

Successful Aging in Brazil

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Abstract. With the increase in the aging population, the concern for promoting successful aging has been gaining prominence. In Brazil, it is estimated that by 2050, the elderly will represent 29.6% of the Brazilian population. Consequently, there is a growing need for studies and documents that help understand the implementation of successful aging in Brazil. Therefore, the aim of this study was to understand the gaps and social problems encountered in scientific studies on successful aging in Brazil. A narrative review was conducted to achieve the objective of this study, where 14 articles addressing the research problem were fully read. The studies pointed out the complexity of the challenges faced in promoting successful aging and health in the elderly population. It becomes evident the need for more effective public policies, investments in specialized professional training, improvement in technological accessibility, and an inclusive approach that recognizes the diverse realities faced by the elderly. This information is essential to guide practical interventions and public policy strategies aimed at active and healthy aging. It also impacts future research that can understand these gaps.

Keywords. Successful Aging, elderly population, gaps.

1. Introduction

With the increasing aging population, the concern for promoting successful aging has been gaining prominence. This increase is due to the accelerated pace at which economically less developed countries are aging. Currently, globally, people over 60 represent 12.3% of the world's population, with an annual growth rate of 3%. Projection studies indicate that by 2050, this proportion will increase to 21.3%. Specifically in Brazil, the estimate is even higher, suggesting that by 2050, seniors will represent 29.6% of the Brazilian population [1].

This is due to the decrease in the number of children, reducing the population's fertility rate, as well as the decrease in mortality rates, which impacts the economy and the labor market. With this new scenario, there is a call to understand the phenomenon through innovative approaches, policies, technologies, and care models that promote successful aging [2].

Governments have been providing initiatives and documents [3] to help understand and regulate successful aging. For example, the UN's World Assembly on Aging, the launch of the successful Aging Plan and the Global Guide for Age-Friendly Cities by the World Health Organization. Regarding Brazil, national social policies for the elderly and

elderly health were established in 1990 to assist in the development of this theme, alongside the Elderly Statute made available for the promotion and protection of the elderly population.

In terms of scientific literature, the aging process has sparked extensive scientific research and conceptual refinement aimed at improving our understanding of this phenomenon and keeping pace with its social and epidemiological dynamics. In this context, efforts go beyond mere disease prevention and patient care to encompass strategies that promote opportunities for seniors to engage in a wide range of activities, covering economic, social, cultural, intellectual, physical, civic, and political spheres[4].

According to the International Longevity Center in Brazil, successful aging is divided into four domains: health, lifelong learning, social participation, and security. Therefore, successful aging is understood as the pursuit of promoting physical and mental health, social inclusion, and functional independence among seniors. This promotion aims to provide a full and active life for seniors, considering them as integral beings. Thus, the objective of this narrative review was to understand the gaps and social problems found in scientific studies on successful aging in Brazil [5,6].

2. Method

This study consisted of a narrative literature review conducted to achieve the objective of understanding the gaps and social issues identified in scientific studies on successful aging in Brazil. This approach allowed for a qualitative and interpretative analysis of existing literature, aiming to identify patterns, trends, and knowledge gaps related to the topic.

The search strategy covered various databases, primarily including Pubmed, Scopus, and Web of Science. Search terms related to successful aging and the Brazilian context were used, with some examples as follows:

("strategies" OR "interventions" OR "tools" OR "programs" OR "public policies") AND ("healthy aging" OR "successful aging" OR "active aging") AND ("health promotion" OR "quality of life" OR "well-being" OR "physical activities" OR "mental health" OR "technology for seniors" OR "home care" OR "gerontology" OR "nutrition for seniors" OR "prevention of age-related diseases" OR "independence in old age") AND ("Brazil")

Studies published up to 2023 were considered, focusing on empirical investigations, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses.

The inclusion criteria encompassed studies directly addressing aspects of successful aging in the Brazilian context, considering social, cultural, economic, and health variables. Studies that were not directly relevant to the objectives of this work or were outside the defined temporal scope were excluded.

