



SYPHILIS IN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS: INTERVENTION AND INCLUSION STRATEGIES

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SUMMARY

This article explores intervention and inclusion strategies for controlling syphilis in vulnerable populations, using a bibliographic and quantitative methodological approach. Syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection of significant global concern, disproportionately affects marginalized groups due to socioeconomic factors and barriers to accessing health services. Studies indicate that implementing health education programs and promoting regular testing are crucial to reducing the incidence of syphilis in these populations (Smith, 2020). Furthermore, community initiatives focused on increasing awareness and access to treatment have proven effective in addressing this public health problem (Johnson & Miller, 2019). Quantitative data reinforce the need for an integrated and inclusive approach, involving health professionals, community organizations and public policies, as essential for controlling syphilis in vulnerable populations.

Keywords:Syphilis. Vulnerable Population. Intervention Strategies

ABSTRACT

This article explores intervention and inclusion strategies for syphilis control in vulnerable populations, employing a bibliographic and quantitative methodological approach. Syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection of significant global concern, disproportionately affects marginalized groups due to socioeconomic factors and barriers to accessing healthcare services. Studies indicate that implementing health education programs and promoting regular testing are crucial to reducing syphilis incidence in these populations (Smith, 2020). Additionally, community initiatives focused on increasing awareness and access to treatment have proven effective in addressing this public health issue (Johnson & Miller, 2019). Quantitative data reinforces the need for an integrated and inclusive approach involving healthcare professionals, community organizations, and public policies, as essential for syphilis control in vulnerable populations.

Keywords:Syphilis. Vulnerable Population. Intervention Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Syphilis, a sexually transmitted infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*, continues to pose a significant challenge to healthcare systems around the world. Despite advances in medicine and public health, the incidence of syphilis remains worryingly high, especially among vulnerable populations. This article seeks to explore intervention and inclusion strategies for controlling syphilis in these populations, recognizing the crucial importance of effective approaches to addressing this public health issue.

Vulnerable populations, defined by their greater exposure to socioeconomic and structural risk factors, face unique challenges when it comes to controlling syphilis. Barriers to accessing health services, social stigma and lack of health education are just some of the obstacles that hinder the adequate prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease. Given this scenario, specific and adapted strategies These realities are necessary to achieve meaningful results.

This study adopts a methodological approach that combines literature review and quantitative analysis to investigate best practices and effective interventions for controlling syphilis in vulnerable populations. The literature review will allow for a comprehensive understanding of existing strategies, while the quantitative analysis will provide additional insights through relevant data and statistics.

It is essential to recognize that syphilis is not just a physical health issue, but also a social and human rights issue. Therefore, any intervention strategy must be holistic and person-centered, taking into account not only clinical aspects, but also social, cultural and economic contexts. This integrated approach is essential to ensure that the needs of populations

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vulnerable people are adequately cared for.

By examining intervention and inclusion strategies for syphilis control in vulnerable populations, this article aims to contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive health policies and programs. By better understanding the challenges and opportunities facing these populations, we can work together to create a future where syphilis is a public health concern of the past, not the present.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Contextualization of syphilis as a public health problem

Syphilis is a bacterial infection caused by *Treponema pallidum*, which represents a serious public health problem due to its high transmissibility and the serious consequences it can have if not diagnosed and treated appropriately. The disease can manifest itself in several phases, each with specific symptoms, and, if left untreated, can progress to serious complications, including neurological and cardiovascular damage.

Congenital syphilis, transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy, can result in stillbirths, neonatal deaths or serious health problems for newborns. The persistence of syphilis as a threat to public health is aggravated by social and economic factors that make access to diagnosis and treatment difficult.

As pointed out by several studies, syphilis has experienced a resurgence in several parts of the world, including in developed countries, which reinforces the need for effective public health strategies to control the disease (Andrade; Silva, 2019). This increase is often associated with changes in sexual behaviors, a decrease in condom use, and a lack of comprehensive sexual education programs. Preventing syphilis requires a multifaceted approach that includes not only promoting safe sex practices but also improving access to health services, especially for vulnerable populations who are at increased risk of infection.

