

**Instagram as a health and citizenship education tool for transsexuals: experience report***Instagram como herramienta de educación en salud y ciudadanía para transexuales: relato de experiencia**Instagram como instrumento de educação em saúde e cidadania para transexuais: relato de experiência***Abstract**

The aim of this study is to reflect on the power of Instagram© as an instrument of education in health and citizenship. This is an experience report of an extension project aimed at the LGBT population, with an emphasis on transgender people in which it analyzes Instagram© as a means of disseminating knowledge. Educational posts were made on the platform, related to meeting the demands in nursing care for the LGBT population, with a focus on transsexuals. Currently the “Transligado” profile has 341 followers, 40 publications, following the direction of health education. This was generated from meetings, studies related to engagement in social media and adaptation of the language of the scientific environment to a dynamic format that is sensitive to the different audiences that the platform reaches. Thus, as an extension project, it fulfills the triad assistance, teaching and research. Its relevance is justified by the difficulty, lack of knowledge and prejudice among Nursing professionals about the health and care demands of transgender people, thus hindering access to health and quality care for this population.

**Descriptors:** LGBT; Health Education; Nursing Assistance; Instagram; Extension.

**Resumén**

El objetivo de este estudio es reflexionar sobre el poder de Instagram© como instrumento de educación en salud y ciudadanía. Este es un relato de experiencia de un proyecto de extensión dirigido a la población LGBT, con énfasis en personas transgénero en el que analiza Instagram© como medio de difusión del conocimiento. Se realizaron publicaciones educativas en la plataforma, relacionadas con la atención de las demandas en el cuidado de enfermería a la población LGBT, con enfoque en transexuales. Actualmente el perfil “Transligado” cuenta con 341 seguidores, 40 publicaciones, siguiendo la dirección de educación para la salud. Esto se generó a partir de reuniones, estudios relacionados con la participación en las redes sociales y la adaptación del lenguaje del entorno científico a un formato dinámico y sensible a las diferentes audiencias a las que llega la plataforma. Así, como proyecto de extensión, cumple la tríada asistencial, docente e investigadora. Su relevancia se justifica por la dificultad, el desconocimiento y los prejuicios de los profesionales de Enfermería sobre las demandas de salud y cuidado de las personas transgénero, lo que dificulta el acceso a la salud y atención de calidad para esta población.

**Descriptoros:** LGBT; Educación para la Salud; Asistencia de Enfermería; Instagram; Extensión.

**Resumo**

O objetivo deste estudo é refletir sobre a potência do Instagram© como instrumento de educação em saúde e cidadania. Trata-se de um relato de experiência de um projeto extensionista voltado para a população LGBT, com ênfase nas pessoas transexuais em que analisa o Instagram© como meio de disseminação de conhecimento. Foram realizadas postagens de cunho educativo na plataforma, relativas ao atendimento das demandas no cuidado de enfermagem para a população LGBT, com foco nos transexuais. Atualmente o perfil “Transligado” possui 341 seguidores, 40 publicações, seguindo a direção da educação em saúde. Isso foi gerado a partir de reuniões, estudos referentes à engajamento em mídias sociais e adaptação da linguagem do meio científico para um formato dinâmico e sensível aos diferentes públicos que a plataforma alcança. Assim, enquanto projeto extensionista, cumpre a tríade assistência, ensino e pesquisa. Sua relevância é justificada pela dificuldade, desconhecimento e preconceito entre profissionais de Enfermagem acerca das demandas de saúde e cuidados das pessoas transexuais, dificultando assim o acesso à saúde e o atendimento de qualidade à essa população.

**Descritores:** LGBT; Educação em Saúde; Assistência de Enfermagem; Instagram; Extensão.

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## Introduction

The extension project “Integral Health Care for LGBT people - Building nursing care spaces for transsexuals”, aims to carry out research, training health professionals in qualified care and health promotion and disease prevention for the entire population. LGBT public. With the use of reports acquired from interviews with transgender people admitted to a university hospital and conversation circles for debates on scientific articles, it was possible to collect information and ideas to complete one of the project proposals, necessary due to the pandemic period and the need to maintain project activities: The creation of an account on the Instagram® social network, focused on health education.

