

Application of integrative and complementary practices in nursing students: integrative literature review

*Aplicación de prácticas integradoras y complementarias en estudiantes de enfermería:
revisión de la literatura integradora*

*Aplicação de práticas integrativas e complementares em estudantes de enfermagem:
revisão integrativa da literatura*

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Abstract

In view of the disorders that can be experienced by students during the Nursing course and in order to encourage discussions on integrative and complementary practices in health (PICS), it is justified to carry out research that seeks to characterize the application of these practices in this population. That said, the aim of this study was to identify, in the scientific literature, the main PICS that have been applied to nursing students. This is an integrative literature review, carried out in the SciELO, LILACS, MedLine and PubMed databases, during the months of October to December 2021. Based on the guiding question "What integrative and complementary practices have been applied to nursing students?", 561 articles were identified; however, after selective and critical analysis, 16 articles made up this review. The most applied PICS in nursing students were music therapy (n=7) and mindfulness (n=3); who sought, among other things, to reduce anxiety (n=7) and stress (n=5). However, studies are needed to assess the impact of the application of PICS in this population. Thus, it will be possible to certify its effects and encourage its use in the face of disorders commonly experienced by nursing students.

Descriptors: Complementary Therapies; Nursing Students; Nursing; Public Health; Self Care.

Resumén

En vista de los trastornos que pueden ser experimentados por los estudiantes durante el curso de Enfermería y con el fin de incentivar discusiones sobre prácticas integradoras y complementarias en salud (PICS), se justifica realizar una investigación que busque caracterizar la aplicación de esas prácticas en este población. Dicho esto, el objetivo de este estudio fue identificar, en la literatura científica, los principales PICS que se han aplicado a los estudiantes de enfermería. Se trata de una revisión bibliográfica integradora, realizada en las bases de datos SciELO, LILACS, MedLine y PubMed, durante los meses de octubre a diciembre de 2021. Partiendo de la pregunta orientadora "¿Qué prácticas integradoras y complementarias se han aplicado a los estudiantes de enfermería?", 561 se identificaron artículos; sin embargo, luego de un análisis selectivo y crítico, 16 artículos integraron esta revisión. Los PICS más aplicados en estudiantes de enfermería fueron musicoterapia (n=7) y mindfulness (n=3); quienes buscaban, entre otras cosas, reducir la ansiedad (n=7) y el estrés (n=5). Sin embargo, se necesitan estudios para evaluar el impacto de la aplicación de PICS en esta población. Así, será posible certificar sus efectos y fomentar su uso frente a los trastornos que comúnmente experimentan los estudiantes de enfermería.

Descriptores: Terapias Complementarias; Estudiantes de Enfermería; Enfermería; Salud Pública; Autocuidado.

Resumo

Diante das desordens que podem ser experienciadas por estudantes no decorrer do curso de Enfermagem e visando fomentar as discussões sobre práticas integrativas e complementares em saúde (PICS), justifica-se a realização de pesquisas que busquem caracterizar a aplicação dessas práticas nessa população. Isto posto, o objetivo deste estudo foi identificar, na literatura científica, as principais PICS que vêm sendo aplicadas em estudantes de enfermagem. Trata-se de uma revisão integrativa da literatura, realizada nas bases SciELO, LILACS, MedLine e PubMed, durante os meses de outubro a dezembro de 2021. A partir da questão norteadora "Quais práticas integrativas e complementares vêm sendo aplicadas em estudantes de enfermagem?", foram identificados 561 artigos; contudo, após análise seletiva e crítica, 16 artigos compuseram esta revisão. As PICS mais aplicadas em estudantes de enfermagem foram a terapia pela música (n=7) e o mindfulness (n=3); que buscavam, dentre outros aspectos, a redução da ansiedade (n=7) e do estresse (n=5). São necessários, contudo, estudos que avaliem o impacto da aplicação das PICS nesta população. Assim, será possível certificar seus efeitos e encorajar sua utilização diante de desordens comumente experienciadas por estudantes de enfermagem.

Descritores: Terapias Complementares; Estudantes de Enfermagem; Enfermagem; Saúde Pública; Autocuidado.