The vulnerability of certain populations to syphilis is one of the most critical aspects in the public health context. Groups such as sex workers, men who have sex with men, homeless people, and injecting drug users are disproportionately affected by syphilis due to factors such as social stigma, discrimination, and limited access to health services. These groups often face significant barriers to obtaining diagnosis and treatment, which contributes to the persistence and spread of the disease. Specific intervention strategies that address the unique needs and challenges of these populations are essential for reducing the incidence of syphilis and improving health outcomes.

Recent research indicates that implementing public health policies aimed at inclusion and equity can be an effective approach to combating syphilis in vulnerable populations (Ferreira; Oliveira, 2020). These policies include forming partnerships with community organizations, conducting culturally sensitive awareness campaigns, and offering accessible and non-discriminatory health services. Furthermore, strengthening epidemiological surveillance systems and promoting regular testing and treatment are fundamental measures to control the spread of syphilis and protect the most affected populations.

Contextualizing syphilis as a public health problem highlights the complexity of the disease and the need for integrated and collaborative approaches. Combining prevention, education and intervention strategies tailored to the needs of vulnerable populations can significantly reduce the burden of syphilis. Furthermore, it is crucial that public health policies continually adapt to changes in epidemiological patterns and risk behaviors, ensuring that all individuals have

equitable access to health care. Only through coordinated and sustained efforts will it be possible to

It is possible to effectively control syphilis and minimize its impact on society.

Definition and history of syphilis

Syphilis is a chronic bacterial infection caused by *Treponema pallidum*, characterized by a progression through different clinical phases: primary, secondary, latent and tertiary. Transmission occurs mainly through sexual contact, but it can also be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy, resulting in congenital syphilis. The disease is known for its varied symptoms and its ability to mimic other medical conditions, earning it the nickname the great imitator. Identification and treatment of syphilis are crucial to avoid severe complications, including neurological and cardiovascular damage, which

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may appear in advanced stages of the disease.

Historically, syphilis emerged in Europe in the late 15th century, with the first epidemics recorded shortly after the arrival of Christopher Columbus from the Americas. There is an ongoing debate among historians and researchers about whether the disease was introduced to Europe by Columbus's sailors or whether it already existed in a less virulent form in the Old World. The rapid spread and severity of the disease in the 16th and 17th centuries led to great social stigma and a series of ineffective and often dangerous treatments, such as the use of mercury, which was widely adopted until the development of penicillin in the 20th century (Jones; Smith, 2005).

During the 18th and 19th centuries, syphilis continued to be a significant public health concern, with many famous individuals and historical figures being affected by the disease. The discovery of *Treponema pallidum* in 1905 by Fritz Schaudinn and Erich Hoffmann and the introduction of serological testing by August von Wassermann in 1906 were important milestones in the history of syphilis. These advances allowed for a better understanding and diagnosis of the disease, but it was only with the introduction of penicillin in the 1940s that an effective and safe treatment became available, revolutionizing the management of syphilis and drastically reducing its prevalence in the following decades (Miller; Johnson, 2010).

Complete eradication of syphilis, however, has been an ongoing challenge. Despite medical advances, the disease has resurfaced in several parts of the world in recent decades, particularly among vulnerable populations. Global mobility, antibiotic resistance in some cases, and changes in sexual behaviors have contributed to the increase in the incidence of syphilis in many countries. This resurgence highlights the need for robust public health strategies that include not only treatment but also prevention and education (Taylor; Brown, 2015).

The fight against syphilis continues to be a public health priority. Modern syphilis control strategies involve a multifaceted approach that includes epidemiological surveillance, expanded access to testing and treatments, and public awareness campaigns. International collaboration and integration of health services are crucial to addressing disparities in access to diagnosis and treatment. Continuous learning from the history of syphilis reinforces the importance of a coordinated and sustained response to combat this disease, which, despite being ancient, still represents a significant challenge to global health.

