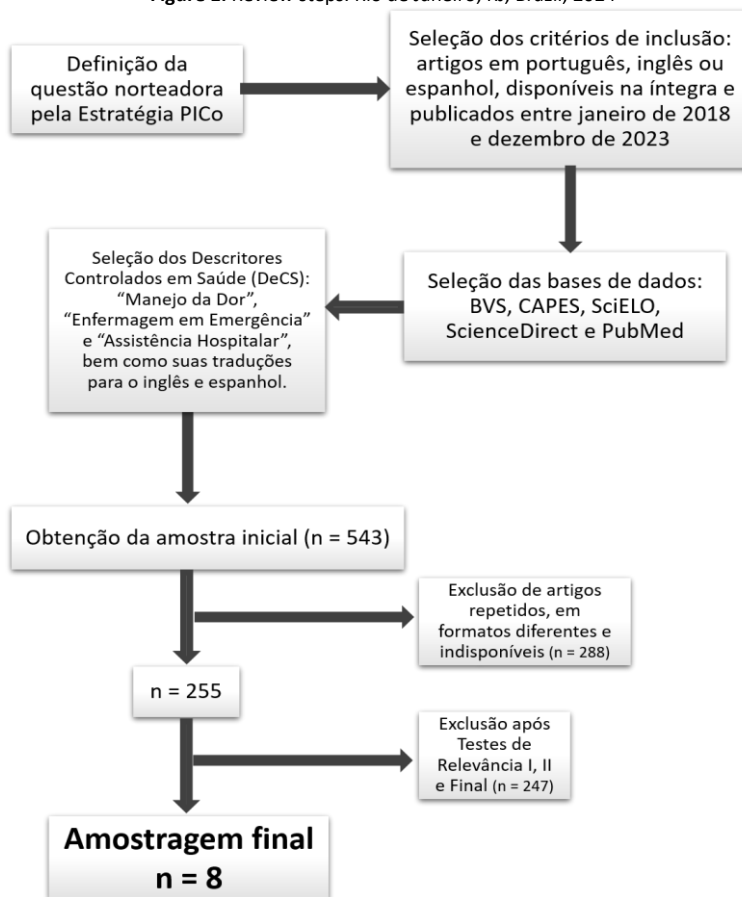
Therefore, this study highlights the need for a more integrated approach to pain management in in-hospital emergency care, emphasizing the importance of strategies that minimize the excessive and inappropriate use of analgesics. To this end, the objective was to describe pain management techniques used by the nursing team in the context of in-hospital emergency care, based on the guiding

Methodology

This is a basic, strategic, and bibliographical research study of the integrative literature review type, with descriptive objectives, based on the hypothetical-deductive method and a qualitative analysis approach. The PRISMA-2020 protocol⁸ was used as a guide for the steps in this review. The guiding question was formulated using the PICO approach⁹. The study identified nurses, technicians, and nursing assistants working in emergency services as the target audience; pain management as the variable of interest; and strategies for pain assessment, intervention, and monitoring as the context.

Articles in Portuguese, English, or Spanish were included, provided they were available in full text and published between January 2018 and December 2023 in the electronic databases Virtual Health Library (BVS), CAPES Journals, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO®), ScienceDirect®, and PubMed®.

Figure 1. Review steps. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2024



Note: Definição da questão norteadora pela Estratégia PICO: Definition of the guiding question by the PICO Strategy. Seleção dos critérios de inclusão: artigos em português, inglês ou espanhol, disponíveis na íntegra e publicados entre janeiro de 2018 e dezembro de 2023: Selection of inclusion criteria: articles in Portuguese, English, or Spanish, available in full text and published between January 2018 and December 2023. Seleção das bases de dados: BVS, Capes, SciELO, ScienceDirect e PubMed: Selection of databases: BVS, Capes, SciELO, ScienceDirect and PubMed. Seleção dos Descritores Controlados em Saúde (DeCS): "Manejo da dor", "Emfermagem em Emergência" e "Assistência Hospitalar", bem como as suas traduções para o inglês e espanhol: Selection of Controlled Health Descriptors (DeCS): "Pain Management", "Emergency Nursing" and "Hospital Care", as well as their translations into English and Spanish. Obtenção da amostra inicial: Obtaining the initial sample. Exclusão de artigos repetidos, em formatos diferentes e indisponíveis: Exclusion of duplicate articles, articles in different formats, and unavailable articles. Exclusão após testes de relevância I, II e final: Exclusion after relevance tests I, II and final. Amostragem final: Final sampling.



The analysis was conducted in January 2024. The Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) "Pain Management", "Emergency Nursing", and "Hospital Care" were used, as well as their respective translations into English ("Pain Management", "Emergency Nursing", and "Hospital Care") and Spanish ("Manejo del Dolor", "Enfermería de Urgencia", and "Atención Hospitalaria"). The Boolean operator "AND" was used to combine descriptors from the same language and refine the search.

From the sample obtained, duplicate articles were excluded, as well as abstracts in conference proceedings, reviews, letters, editorials, monographs, theses and dissertations, and articles unavailable in full. Relevance Tests I and II¹⁰ were performed, in which the questions "Was the study published in the period and languages selected in the inclusion criteria?", "Does the study address the topic of interest for the investigation?" and "Does the study focus on solving the specific problem being investigated?" were answered, and works in which at least one of the answers was negative were excluded.