Health education is of great importance for a population that faces so many prejudices and that is still very marginalized in society. The latter view, from a study on health education and action research, as a direct contribution to comprehensive care for individuals, being necessary for the act of educating.<sup>1</sup>

Associated with health education with the presence of quality education, it enhances the active listening of health professionals, being highlighted as indispensable for the care of transgender patients, in order to understand the issues presented to guarantee completeness, universality and equity, or that is, the basic principles of the SUS.<sup>2</sup>

With the opportunity of virtual reach, using the internet for health education is necessary when seeking to reach a larger audience, facilitating the expansion of knowledge of nursing students in their training process. This also collaborating for assistance in accordance with the public policies of the SUS.<sup>2</sup>

Bearing in mind that in 2020 there was global social isolation, resulting from the pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the world had to disconnect from face-to-face collective activities to protect itself. This movement generated a need to reinvent itself and seek new means of social interaction.<sup>3</sup>

Due to this scenario, social networks were introduced more frequently in the daily life of the population. This is because it is a usable environment for leisure activities, connections with other people, active entertainment and access to information. Therefore, since Instagram is not a paid platform, it becomes an easily accessible vehicle for individuals who can connect to the Internet. In the field of education, for example, technological devices in general have become indispensable for maintaining classes and activities that were previously built in classrooms.<sup>4</sup>

“Transligado” was created in 2020 to complement the means of transmitting knowledge about LGBT health, since, with the COVID-19 pandemic, project participants felt the need to adapt to the new reality, and saw this opportunity, another way to expand your contact channel, seeking to reach the LGBT population amid the limitations of the established quarantine.

For its construction, the experience derived from interviews with transgender people admitted to a university hospital and conversation circles for debates on scientific

articles were used. We sought to collect information and ideas to complete one of the project proposals, necessary due to the pandemic period and the need to maintain project activities.

Informative posts are regularly posted on the platform, as well as announcements of events organized by the project, making it possible to raise awareness and educate its followers, also leading to reflection on the importance of seeking information related to the subjects addressed in its publications. This aims to promote questioning and encouragement for knowledge, as well as its sharing.

It is noteworthy that LGBT people may find it difficult to access and remain in the health services offered by the SUS, sustained, for example, by disrespect for the social name, trans/travestiphobia and pathologization of transvestite and transsexual gender identities.<sup>2</sup> In terms of education, as highlighted in a study carried out with nursing students from a university<sup>5</sup>, it is possible to understand that, during graduation, there are not many debates about issues related to the social context of the LGBT population, which can generate negative impacts on the quality of care. service that these future nurses will develop with this population and possible constraints.

The justification for the study is based on the importance of introducing new health education mechanisms for the population, such as this Instagram® account, with the aim of disseminating issues that are little debated in Brazilian society. Its relevance is based on the difficulty that nursing professionals have regarding the health and care demands of LGBT people, which can hinder access to health and quality care for the population. In this perspective, the objective of this study is to reflect on the power of the Transligado account on Instagram® as an instrument of education in health and citizenship, for the general population, regarding the reality of LGBT people.

## Methodology

This is an experience report based on the observations and activities carried out by fellows and volunteers in the project “Comprehensive health care for LGBT people: Building spaces for nursing care for transsexuals”, under the supervision of the coordinators, who had direct contact with the activities carried out on the Instagram® platform. The proposal is established from the registration, description and analysis of the activities carried out by the project in social networks and their influence on the field of Nursing.

Among the objectives of the extension project are: to meet the demands and health needs of the LGBT population, in accordance with national policy; contribute to the education and training of health professionals to implement policy guidelines; develop an elective course focusing on the specific demands in the care of transgender people; carry out research and stimulate the production of studies by students, which contribute to the production of knowledge; maintain an information channel with the LGBT population.



Monthly deliberative meetings are held with project members, with the purpose of debating the activities carried out on Instagram®, since the beginning of the activity, seeking themes that corroborate the theme. The activities previously carried out individually in the user – project participant relationship or in specific events, conversation circles and lives with experienced people in the area were important for the new proposal employed since they provided structure for the development of educational posts. And, in line with research on scientific articles about the effects of social networks in different education environments, such as schools or EAD (distance learning), for example.

