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### **INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE USE OF HEALTH SERVICES AMONG ELDERLY IN A DEVELOPING CONTEXT**

**Statement of the Problem:** The way we connect to each other can affect our health status and other health related outcomes. Broadly, social capital refers to the characteristics that emerge from social connections among individuals in a given society that can be used for a common goal. Health related outcomes have been linked to lack in Social Capital such as high mortality rates, poor mental health, low well-being, poor oral health, poor maternal health weak adherence to health promotion policies, and obesity prevention.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** This cross-sectional study sought to test the association between social capital, health status, and use of health services, among Brazilian non-institutionalized elderly living in an industrialized area. Sample was composed by 2,052 respondents aged 60 or older, living in Sete Lagoas county in 2012 (Jan-Jul). Social Capital (SC) was measured by The World Bank Integrated Questionnaire (SC-IQ) dichotomized in “low Social Capital” and “high Social Capital”. Use of health services (11 variables), health status, community engagement, familiar functionality, and social demographics were assessed.

**Findings:** Out of total respondents, 68.6% belonged to the group of low social capital. Lack in social capital was associated to poor health status (69.5%), > medical treatment (70.7%). When controlled, Low SC increased chances to medical appointment within 6 months [OR=1.78; 95%IC=1.22-2.60], decreased chances to be assisted by Public Health Family Program [OR=0.77; 95%IC=0.59-0.99], of community engagement [OR=0.12; 95%IC=0.09-0.15], and good familiar functionality [OR=0.56; 95%IC=0.36-0.86].

**Conclusion & Significance:** Individual Social Capital affected health status and the pattern that elderly used health service in this population.

#### **Biography**

Carolina M Borges is a Social Epidemiologist and currently working as an Assistant Professor of Public Health at The College of New Jersey. She holds a PhD in Dental Public Health, Master's in Public Health focused on Oral Epidemiology. Her research line includes social determinants of health, health inequalities, technology and health and social capital. Additionally, she has experience in planning, building and implementing undergraduate and graduate programs; experience as Administrative and Academic Coordinator.

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