Stages of the disease (primary, secondary, latent, tertiary)

Syphilis is a complex bacterial infection that develops in four distinct phases: primary, secondary, latent and tertiary. Each phase has specific clinical characteristics and implications for diagnosis and treatment. A detailed understanding of these phases is essential for effective management of the disease and prevention of its long-term complications.

The primary phase of syphilis is characterized by the appearance of a painless lesion called chancre, generally located at the site of the initial infection, such as the genitals, anus or mouth. This lesion appears approximately three to six weeks after exposure to *Treponema pallidum* and tends to heal spontaneously within a few weeks, even without treatment. Despite spontaneous resolution, the bacterium remains in the body, progressing to the next phase if not treated. Early identification and treatment during the primary phase are crucial to stopping the progression of the disease (Martinez; Almeida, 2011).

If left untreated, syphilis progresses to the secondary stage, which generally occurs between six weeks and six months after the appearance of the primary chancre. This phase is marked by a wide variety of symptoms, including rashes, mucocutaneous lesions, fever, lymphadenopathy, and flu-like symptoms. Rashes can appear anywhere on the body, but are most common on the palms and soles. The symptoms of secondary syphilis are often nonspecific, which can make diagnosis difficult (Rodrigues; Silva, 2012).

As highlighted by Rodrigues and Silva (2012), secondary syphilis is one of the most infectious phases of the disease due to the high concentration of spirochetes in the lesions. The diversity of symptoms can lead to confusion with other diseases, delaying the correct diagnosis. At this stage, the disease is still highly treatable with antibiotics, which reinforces the importance of rigorous clinical surveillance and appropriate diagnostic tests for those who present symptoms compatible with secondary syphilis.

After the secondary phase, syphilis enters a latent phase, during which the patient has no visible symptoms, but *Treponema pallidum* remains in the body. The latent phase is divided into early latent, which occurs within the first year after the initial infection, and late latent, which extends beyond this period. During the early latent phase, the infection may still be transmissible, especially during

pregnancy, which may result in congenital syphilis. Without treatment, the latent phase can last for many years and progress to the tertiary phase in some individuals (Ferreira; Gomes, 2014).

Ferreira and Gomes (2014) observed that the latent phase represents a significant challenge for public health, as the absence of clinical symptoms can lead to a false sense of cure. During this phase, infection can only be detected by serological tests. Detection and treatment of latent syphilis are crucial to prevent progression to the tertiary stage, which is associated with serious health complications.

The tertiary phase of syphilis, also known as late syphilis, can occur years or even decades after the initial infection. This phase is characterized by severe damage to multiple organs and systems, including the cardiovascular system, central nervous system, and bones. Common manifestations include syphilitic aortitis, neurosyphilis, and syphilitic gumma, which are granulomatous lesions that can affect any part of the body. Tertiary syphilis can result in severe disability and even death if not treated properly (Santos; Oliveira, 2015).

As stated by Santos and Oliveira (2015), tertiary syphilis is relatively rare nowadays due to the availability of effective antibiotics. However, it remains a significant problem in regions where access to medical care is limited. Neurosyphilis, a particularly severe form of tertiary syphilis, can occur at any stage of the disease and is characterized by a wide range of neurological symptoms, including dementia, paralysis, and meningitis. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment are essential to prevent these complications.

The progression of syphilis through its different stages highlights the importance of early diagnosis and treatment. Serological tests are the main diagnostic tool, used to detect antibodies against *Treponema pallidum*. The standard treatment for all stages of syphilis is penicillin, which is highly effective in eliminating the bacteria. However, clinical follow-up is essential to ensure an adequate response to treatment and to monitor possible relapses or late complications.

Challenges in managing syphilis include the need for greater public awareness of the disease, promoting regular testing, especially among high-risk populations, and combating the stigma associated with the infection. Furthermore, it is essential that healthcare professionals are well trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of syphilis in all its stages, ensuring effective diagnosis and treatment.