The students, project participants, were selected for the project based on a selection process, as a prerequisite to be enrolled in the undergraduate nursing course at a university in the city of Rio de Janeiro and to demonstrate interest in the topic. Such criteria were essential since the project is aimed at the care of the nursing team and needs members with focus and enthusiasm to develop materials that contribute to the scientific evolution of the topics addressed.

Through the report, core meanings were assigned, consisting of: “Instagram®”, “Creation of Transligado”, and “Discussing the power of Instagram®”.

## Experience Report

### Instagram®

With the democratized access to the internet, adherence to social networks grew, making the use of these networks common today. Brazil, in 2020, occupied the third position as the country that most uses social networks, with Instagram® being the most used. These networks, through the improvement of technological devices, facilitate communication at any place and time, which allows for greater dissemination of information and sharing of ideas, contributing to communication, exposure of opinions and generating entertainment. The use of digital media, then, becomes extensions of the individuals who use them.<sup>6,7</sup>

*“A social network refers to a set of people (organizations or entities) connected by social relationships, motivated by friendship, work relationship or exchange of information – a formal representation of actors and their relationships. The phenomenon of connectivity constitutes the dynamics of networks and exists only as long as connections are established”<sup>6,7</sup>.*

The great risk of the information age is the exponential sharing of information that, in some cases, can lead to the dissemination of misinformation, when it is inaccurate information and from unreliable sources, which is called infodemic. This can lead to damage to human health and hinder the positive purpose of a social network as a health education strategy.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, the Instagram® social network stands out as a facilitating social network for the dissemination of scientific information, since it has great representation and influence in society by joining the public,

standing out as one of the main digital media of virtual interaction between people.<sup>10</sup>

The use of a social network, in this sense, is a health promotion and education strategy for society, as it benefits different audiences through online media, mediating a relationship between the population, health professionals and students. The information, for a better reach and understanding of the public, must be transmitted in a simple and attractive way. With this, the use of the Internet, especially Instagram for its acceptance by the public, as one of the teaching tools can contribute positively to the transformation of society, providing the extension of learning to the general public and users of digital media.<sup>11</sup>

### Creation of the Transligated

The Instagram® page called “Transligado” was created in 2020 to complement the means of transmitting knowledge about health and LGBT citizenship. This virtual space, explained in Figure 1, is a source of up-to-date information based on science, public policies, booklets and resolutions from the various Ministries, aimed at raising awareness about LGBT rights, with a focus on transgender individuals in line with commemorative dates or months and their relationship with the trans population, as well as commemorative dates that celebrate the pride and rights of the LGBT population.

An example of this production was the post made on June 14, 2022, about World Blood Donor Day. In it, the project presented the historicity until the definition of the date and the relationship with the breaking of the restriction on blood donations carried out by individuals who had had sexual intercourse in the last 12 months prior to the donation, which was overthrown only in 2020.

The project's social network is the most accessible channel that the group has found, aiming at popularizing information, through periodic posts that cover various subjects of great importance not only for the LGBT community, but for everyone who seeks this type of contact. information. The social network seeks to address job opportunities, raise awareness of important days such as the National Day against LGBTphobia and Golden August. In Figure 2, it is possible to analyze some of the themes addressed on the page.

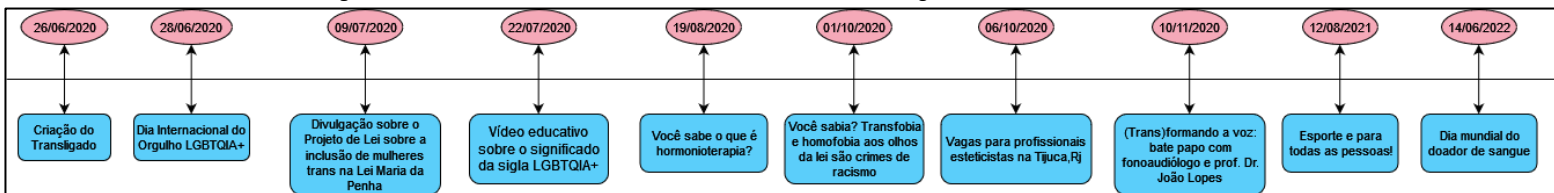
In this way, according to the emergence of combating Trans invisibility<sup>12</sup>, this project appropriated the virtual environment as a vehicle for empowerment and support for this social segment. Health education is promoted from the understanding of the individual in its entirety, not only valuing the physical body, but its citizenship and the awareness of rights for its guarantee. To date, forty (40) posts or shared materials have been made. In these, it is possible to visualize a political character (12 posts against homophobia), social (9 posts about empowerment and 2 inclusive job offers), scientific (12 posts referring to campaigns and related to the health area) and educational (11 posts covering advertisement conversation circles, historical and cultural content).



