

Foundation for Improving Podiatric Care for Vulnerable Groups in Guayas, Ecuador

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Abstract

Introduction: In the world there are vulnerable groups that, due to social, economic and geographic conditions, do not have access to podiatric care; Ecuador is not immune to that. Therefore, the authors aim to improve podiatric care in vulnerable groups in the province of Guayas.

Materials and Methods: For this research we carried out a systematic review and data sources from different databases were consulted for the study such as: Pubmed, Science Direct; Scielo and Lilacs. The participants were vulnerable groups from the province of Guayas, Ecuador.

This is a mixed research, which is based on the dialectical-materialist conception for the application of theoretical method in obtaining and processing information for research.

Results: In the province of Guayas, Ecuador, there are vulnerable groups that face specific challenges that make podiatric care and other public health services impossible.

Conclusions: Improve podiatric care in vulnerable groups in the province of Guayas, Ecuador, given the social and human responsibility in the application of technological health procedures in that area of knowledge, pediatric treatment and rehabilitation of breech conditions and provide thus quality attention in services.

Keywords: podiatric care; vulnerable groups; technological health procedures; communicable diseases; Guayas province; Ecuador

Introduction

Laws and resolutions are available worldwide to assist in the development of strategies aimed at caring for groups of people limited in accessing public health services.

Ramos (2019) in his article analyzes social vulnerability, which is a relevant topic for the social sciences, as it raises questions about the planning and management of resilience in the region, as well as issues related to social disintegration, social instability, and the consequent processes of production

and/or reproduction of poverty, among others. The complexity, heterogeneity, and dynamic and multidimensional nature of the approach have made it possible to identify scenarios with specific vulnerability conditions. (Ramos, 2019).

Montoya (2018) analyzes the concept of vulnerability based on the opinion of other authors such as (Beck U, 1998 and wolti, 2013) who as a first impulse analyze the impacts of natural disasters on people and their communities. It is a multidimensional concept, differentiable between contexts, which is related to fragilities, weaknesses, susceptibilities or lack of capacities and resilience, which favor socially differentiated adverse effects between people, groups and communities. (Montoya, 2018).

Peraza de Aparicio et al. (2019) in a study on community care aimed at vulnerable groups in Ecuador states that rural localities in Ecuador deserve care, with quality and warmth. In addition, that the community care strategy promotes actions on health problems and needs detected as prevalent, through activities aimed at promoting health and increasing the quality of life of the inhabitants. (Peraza de Aparicio, 2019).

Peraza de Aparicio et al. (2019). In his study on community care for vulnerable groups in Ecuador, he intends to comment on strategies aimed at an inclusive community approach for the care of vulnerable groups. To this end, the issues of inequality and vulnerability, key to the 2030 Agenda, are reviewed. In settings such as rural communities in Ecuador, the community care strategy promotes actions on health problems and needs detected as prevalent, through local activities aimed at promoting health and increasing the quality of life of the inhabitants. (Peraza de Aparicio, 2019).

Sobreviela Juste et al. (2023) state in their article that the lifestyle that people have is determined by various factors, which can be physical, cultural, socioeconomic, and political, the same ones that influence development. This term appears in the first stages due to various public struggles that at the time arose around the environment and the deterioration that is caused due to the circumstances of urban and rural life. (Sobreviela J, 2023).

This article is aimed at substantiating the need to improve podiatric care for vulnerable groups in the province of Guayas, Ecuador. The lack of specialized graduate programs that address the specific needs of these populations is highlighted.

Materials and Methods

This is a qualitative research, with the application of a theoretical method in obtaining and processing the required data and information.

The historical and logical method made it possible to know the trajectory of the information and historical events of the subject. In this research identified as podiatric care of vulnerable groups in the province of Guaya, Ecuador, to assess its functioning and development, build the theoretical framework, delve into the state of the art of the phenomenon and identify essential concepts.

Ethical considerations

The need to update to improve podiatric care in vulnerable groups in the province of Guayas, Ecuador, given the social and human responsibility in the application of technological health procedures in this area of knowledge, pediatric treatment and rehabilitation of breech conditions and thus provide quality care in services.