Introduction

Integrative and Complementary Health Practices (PICS), also known as alternative, non-pharmacological and unusual/conventional therapies, broaden the perspective of human beings in a holistic way, covering physical, psychological and social issues. These practices can be used alone or together, associated with conventional therapies, with the aim of enhancing treatment and promoting comprehensive care¹.

In 2006, the federal government approved Ordinance No. 971, of May 3, 2006, which approves the National Policy on Integrative and Complementary Practices in Health (PNPIC)². However, in that regulation, the practices offered by the Unified Health System (SUS) were restricted to traditional Chinese medicine techniques, such as acupuncture and phytotherapy. In 2017/2018, the number of practices incorporated into the PNPIC increased, with the inclusion of chromotherapy, ozone therapy, meditation, shantala, among others³.

Within nursing, the PICS approach has undergone reformulations over the years. From COFEN Resolution No. 197 of 1997⁴, alternative therapies were considered as specialties and/or qualifications of nursing professionals. Later legislation, with the intention of regulating such actions, showed that, to be considered a specialist, the professional should complete a course, recognized by the regulatory body, with a minimum workload of 360 hours⁵. Among other regulations, the most recent is Resolution No. 581/18, which presents 12 PICS - phytotherapy, homeopathy, orthomolecular, floral therapy, foot reflexology, reiki, yoga, therapeutic touch, music therapy, chromotherapy, hypnosis and acupuncture - among 29 of the PNPIC, as Nurse specialties⁶.

Despite the legal support by the superior council, discussions about the PICS in the nursing course occur in a primary way; being generally related to complementary training activities, such as lectures, courses and optional subjects⁷. However, Calado et al. states that the insertion of contents focused on the PICS in the nursing curriculum becomes essential in view of the holistic view and integration required of the professional⁸.

In line with these issues, studies reveal that higher education in nursing, in certain cases, can be accompanied by some imbalances and/or disorders^{9,10}.

In this perspective, a study with students in the health area showed that nursing students are more prone to depression, and this data is commonly associated with the fact that they are directly with patients and often deal with pain, suffering and the end of life⁹. In another study, the authors report that most nursing students, at some point, show characteristic signs and symptoms of anxiety¹⁰.

However, it is emphasized that interventions to promote the mental health of nursing students, especially with regard to strengthening skills and reducing suffering or mental disorders, are still scarce¹¹.

Thus, in view of the disorders that may be experienced by students during the Nursing course and in

order to encourage discussions about PICS in the area, it is justified to carry out research that seeks to characterize the application of these practices in this population.

Therefore, the objective of this research was considered to be: to identify, in the scientific literature, the main integrative and complementary health practices that have been applied to nursing students.

Methodology

This is an integrative literature review, based on the PRISMA recommendations¹², which aimed to synthesize results of studies in an organized manner¹³.

The development of this review covered the months of October 2021 to February 2022, with five steps being covered: elaboration of the guiding question, search in the scientific literature, selective analysis, critical analysis and interpretation of the findings¹⁴.

Thus, based on the PICo strategy – P: population (nursing students); I: intervention (integrative and complementary practices); Co: context (main integrative and complementary practices applied to nursing students), the guiding question was established: "What integrative and complementary practices have been applied to nursing students?".

The search was carried out by pairs of researchers in the following databases: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS), Medline and PubMed, based on the subject descriptors: "complementary therapies" and "nursing students", crossed with the Boolean operator "AND".

As inclusion criteria were established: original articles freely available in full and published in Portuguese, English or Spanish. As exclusion criteria were considered: editorial texts, literature reviews and reflections. It is informed that the duplicated articles were eliminated, being considered the first database where they were found.

For data extraction and analysis of the studies, an electronic form was used with items related to the identification of the article (title, authors, year and place of publication), general characteristics (objective, methodology, results and conclusion) and specific characteristics (PICS applied to nursing students).