After reading all the articles in full, the Final Relevance Test was performed¹⁰. For each study, the following questions were answered: "Are the research problem and objectives related to pain management interventions by the nursing team in emergency and urgent

care in hospital units?", "Is the methodology sufficiently described and adequate to the objectives?", "Are the results compatible with the methodology used?", and "Is it possible to apply the results in practice with minimal risk?". Thus, articles that did not answer at least one of the questions were excluded, with the remaining eight articles comprising the final sample. The entire methodological process is simplified in Figure 1.

Results and Discussion

Articles were obtained from all databases searched, with the largest number extracted from the Capes platform (n = 221) and the smallest from SciELO (n = 4). All combinations of descriptors generated results, with the largest number obtained by combining the English keywords ["Pain Management" AND "Hospital Care"], totaling 219 studies, and the smallest number from the Spanish group ["Enfermería de Urgencia" AND "Atención Hospitalaria"], with 7 studies.

The initial sample totaled 543 studies, of which 288 were excluded due to duplication, unavailability, and format discrepancies; while 247 were excluded by Relevance Tests I, II, and Final. Thus, the final sample consisted of 8 articles. A summary of the results is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. List of articles analyzed. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2024

Group	Authors/Year	Type of Study	Objective	Location
I	Abouzida et al., 2020	Observational and descriptive	Describe the pain management performed by the nursing team on children treated in the emergency room.	Canada
	Khoury et al., 2018	Observational, prospective, clinical trial type	Verify pain reduction according to the medication administration protocol by nursing staff in emergency care.	Israel
II	Caspi et al., 2019	Prospective, comparative, observational, pre- and post-implementation	Evaluate the effectiveness of the pain management protocol implemented by nursing staff in the emergency room and patient satisfaction.	Israel
	Santos et al., 2021	Prospective cohort	Evaluate the pain management protocol used by nursing staff in the emergency room.	Brazil
III	Varndell et al., 2020	Exploratory questionnaire-type test	Assess knowledge and factors that influence nursing practices in pain management in emergency settings.	Australia
	Lee et al., 2021	Descriptive retrospective	Investigate the factors associated with medication administration time and pain reassessment by the nursing staff in the emergency room.	South Korea
	Hughes et al., 2021	Retrospective cohort study	Measure factors associated with analgesia time by nursing staff in emergency care.	Australia
IV	Mutlu; Yilmaz, 2020	Randomized observational clinical trial	Determine the analgesic effect of applying cold compresses by the nursing staff in the emergency room.	Turkey

The studies found encompassed different countries and methodological approaches, reflecting a broad view of the practices and challenges faced by nursing in pain management in the emergency setting. These studies highlight the importance of continuing education for nursing professionals and the dissemination of different strategies to optimize care, so that holistic and compassionate assistance

is offered. The eight articles found were grouped into four categories according to the similarity of their objectives.

The only article in Group I¹¹ revealed that, despite the need to optimize pain management in pediatric emergency patients, there is still a low rate of pain assessment by nurses, as well as limited use of pain scales and non-pharmacological interventions. This corroborates a



study that showed that long waiting times for pain relief are a negative factor in patient satisfaction in emergency care¹².

In Group II, the articles by Khoury and co-authors¹³, Caspi and colleagues¹⁴, and from Santos and collaborators¹⁵ demonstrated the effectiveness of specific nursing protocols for pain management, based on the analysis of changes in pain levels after treatment, waiting time for analgesia, and patient satisfaction with the care received. These articles relate to studies in which such protocols, combined with appropriate training, contribute to the effective implementation of care, considering patient needs and the diverse roles of nursing in the emergency setting^{16,17}.

In Group III, studies by Varndell et al.¹⁸, Hughes et al.¹⁹, and Lee et al.²⁰ analyzed the factors associated with the time it takes for nursing staff to administer analgesia in the emergency room. Among these aspects, the influence of the patient's economic situation, the method of triage, and pain-related characteristics such as level and location stand out. These findings highlight the need to consider multiple factors in planning strategies that refine care, emphasizing the importance of continuing education^{16,21}.

Finally, the only article from Group IV²² investigated the analgesic effect of applying cold compresses by the nursing staff in the emergency room of a hospital in Turkey, showing positive results in reducing pain and improving patient satisfaction, suggesting the viability of non-pharmacological interventions. This corroborates studies

that point to the effectiveness of nursing care in non-pharmacological analgesia in the emergency setting^{16,17,23}.

Final Considerations

In general, the analysis of the selected studies shows that the nursing team's experience, interdisciplinary collaboration, and continuous pain reassessment are key factors for more effective pain management. In this context, continuing education is consolidated as an essential pillar for improving care practices, ensuring that professionals are prepared to perform effective interventions and offer quality care to patients in in-hospital emergency situations. Raising awareness among professionals from different areas about the comprehensiveness of care is indispensable to ensure qualified attention. Investing in the training and sensitization of the team is, therefore, a decisive strategy to transform pain management into a standard of excellence, providing efficient and humane relief to each patient.

Furthermore, it is recommended that future research further evaluate specific pain management protocols in emergency settings, investigating the applicability of the results in clinical practice. Integrating the findings into institutional guidelines and continuing education programs can significantly contribute to the standardization and continuous improvement of care, reinforcing the commitment of nursing and interdisciplinary teams to the quality and safety of care.

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