

system. This condition is enhanced by stress. In turn, stress symptoms are a risk factor for the onset and progression of MS. However, knowledge about predictors of stress in patients with MS is scarce.

**Objectives:** This preliminary study aimed to verify whether the number of relapses, fatigue, physical disability (MS characteristics), experiential avoidance and self-judgment (emotion regulation processes) predict stress symptoms in patients diagnosed with MS.

**Methods:** A convenience sample of 101 patients diagnosed with MS and without other neurological diseases participated in this study. Participants completed the Depression Scale of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scales-21, Analog Fatigue Scale, World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule-12, Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II, and Self-Judgment Subscale of the Self-Compassion Scale.

**Results:** All predictors initially hypothesized and years of education have significant correlations with stress symptoms. Simple linear regression analyses showed that the variables significantly predicted stress symptoms and were, therefore, included in the multiple linear regression model. This model explained 51.8% of the variance of the stress symptoms and showed that years of education, the number of relapses, fatigue, and experiential avoidance significantly predicted those symptoms.

**Conclusions:** The promotion of mental health mental in patients with MS must develop functional skills to deal with stress induced by years of education (possibly responsible for the degree of awareness about MS and its consequences), recurrence of relapses and fatigue, and should minimize emotion regulation strategies focused on experiential avoidance.

**Keywords:** Multiple sclerosis; predictive model; clinical characteristics of multiple sclerosis; emotion regulation processes

## EPP0995

### Improving hospitalization in children and adolescents through animal assisted interventions (AAIs): A systematic review

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**Introduction:** Animal Assisted Interventions (AAIs) are increasingly introduced in pediatric care settings as a mean to promote the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of hospitalized children and adolescents and the humanization of the hospital environment.

**Objectives:** The aim of this work was to review published studies implementing AAIs in hospital settings and to assess their effectiveness in reducing stress and pain, ameliorating social behavior, quality of life, and mood in pediatric patients. Reviewed interventions were also evaluated for their effects on caregiver's stress and burden, as well as on perception of the work environment in hospital staff.

**Methods:** Studies were systematically searched using PubMed, Scopus, ProQuest and Web of Science databases in accordance with PRISMA guidelines. The search was aimed at identifying studies examining the effects of AAIs on behavioral and

physiological response to stress in children and adolescents (0-18 years) formally admitted to a hospital for a stay, as well as in those undergoing a visit for treatments or medical examinations.

**Results:** Of 350 studies screened, 17 were eligible for inclusion. Most of them focused on stress, pain and anxiety reduction in pediatric patients, and used both physiological parameters and behavioral observations/scales. The vast majority of the studies employed dogs. Results show the potential of AAIs to reduce anxiety and behavioral distress in pediatric patients, while acting on physiological measures associated with arousal.

**Conclusions:** Although further studies of better quality are still needed, the findings of this review may have implications for clinical practices suggesting appropriate planning of AAIs by pediatric healthcare professionals.

**Keywords:** humanization of care; stress and pain reduction; Animal Assisted Interventions; Pediatric Hospital

## EPP0996

### Evaluation of the impact of a socio-educational intervention in quality of life and mental health of institutionalized elderly

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**Introduction:** With the huge increase of life expectancy in developed countries, new needs for long-term care arise in order to guarantee an active ageing for an increasing older adult population. One way to promote emotional well-being and quality of life in elderly is through socio-educational interventions.

**Objectives:** To test the effects of a socio-educational intervention in quality of life and mental health of institutionalized elderly.

**Methods:** This study employed a pretest-posttest design. Measures: Portuguese version of Mental Health Inventory (Ribeiro, 2001) and WHOQOL-OLD (Vilar, Sousa & Simões, 2009). Qualitative assessment was made using a logbook. Participants: 15 institutionalized elderly, 60% females, with mean age of 82.5 years (sd=8.5). The intervention ran for 2 months, with 12 group sessions, 60 minutes each, held twice a week. A nonparametric paired samples tests was conducted to evaluate the impact of the intervention.

**Results:** After the intervention, results showed a significant increase of total value of mental health ( $p=.021$ ). Concerning dimensions: significant increase of positive psychological well-being ( $p=.014$ ), emotional ties ( $p=.050$ ), positive affect ( $p=.004$ ), behavioural emotional control ( $p=.018$ ), and a significant decrease of depression ( $p=.043$ ). Concerning quality of live, the results showed a significant increase of the mean values of the facets: social participation and intimacy ( $p=.005$ ;  $p=.027$ , respectively).

**Conclusions:** Overall, the intervention implemented with institutionalized elderly had good results, with significant increase of positive psychological well-being and decrease of depression. Although there was no control group, the results suggest that the socio-educational intervention implemented can contribute to promote mental health in elderly.

**Keywords:** mental health promotion; PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING; quality of life; Elderly