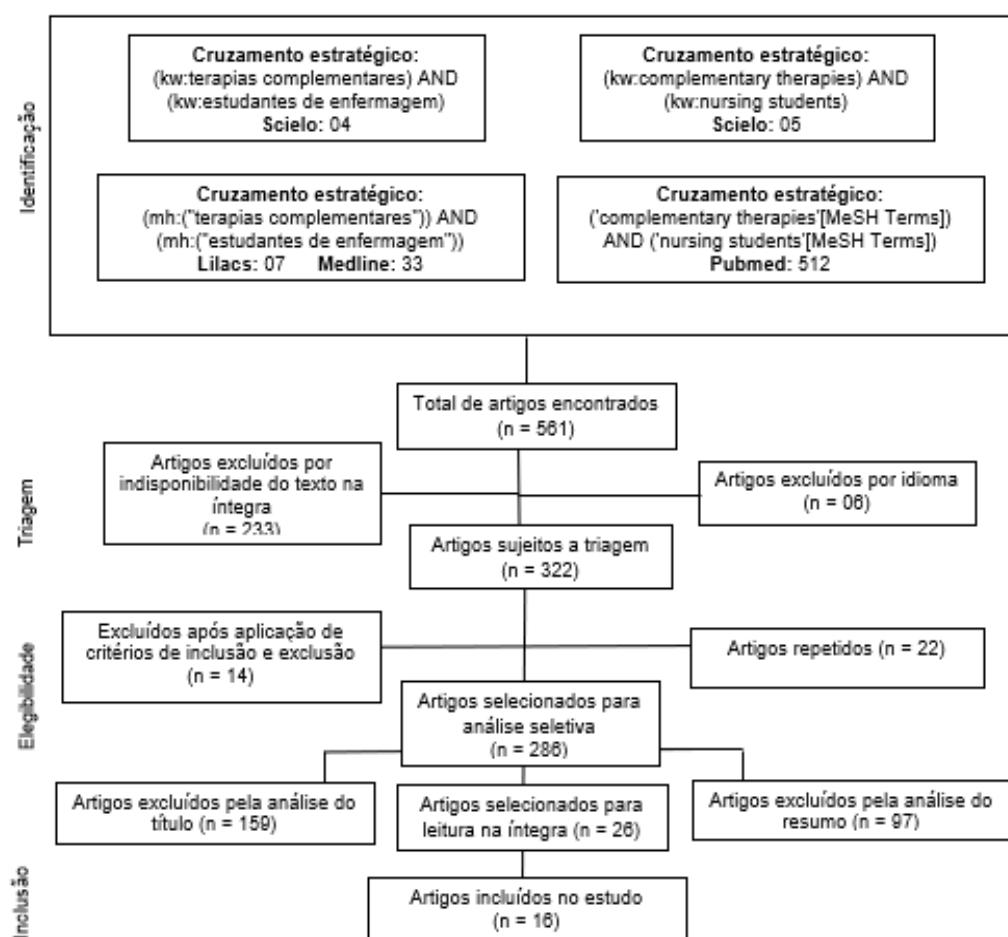
To classify the level of evidence of the articles found, the pyramid proposed by Montagna, Zaia and Laporta, 2020 was used¹⁵, considering: level I, meta-analyses; level II, systematic reviews; level III, randomized clinical trials; level IV, cohort/case-control; and, level V, cross-sectional study/case report.

It is noteworthy that all analysis was also performed by peers, in an attempt to reduce subjective interpretations.

Therefore, based on the specific search strategy for each database, 561 articles were identified and, after a selective and critical analysis, 16 articles were considered (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Flowchart of article selection, based on PRISMA recommendations. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2021



Results and Discussion

Of the 16 articles in this review, 11 were indexed in PubMed; two in SciELO, two in LILACS; and, um, on MedLine.

Regarding the place of publication, four were developed in the East and twelve in the West, four in Brazil.