Understanding the stages of syphilis is essential for the development of public health strategies aimed at controlling and eradicating the disease. Integrated approaches involving education, prevention, early diagnosis and effective treatment are essential to reduce the incidence and prevalence of syphilis, protecting public health and improving outcomes for affected individuals.

Global and local epidemiological data

Syphilis continues to be a significant public health concern worldwide, with marked variations in its prevalence among different regions and populations. Global epidemiological data indicate that syphilis is still one of the main sexually transmitted infections (STIs), affecting millions of people annually. In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated approximately 6 million new cases of syphilis worldwide. The disease has high incidence rates in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America, reflecting disparities in access to health services and the effectiveness of preventive interventions (Who, 2020).

In sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence of syphilis is particularly high due to factors such as limited healthcare infrastructure, the stigma associated with STIs, and the lack of effective prevention programs. Studies carried out by Ncube et al. (2020) reveal that, in some rural areas, the prevalence of syphilis among pregnant women can reach 10%, which significantly increases the risk of congenital syphilis and other maternal and neonatal complications. The high prevalence of the disease in this region highlights the urgent need for public health interventions that address both accessible and effective diagnosis and treatment.

In Latin America, syphilis also represents a public health challenge, with an increasing incidence observed in several countries. In Brazil, for example, data from the Ministry of Health indicate that cases of acquired syphilis increased from 12.4 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010 to 75.8 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2019 (Brazil, 2020). This increase can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the expansion of mandatory notification, improvements in epidemiological surveillance systems, and a real increase in the incidence of the disease. The young population and men who have sex with men (MSM) are the most affected groups, reflecting changes in sexual behaviors and prevention practices.

According to Silva and Santos (2021), the re-emergence of syphilis in developed countries, such as the United States and several European nations, is also a growing concern. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported an increase of more than 70% in cases of primary syphilis

and secondary between 2014 and 2018. In Europe, the situation is similar, with countries such as Germany and the United Kingdom reporting substantial increases in the incidence of syphilis, particularly among MSM. These data indicate the need to strengthen public health policies and prevention strategies to contain the spread of the disease (Silva; Santos, 2021).

The local epidemiological scenario varies considerably within countries, reflecting regional differences in social, economic factors and access to health services. In urban areas with better healthcare infrastructure, detection rates are generally higher due to greater availability of testing and treatment. However, in rural regions and marginalized communities, syphilis often remains underdiagnosed and undertreated. Studies carried out by Oliveira et al. (2022) show that, in regions of Northeast Brazil, the prevalence of syphilis is significantly higher in riverside and indigenous communities, where access to health care is limited and prevention programs are insufficient.

Also, congenital syphilis continues to be a critical indicator of the effectiveness of public health interventions. In Brazil, the rate of congenital syphilis increased from 2.4 cases per 1,000 live births in 2010 to 8.2 cases per 1,000 live births in 2019 (Brasil, 2020). This increase is worrying and reflects failures in adequate tracking and treatment of infected pregnant women. Preventing congenital syphilis requires a coordinated effort to ensure that all pregnant women are tested and treated appropriately during prenatal care, which includes implementing rapid testing and immediate treatment programs.

The comparison of global and local epidemiological data highlights the importance of public health strategies adapted to the specific needs of each region. Effective interventions require a thorough understanding of the factors that contribute to the transmission of syphilis, including socioeconomic, behavioral and access to health services issues. Education and awareness programs, along with public health policies that promote equitable access to diagnosis and treatment, are essential to controlling the spread of syphilis and reducing its long-term prevalence.

Analysis of epidemiological data also highlights the need for an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to syphilis control. Collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations, and the community is vital to implementing effective health programs. Investments in health infrastructure, training of professionals, and awareness campaigns are essential to face the challenges presented by syphilis, both in global and local contexts. Through coordinated efforts, it is possible to reduce the burden of disease and improve health outcomes for affected populations around the world.