Figure 1. Logo on Instagram® of the activities described in the experience report in question. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2022



Figure 2. Timeline about some of the activities carried out in “Transligado”. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, 2022



At the same time, the Transligado page hosts live events or lectures to discuss issues for analysis of the project. They are in line with the educational and inclusive ideal that is transmitted in the textual posts. These lives are usually conversation circles, enabling important virtual debates at the moment of social seclusion of epidemiological urgency of COVID-19. Debates on sexual diversity and its rights are the main citizenship mechanism which fills the gaps in popular knowledge in order to put into practice the ideals of universality, equity and comprehensiveness safeguarded by the SUS<sup>13</sup>.

**Discussing the power of Instagram®**

Currently, the Instagram® profile “Transligado” has 341 followers and 40 publications, following the direction of health education. This was generated from meetings, studies related to engagement in social media and adaptation of the language of the scientific environment to a dynamic format that is sensitive to the different audiences that the platform reaches. Therefore, the page is dedicated to the general public, but does not exclude university students, nursing professionals who seek to improve their knowledge about care for transsexuals and the LGBT public. Another space for citizenship and health education with reliable sources, making a counterpoint with media that do not convey correct information, that present unreliable sources or that do not even present them, disseminating the recently called “fake news”.<sup>14</sup>

The creation of this page also led to the development of new skills by the students. A study carried out by the Federal University of Itajubá<sup>15</sup> corroborates the assertion that the use of the social network Instagram® can be very useful for educational development due to its wide dissemination tools, either through posts in which it is possible to provide content that is quickly assimilated, or through videos with more dynamic content. From the experience of the project members, there was a detachment from the exclusively theoretical-scientific study and they had the opportunity to develop design and advertising techniques, for example. It was necessary to improve the

creative sense, not only for the realized arts to be of instant interest, but also for the dissemination power to be greater. This in order to have a greater reach and attractiveness of the events and the contents posted<sup>11</sup>.

In addition, “Transligado” is used to promote events held both on the Instagram® platform and on other streaming media, such as YouTube®. The main focus of these lectures and conversation circles is to fight the limiting taboos of health professionals in the care of transgender people and give voice to these individuals, with the participation of trans people or transvestites, or researchers and scholars on the subject who can contribute in the reflection of the health-transsexuality relationship.

From this perspective, Instagram® proved to be a favorable place for the development of activities that integrate the academic community, developing an active work on the part of the students who adapted their personal knowledge with the technical-scientific knowledge, also promoting a problematizing education, being guided by the development of critical awareness during the study. This education was built by the sociologist Paulo Freire, in which he describes problematization as a liberating study format, relevant to the student's protagonism in their learning process.<sup>16</sup>

**Final Considerations**

Based on the need to continue and expand extension activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the creation of the “Transligado” profile on the Instagram® social network shows that the objectives proposed by the project are being achieved, since from a pandemic context, a new health education strategy was developed. And even with the possibility of face-to-face meetings, the platform started to be incorporated by the extension project as an activity for scholarship holders and academics.

Using media technologies enables a greater reach to the general public in addition to health professionals, which reveals the need and importance of transmitting information about health care and political and social issues aimed at the LGBTQIA+ population, in order to break



barriers, prejudices and taboos, since health education and assistance are also part of nursing care.

The content is brought on the social network with a vocabulary that is easy to understand and scientifically based, providing a better quality of life for transgender individuals, which also improves the work and active listening of future nurses and professionals already trained for assistance to the transgender audience. The extensionist activity contributes to the expansion of the knowledge of

academics and future nursing professionals, collaborating for assistance in line with the public policies of the Unified Health System aimed at this population, in an integrated way, understanding the demands and respecting the patient's autonomy and its particularities.

The extension project presented in this study integrates a set of experiences that complement and diversify the activities developed during the undergraduate course.

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