Considering the year of publication, the oldest article is dated 2002, and the most recent, 2021. As for the level of evidence, nine were classified as level III and seven as level of evidence V, as shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Characterization of the articles that composed the review (n=16). Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2021

Authors	Applied PICS	Variable(s) of interest	Level of evidence
Prado JM, Kurebayashi LFS, Silva MJP	Auriculotherapy	Anxiety	III
Trovo MM, Silva MJP, Leão ER	Floral therapy Phytotherapy Homeopathy Acupuncture Massage Shiatsu Hydrotherapy Music therapy Reiki Chromotherapy Yoga	Tension Anxiety Depression Sleep Ache Relaxation Welfare Psycho-spiritual state Self-control Self confidence	V
Medeiros SP, Oliveira ACC, Piexak DR, Silva LL, Oliveira AMN, Fornari NC	Therapeutic touch	Ache Mood disorders Sleep Agitation Fatigue	V
	Floral therapy Phytotherapy Aromatherapy Herbal Medicine	-	V



Trovó MM, Silva MJP	Acupuncture Moxibustion Massage Do-in Shiatsu Homeopathy Chromotherapy Music therapy Therapeutic touch Reiki Meditation Yoga Iridology		
James PB, Bah AJ, Kondoroh IM	Phytotherapy Massage	-	V
Kang YS, Choi SY, Ryu E	Mindfulness	Stress Anxiety Depression	III
Ying G, Qi W, Shaoliang X, Yue-mei F, Wei-xin C, Jing-yun Y, et al	Moxibustion	Dysmenorrhea	III
Lai HL, Chen PW, Chen CJ, Chang HK, Peng TC, Chang FM	Music therapy	Anxiety	III
Ince S, Çevik K	Music therapy	Anxiety	III
Eyüboğlu G, Baykara ZG, Çalışkan N, Eyikara E, Doğan N, Aydoğan S, et.al	Music therapy	Anxiety	III
Son HK, So WY, Kim M	Aromatherapy Music therapy	Anxiety Stress	III
Kinchen EV, Loerzel V	Meditation	Stress	V
Gallego-Gómez JI, Balanza S, Leal-Llopis J, García-Mendez JA, Oliva-Pérez J, Doménech-Tortosa J, et.al	Music therapy	Stress	III
Turkeltaub PC, Yearwood EL, Friedmann E	Massage	-	V
Spadaro KC, Hunker DF	Mindfulness	Stress Humor Cognition	V
Jain S, Shapiro S, Swanick S, Roesch S, Mills P, Bell I, et.al	Mindfulness Relaxation exercises	Anguish Distraction	III

The most frequently applied PICS in nursing students were: music therapy, present in seven studies; and, mindfulness, in three studies.

Some researchers believe that PICS involving the use of one's own body^{21,30,31}, of another's body^{18,29} and easily accessible equipment^{23-25,28}, like music therapy and mindfulness, their application is facilitated.

Among the PICS applied to nursing students, the most common variable of interest was anxiety, in seven studies; and stress, in five.

This data is corroborated by Brazilian studies, whose results show that the prevalence of anxiety is significantly

high among students, regardless of how it presents itself.^{32,33}. These disorders influence and have repercussions on academic life and may originate from social, economic and profession-related factors³⁴.

A study developed with Primary Care also found that people who seek integrative and complementary practices have a high level of stress³⁵. That said, it can be inferred that the use of PICS by nursing students is due to the need for mechanisms to mitigate the university period. The nursing course raises a great commitment and responsibility for oneself and the other, which can lead to emotional and psychological imbalances, such as anxiety and stress^{17,18,23}.



It is observed that the PICS in nursing still happen in an elementary way, having its insertion, until now, in a primary way, which limits the amount and applicability of research in the area. In addition, concern for the well-being of students is also recent.

Therefore, for the student who was previously seen passively and who today presents himself as the protagonist of the teaching-learning process, it is necessary to have new observation parameters that include his active participation, as well as strategies aimed at his well-being.

A limitation of this investigation is the non-inclusion of studies in languages other than Portuguese, English and Spanish, in view of the considerable number of findings from the East.

Conclusion

The most applied PICS in nursing students, based on the findings of this review, were music therapy and mindfulness; who sought, among other things, to reduce anxiety and stress.

It is believed that this investigation contributes to discussions about the use of PICS in the academic setting as an unusual possibility of caring for oneself and others, also aiming at bringing future professionals closer together with different possibilities of assistance.

However, studies are needed to assess the impact of the application of PICS in this population. Thus, it will be possible to certify its effects and encourage its use in the face of disorders commonly experienced by nursing students.

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