Definition of vulnerable populations

The definition of vulnerable populations in the context of public health covers groups of individuals who, due to social, economic, cultural, or behavioral factors, are at greater risk of developing health problems and have less ability to access quality medical care. These groups include, but are not limited to, people living in extreme poverty, ethnic minorities, sex workers, people who inject drugs, homeless individuals, and the LGBTQIA+ community. The vulnerability of these populations is exacerbated by social marginalization and discrimination, which often limit their opportunities for employment, education and access to health services (Souza; Pereira, 2017).

According to Souza and Pereira (2017), vulnerability is a multidimensional concept that is not limited only to economic aspects, but also encompasses living conditions and access to basic rights. For example, sex workers and people who inject drugs face significant stigma that can prevent them from seeking health care, contributing to a higher incidence of infectious diseases such as syphilis. The marginalization of these populations creates additional barriers, such as a lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and the fear of being criminalized or discriminated against when seeking help.

Social and economic factors, geographic location also play a crucial role in defining vulnerable populations. Communities in rural and remote areas, for example, often have limited access to health services, which worsens their vulnerability. Studies by Silva and Rodrigues (2018) highlight that the lack of infrastructure and resources in rural areas contributes to the perpetuation of unfavorable health conditions. Indigenous and riverside populations in Brazil exemplify these challenges, facing significant barriers to accessing medical care due to distance and a shortage of qualified health professionals in their regions.

Silva and Rodrigues (2018) emphasize that, to effectively address the needs of vulnerable populations, it is essential to develop inclusive public health policies that recognize and combat multiple forms of exclusion and discrimination. Intervention strategies must be culturally sensitive and adapted to the specific realities of each group. This includes promoting welcoming healthcare environments,

training professionals to address the unique needs of these populations, and implementing prevention and treatment programs that take into account the social determinants of health.

Only through integrated and inclusive approaches will it be possible to reduce health disparities and ensure that all individuals, regardless of their social or economic status, have equitable access to health care.

Identification of specific groups (prison population, homeless people, drug users, sexual and ethnic minorities)

Identifying specific vulnerable groups is crucial to developing effective public health policies that address the unique needs of these populations. Among the most vulnerable groups are the prison population, the homeless, drug users, and sexual and ethnic minorities. Each of these groups faces particular challenges that increase their health vulnerability and make it difficult to access adequate medical care. Understanding the characteristics and health determinants specific to each group is essential to inform interventions that aim to reduce health disparities and promote equity in access to health services (Alves; Martins, 2019).

The prison population is a particularly vulnerable group due to factors such as overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, limited access to healthcare, and a high prevalence of mental health problems and infectious diseases. Studies carried out by Santos and Oliveira (2020) reveal that the prison population is at greater risk of contracting communicable diseases, such as syphilis, due to the lack of access to condoms and sexual and reproductive health services. Prison often amplifies existing inequalities in society, placing individuals at greater risk of violence, substance abuse and mental health problems.

Homeless people face similar challenges due to their lack of stable housing and limited access to basic services such as sanitation and medical care. Studies by Oliveira et al. (2018) show that homeless people have a significantly higher prevalence of chronic illnesses, mental illnesses, and substance abuse compared to the general population. Homelessness is associated with greater exposure to adverse weather conditions, poor personal hygiene, and street violence, all of which contribute to an increased risk of infectious diseases, including syphilis.

Drug users are also considered a vulnerable population due to the risks associated with the use of illicit substances, including exposure to blood-borne infectious diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis C. Studies carried out by Silva and Almeida (2017) highlight that the Injecting intravenous drugs significantly increases the risk of contracting syphilis due to sharing contaminated needles and syringes. Additionally, drug use can lead to high-risk behaviors, such as unprotected sex, which further increase vulnerability to syphilis and other STIs.

Sexual and ethnic minorities face additional challenges due to discrimination and social marginalization. Studies carried out by Lima and Costa (2019) show that the lack of access to culturally sensitive health services and the stigmatization of non-heterosexual sexual behaviors can hinder access to the diagnosis and treatment of syphilis. Furthermore, ethnic minorities often face disparities in access to health care due to language barriers, lack of health insurance, and institutional discrimination.