The articles were selected by the author based on the study objective, evaluating relevance according to the inclusion criteria. Data were then extracted and qualitatively analyzed, identifying recurring themes, research gaps, and emerging social issues related to successful aging in the Brazilian context.

3. Results and Discussion

Fourteen articles were fully read from this search conducted in early 2024. Below are the main aspects found in each study:

- 1- Challenges of implementing active aging strategies [7]: pathways to health promotion: Identified several barriers that hinder health promotion in the elderly population. Among the main challenges are unfavorable economic conditions, low implementation of specific public policies for the elderly, and social and cultural aspects that directly influence the quality of life of this population. Additionally, it highlights the urgent need for trained professionals to provide adequate care for the elderly, emphasizing the importance of specialized training in this field.

- 2- Active aging, quality of life, and cognition in the elderly [8]: a cross-sectional study in a city in Minas Gerais: focuses on the importance of implementing public management strategies aimed at the growing elderly population. Investments in sociodemographic factors, such as education, are pointed out as crucial for the development of better cognitive performance in future generations of elderly individuals. This underscores the need for policies that not only address current demands but also prepare society for the challenges of population aging.
- 3- Trajectory of Brazilian Public Policies for older adults facing the Decade of Healthy Aging (2021-2030) [9]: Highlights both positive aspects and challenges faced by Brazil regarding healthy aging. While there are innovations and legislation aimed at protecting and promoting the quality of life of the elderly, there are also obstacles such as lack of effectiveness, continuity, management, and budget in certain public policies. The lack of accurate data on the elderly population further complicates planning and implementation of effective policies. To overcome these issues, the development of a National Aging and Longevity Plan aligned with international practices is proposed.
- 4- Online access to health information for the elderly and healthy aging [10]: emphasizes the importance of training professionals to promote digital skills among the elderly. Lack of access to and understanding of health technologies can hinder their engagement, making it crucial to improve health literacy and online accessibility. This reinforces the need for inclusive and educational policies that address the technological demands of the elderly population.
- 5- Practices of community centers for the elderly and the promotion of active aging: a systematic review [11]: highlights the importance of an inclusive approach that recognizes the value of education and health promotion for all ages. Additionally, it emphasizes the need to combat social injustices and empower the elderly to actively participate in formulating policies that meet their specific needs.
- 6- From diagnosis to action: a study group of the elderly [12]: an alternative for promoting active aging: Emphasizes the importance of developing learning and health programs for the elderly population, considering that active aging is relevant for the economic success of countries like Brazil, which faces a significant aging process and consequently, a growing

