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Self-perception of health, representative sample of older adults living in Long-Term Care Facilities in Brazil

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Statement of the Problem: Brazil is undergoing a period of demographic transition. In a decade, the proportion of older adults rose from 9.7% in 2004 to 13.7% in 2014, and projections indicate this group will represent 18.6% of the population in 2030 and 33.7% in 2060. Approximately 1% of older adults live in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF). The purpose of this study was to evaluate self-perception of health and describe the sociodemographic characteristics of older adults living in LTCF in Brazil.

Methodology: this was a representative cross-sectional study conducted in the Metropolitan Area of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais State, which is the 3rd largest city in Brazil. To describe the sociodemographic characteristics a questionnaire was used to assess 156 out of 170 LTCF, comprising 3,752 older adults. To evaluate self-perception of health, interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis with 127 participants in 47 LTCF. Participants were asked: "Overall, you would say that your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor? and "Compared to people of the same aged, how do you evaluate your health?". The data collection was completed in July 2017.

Findings: the mean age was 74.9 (± 8.85) years, 43.31% were single and 26.8% were illiterate. The average time of institutionalization was 5.3 years. Regarding the reasons for institutionalization, 60.6% stated that it was not their own choice, having as reasons the definition of family, abandonment or violence. Turning to self-perception of health, 53.5% evaluated your health as excellent/very good and 65.4% as excellent/very good when compared to people of the same age.

Conclusion & Significance: Knowing the profile of LTCF residents is the first step towards policy orientation, addressing the long-term care resources gap and the stigma about these institutions, as well as proposing actions for this public that should be considered as particularities, including their weaknesses and potentialities.

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