Identifying these specific groups is critical to inform public health policies and programs that address their unique needs and promote equity in access to health care. Effective strategies must include implementing accessible and culturally sensitive health services, offering testing and treatments for infectious diseases such as syphilis, and developing prevention programs that address social determinants of health. Only through an integrated and inclusive approach will it be possible to reduce health disparities and ensure that all vulnerable groups have access to the health care they need.

Risk factors associated with vulnerability

Understanding the risk factors associated with vulnerability is essential to develop effective public health intervention and prevention strategies. Several studies have identified a series of factors that contribute to increasing the vulnerability of certain population groups to health problems, such as syphilis. Among these factors are socioeconomic, behavioral, cultural and environmental aspects, which can interact in a complex way to influence the risk of exposure and worsening of infectious diseases (Silva; Pereira, 2018).

Socioeconomic factors play a significant role in determining the vulnerability of certain groups. Poverty, lack of access to adequate housing, education and employment, as well as socioeconomic discrimination, can increase the risk of contracting diseases such as syphilis. Studies by Oliveira et

al. (2019) show that individuals of low socioeconomic status are more likely to face difficulties in accessing healthcare, which can result in delays in the diagnosis and adequate treatment of the disease.

Risk behaviors also play a key role in vulnerability to syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections. The use of illicit drugs, risky sexual practices, such as unprotected sex and multiple sexual partners, and the lack of knowledge about prevention and sexual health are factors that increase exposure to the risk of syphilis infection. Studies by Santos and Lima (2020) highlight that the lack of sexual education and access to condoms contribute to the spread of the disease, especially among young and vulnerable populations.

Cultural determinants can also influence vulnerability to syphilis, shaping attitudes toward sex, health, and illness. Cultural norms that discourage open discussion about sexuality, stigma associated with sexually transmitted infections, and religious beliefs that discourage the use of prevention methods can make access to health services and adherence to treatment difficult. According to studies by Almeida and Silva (2017), cultural influence can be especially pronounced in conservative or traditional communities, where the taboo surrounding sexuality can impede the search for medical care.

Environmental determinants, such as the availability of health services, access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, also play an important role in determining vulnerability to syphilis. Populations in marginalized rural or urban areas may face significant barriers to accessing health services, which can result in delays in disease diagnosis and treatment. Studies by Sousa and Costa (2018) highlight that the lack of health infrastructure in remote regions can contribute to a higher prevalence of infectious diseases, including syphilis.

The interaction of these risk factors may result in greater vulnerability to syphilis in certain population groups. For example, individuals who face multiple forms of marginalization, such as homeless people who are also drug users, may be at greater risk of contracting the disease due to overlapping risk factors. Studies by Carvalho and Santos (2019) demonstrate that the intersectionality of different forms of vulnerability can amplify the risk of infection with syphilis and other infectious diseases.

Understanding these risk factors is critical to guide public health interventions that aim to reduce vulnerability to syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections. Effective strategies must address not only individual determinants of health, but also the structural and contextual factors that contribute to vulnerability.

This includes implementing health education programs, promoting equitable access to health services, and approaches sensitive to the cultural and social context of vulnerable populations.

Concept of social determinants of health

The concept of social determinants of health plays a fundamental role in understanding health disparities observed between different population groups. These determinants refer to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, as well as the systems that shape daily living conditions. As highlighted by Silva and Almeida (2019), the social determinants of health include factors such as education, income, employment, access to adequate housing, physical and social environment, as well as access to health services.

These social factors have a significant impact on the health of populations, influencing exposure to health risks, the ability to adopt healthy behaviors, and access to medical care. For example, individuals with lower socioeconomic status tend to have greater exposure to environmental and occupational risks, as well as limited access to healthy foods and quality health services. Consequently, they face a greater risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and

cardiovascular diseases (Rodrigues; Santos, 2018).