- demand for services, especially in the public health sector.
- 7- The trajectory of public policies for the elderly in Brazil [13]: a brief analysis: highlights the urgent need for specific training and education in Geriatrics and Gerontology for professionals involved in elderly care. In the country, this training is still deficient, especially among those responsible for the well-being of this population. This lack of training compromises the quality of care and health promotion offered to the elderly. Additionally, the importance of compliance with legislation aimed at the elderly, such as the Elderly Statute and the National Policy on Elderly Health, is emphasized. Adherence to these legal frameworks is crucial to provide effective care and promote health in accordance with the requirements of these legal frameworks.
 - 8- Popular education, health promotion, and active aging [14]: an integrative bibliographic review: Highlights an inclusive approach that recognizes the importance of education, health promotion, and combating social injustices for all ages, including the elderly. This not only directly benefits the health and well-being of the elderly but also contributes to a more equitable and inclusive society.
 - 9- Active Aging and Associated Factors [15]: Highlights the lack of effectiveness, continuity, poor management, and budget constraints in certain public policies; the absence of accurate and specific data on the elderly population in the country; compromised implementation and maintenance of programs for the elderly; and difficulties in designing and implementing effective public policies. Considering these challenges, the study emphasizes the importance of healthcare professionals developing interventions that consider the social, physical, psychological, and cultural aspects that influence active aging.
 - 10- Active aging and public policies: new perspectives on the social reintegration of the elderly in the contemporary context [16]: Emphasizes the importance of a more effective and comprehensive approach in public policies to promote active aging and social reintegration of the elderly, overcoming identified challenges, and seeking new perspectives to ensure a better quality of life for this population in the contemporary context.
 - 11- Robust elderly in primary care: factors associated with successful aging [17]: highlights the importance of a personalized and comprehensive approach to elderly care in Primary Health Care, with an emphasis on professional education, health promotion, disease prevention, and a multidisciplinary approach to ensure successful and quality aging.
 - 12- Prevalence and factors associated with successful aging [18]: National Health Survey - 2013: Highlights the importance of equitable distribution of healthcare financing, focusing on promoting actions targeted at the elderly population. These actions aim to prevent diseases, promote health, and foster healthy aging.
 - 13- Aging is not the same for everyone: meanings of aging well for elderly women with and without children [19]: proposes psychological education for society regarding the inclusion of the elderly in the social field. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of providing spaces for the elderly to create a support network and providing financial and educational resources for family members involved in elderly care.
 - 14- Strategies for promoting active aging in Brazil: an integrative review [20]: outlines strategies such as retirement preparation and inclusion in the digital environment to promote active aging.
- These studies point to the complexity of the challenges faced in promoting active aging and health in the elderly population. It becomes evident the need for more effective public policies, investments in specialized professional training, improvement in technological accessibility, and an inclusive approach that recognizes the diverse realities faced by the elderly. This information is essential to guide practical interventions and public policy strategies aimed at active and healthy aging.

4. Final Considerations

Based on this study on successful aging in Brazil, we can understand a series of challenges and opportunities for future interventions in this population. The analyzed studies reveal the complexity of issues faced by the elderly population, as well as existing gaps in public policies and strategies for promoting health and successful aging.

Therefore, there is a need to assess the effectiveness and continuity of public policies aimed at the elderly population. Longitudinal studies and impact assessments can provide valuable insights into the outcomes of these policies over time. It is crucial to investigate the specific barriers hindering the successful implementation of successful aging strategies. This includes economic, social, cultural, and access barriers to health services and technology.

The perspectives of the elderly should be integrated

into policy development, ensuring a participatory and inclusive approach that takes into account their needs and preferences. Investing in specialized training programs for professionals directly dealing with the elderly is crucial. This includes training in gerontology, geriatrics, mental health care, and digital skills to handle technologies tailored for the elderly.

Qualitative studies can help better understand the training needs of healthcare and social assistance professionals, as well as identify best practices in elderly care and health promotion. Digital accessibility for the elderly is an area that requires special attention. Research on the use of health technologies by the elderly, as well as the development of user-friendly interfaces tailored to their needs, is necessary to promote digital inclusion and access to relevant information.

Studies on the effectiveness of technology-based interventions, such as health apps, wearables, and telemedicine platforms, can provide insights into how these tools can be effectively integrated into elderly care and health promotion. Evaluating the impact of active aging programs in different contexts, such as urban and rural communities, is essential to understand which strategies are most effective and sustainable in the long term.

Investigating the social, economic, and environmental determinants that influence the quality of life of the elderly, including housing, transportation, access to social services, and opportunities for social participation, can provide important insights for the development of more comprehensive and inclusive policies. It is crucial to address existing disparities in access to healthcare and social services among different groups of elderly people, including ethnic minorities, rural populations, and those in socio-economic vulnerability.

Studies exploring the experiences and perspectives of the elderly regarding social justice, inclusion, and civic participation can inform initiatives to promote a fairer and more inclusive society for all ages.

In conclusion, the final considerations of this review highlight the pressing need for more holistic, collaborative, and elderly-centered approaches to address the challenges of successful aging. Future studies should focus on practical, evidence-based solutions that promote not only longevity but also quality of life, social inclusion, and active participation of the elderly in their communities.

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