Results

In the province of Guayas, Ecuador, there are several vulnerable groups that face specific challenges in assisting health services. We can list some of these challenges faced by vulnerable groups:

1. **People with diabetes:** Diabetes is a chronic disease that can cause serious podiatric complications, such as foot ulcers and neuropathy. People with diabetes need regular podiatric care to prevent complications and maintain the health of their feet.
2. **Low-income people:** People with limited financial resources may face difficulties accessing health services, including podiatric

care. This may be due to economic barriers, limited transportation, or lack of information about available services.

3. **Seniors:** Older adults may have difficulty taking proper care of their feet due to decreased mobility, poor vision, or other chronic medical conditions that can affect foot health.
4. **Rural population:** In rural areas of the province of Guayas, there may be a lack of access to health services, including podiatric care. People living in rural areas may face greater challenges in accessing specialized medical services due to distance, lack of transportation, and limited infrastructure.
5. **Ethnic Minority Groups:** In the province of Guayas, there may be ethnic minority groups that face additional barriers to accessing health services, including podiatric care. This may be due to cultural, linguistic, or discriminatory factors.

Discussion

Authors such as Chang (2018) and Montufar (2023) assert that Ecuador has taken important steps in recognizing care as a right in its Constitution and has expressed its recognition of the need to have a system of care and social support for the elderly. However, in order to measure the magnitude of their needs, as well as to determine and make available the effective resources that offer viability, it is necessary to have a greater quantity and quality of data on the levels of functionality of the population that make it possible to determine who would be the beneficiaries of the future care policy. This would also make it possible to make progress in strengthening current services and in greater coordination with health services in order to improve their effectiveness and lay solid foundations for their growth. (Chang, 2018; Montufar, 2023).

62.7% of the population in Ecuador is poor and vulnerable: That is, their income level does not allow them to cover the cost of the basic basket. 27.0% are in poverty and 10.8% in extreme poverty without being able to cover the cost of the minimum food to survive.

According to Nishio (2024), he asserted that the International Development Association (IDA) in 2019, promised to help the poorest and most vulnerable with the World Bank's concessional financing fund. (Nishio, 2024).

People in poorer countries suffer the most from foot-related ailments, so taking care of them has been a health challenge since humans started walking upright, putting the entire body load on their feet and exposing them to impact forces when walking.

Sánchez (2024) refers in his publication in the journal Primary Care to the importance of Podiatry, since the feet are part of the human anatomy, and if they are affected, people's quality of life deteriorates. Podiatry professionals are qualified to care for and treat your feet to prevent any conditions that can seriously affect your foot health. In addition, their work can contribute to cost reduction in the health care system in the long term. (Sánchez, 2024).

Diabetic foot is one of the most common and serious complications, which can lead to serious infections, ulcers, and amputations; if not handled properly. Comprehensive foot care in these patients is crucial to prevent these complications, and podiatrists play a critical role in this process. However, there is a need for specialized educational programs that train podiatrists in the specific care of patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus in this region.

Martínez (2021) stated in his article podiatric conditions in older adults treated in the general Podiatry Consultation that foot problems in the elderly are generally chronic, take many years to develop and have a great impact on their quality of life; even so, it is difficult to determine exactly what causes the increase in these diseases. After the study carried out and the bibliography consulted, it can be stated that conditions in geriatric patients can be grouped into different categories: onychopathies, dermatological, vascular and neuropathic. (Martínez, 2021).

The province of Guayas faces significant challenges in terms of access and awareness of podiatric care, especially among vulnerable groups such as low-income people, older adults, and people with chronic diseases such as diabetes among other communicable diseases.

Podiatric care is an integral and indispensable part of health, especially for vulnerable groups who face additional challenges due to socioeconomic, geographic, or access to health care conditions.

The socioeconomic and geographic context of the province of Guayas presents unique challenges in terms of podiatric health. Factors such as poverty, lack of access to specialized medical care, scarcity of resources, and low health literacy contribute to the prevalence of untreated or poorly managed podiatric conditions in these vulnerable groups.

Conclusion

The study is aimed at the Sciences of Medical Education in particular to podiatric care in vulnerable groups, based on the identification of weaknesses, in correspondence with the three areas of work performance, the technological procedures of health in Podiatry, which is based on the integration between the areas of care and social interaction.

To improve podiatric care in vulnerable groups in the province of Guayas, Ecuador, given the social and human responsibility in the application of technological health procedures in this area of knowledge, pediatric treatment and rehabilitation of breech conditions and thus provide quality care in services.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Author Contribution

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