7 Social determinants of health also play a crucial role in determining health inequalities observed between different social groups. Marginalized groups, such as ethnic minorities, immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, and LGBTQIA+, face additional barriers to accessing social determinants of health, which contributes to significant health disparities. According to studies by Lima and Costa (2020), these populations are more likely to face discrimination, lack of access to basic services, poverty and unemployment, which are determining factors of health.

Understanding the social determinants of health is essential to guide public health policies and interventions that aim to address health inequalities and promote equity. Effective strategies must go

beyond treating disease and addressing the underlying causes of health disparities, including implementing social policies that promote equal opportunity, reducing poverty, improving access to education and employment, and promoting healthy and safe environments for all populations (Souza; Martins, 2017).

In this sense, public health policies must adopt a broad and integrated approach that takes into account the social determinants of health at all stages of planning and implementation. This requires collaboration between different sectors, including health, education, housing, transport, labor and social development. Only through coordinated, interdisciplinary efforts will it be possible to effectively address the roots of health inequalities and promote better health outcomes for all members of society.

Targeted prevention programs

Targeted prevention programs play a crucial role in reducing disease incidence and promoting health in vulnerable populations. These programs are designed to specifically address risk factors associated with certain health conditions and are targeted at specific groups who face greater vulnerability. As highlighted by Santos and Lima (2019), targeted prevention programs are fundamental to achieving effective public health results, especially when it comes to infectious diseases such as syphilis.

These programs typically include a combination of strategies such as health education, promoting condom use, regular testing, early treatment of infections, providing HIV pre-exposure therapy (PrEP) in high-risk groups, and exchange programs. syringes for injecting drug users. Studies by Oliveira and Almeida (2018) demonstrate that multicomponent approaches are more effective in reducing the transmission of infectious diseases, as they address multiple risk factors simultaneously.

Targeted prevention programs must also take into account the specific needs of target groups, such as language and culture, to ensure effectiveness and acceptance by the communities served. For example, prevention programs targeting LGBTQIA+ populations must be culturally sensitive and inclusive, taking into account the barriers faced by this population when accessing health services. According to Alves and Costa (2020), successful prevention strategies must be adapted to the social and cultural context of the target populations to ensure their effectiveness.

Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of targeted prevention programs is essential to inform evidence-based practices and improve future interventions. Studies by Souza e Silva (2017) highlight the importance of rigorous monitoring and evaluation of prevention programs, including indicators of coverage, adherence, risk behaviors and infection rates, to determine their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Collaboration between diverse sectors, including health, education, government, non-governmental organizations and local communities, is critical to the success of targeted prevention programs. The integration of efforts and resources can expand the reach and impact of interventions, in addition to promoting a more comprehensive and holistic approach to public health prevention.

Awareness and education campaigns

Awareness and education campaigns play a key role in promoting health and preventing diseases, including syphilis. These campaigns are designed to increase knowledge about the disease, its risk factors and prevention methods, as well as promoting positive behavioral changes in the population. As highlighted by Silva and Santos (2019), awareness and education campaigns are a powerful tool to empower individuals to take proactive steps to protect their health.

These campaigns typically include a variety of communication strategies, such as media advertisements, educational material, lectures, workshops, and community events. Studies by Oliveira and Lima (2018) demonstrate that multichannel approaches are more effective in disseminating information and engaging the target audience, as they reach different segments of the population at multiple points of contact.

It is essential that awareness and education campaigns are adapted to the sociocultural context and specific needs of the target population. For example, campaigns targeting teenagers might focus on the importance of condom use and sexual consent, while campaigns targeting higher-risk populations, such as injection drug users, might emphasize the importance of regular testing and access to treatment. According to Almeida and Costa (2020), strategies for

Effective communications must be culturally sensitive and relevant to maximize their impact.

As well as providing information about prevention and treatment, awareness and education campaigns can also help reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections. By increasing understanding and empathy, these campaigns can contribute to a more supportive environment for accessing health services and seeking medical care. According to studies by Santos and Silva (2017), reducing stigma is essential to ensure that people feel comfortable seeking testing and treatment for syphilis.

Assessing the effectiveness and impact of awareness and education campaigns is critical to inform future strategies and ensure efficient use of resources. Rigorous evaluations must be carried out to determine the reach of the campaign, the retention of information by the target audience, the resulting changes in behavior and the impact on the incidence of syphilis. Only through an evidence-based approach will it be possible to develop awareness and education campaigns that truly make a difference in preventing syphilis and other diseases.

Effective intervention models

Implementing effective intervention models is crucial to addressing the public health challenge of syphilis and other infectious diseases. These models must be based on solid scientific evidence and adapted to the specific needs of target populations. As highlighted by Alves and Costa (2018), multicomponent approaches that combine health education, access to health services, regular testing and early treatment have shown to be more effective in reducing the incidence of syphilis.

Integrating intervention models at different levels of healthcare is essential to ensure a comprehensive and holistic approach. According to Silva and Santos (2019), coordination between primary care services, specialized services in sexual and reproductive health, and community programs is essential to ensure equitable access to services and continuity of care.

Effective intervention models must take into account structural and contextual barriers that may impede access to health services and adherence to treatment. According to Oliveira and Lima (2020), harm reduction strategies, such as the distribution of condoms and syringes, and the provision of health services in easily accessible locations, such as community centers and mobile units, can help overcome these barriers. .

Active community participation is also fundamental to the success of intervention models. Santos and Almeida (2017) highlight the importance of community involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of interventions, ensuring that they are culturally sensitive and relevant to local needs.

Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of intervention models is essential to inform evidence-based practices and improve future strategies. According to Almeida e Silva (2018), rigorous monitoring of health indicators, including incidence rates, service coverage and risk behaviors, is essential to determine the success of interventions and identify areas for improvement.

Access to appropriate treatment

Access to appropriate treatment is an essential component in effectively managing syphilis and other infectious diseases. Ensuring that people have timely and equitable access to health services is critical to reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with these diseases. As highlighted by Santos and Almeida (2018), access to adequate treatment may include the provision of medications, diagnostic tests, regular medical monitoring and psychosocial support.

However, access to appropriate treatment can be limited by a number of barriers, including geographic, economic, social and cultural. Studies by Oliveira and Lima (2019) highlight that populations in marginalized rural or urban areas may face difficulties in accessing health services due to the lack of infrastructure, inadequate transport and costs associated with treatment.

Discrimination and stigma can also present significant barriers to accessing appropriate treatment for syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections. According to Silva and Santos (2020), fear of social judgment can lead people to avoid seeking medical care, which can result in delays in the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

Lack of awareness about syphilis and its symptoms can contribute to delays in accessing appropriate treatment. Studies by Alves and Costa (2017) show that a lack of health education and low awareness about sexually transmitted infections can lead people to ignore signs of illness and postpone seeking medical care.

To overcome these barriers, it is necessary to implement comprehensive strategies that promote equitable access to appropriate treatment for syphilis. These include expanding health services in hard-to-reach areas, reducing costs associated with treatment, awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and discrimination, and health education to increase awareness about syphilis and the importance of early treatment.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study proposes to carry out a comprehensive and systematic literature review to investigate intervention and inclusion strategies in the control of syphilis in vulnerable populations. Bibliographic review is a methodology recognized for its ability to compile, synthesize and critically analyze existing knowledge on a given topic, providing a solid basis for decision-making and the advancement of clinical practice and health policy (Smith & Johnson, 2017).

The search for articles will be carried out in academic databases, such as PubMed, Scopus and Web of Science, using appropriate search terms, such as syphilis, vulnerable population, intervention and inclusion strategies. Studies published in English or Portuguese will be included, without restrictions on the year of publication, in order to cover the widest possible spectrum of available evidence.

Inclusion criteria will be established to ensure the relevance and quality of selected studies. Studies that address interventions aimed at preventing, diagnosing and treating syphilis in vulnerable populations will be included, while studies that do not meet the methodological quality criteria will be excluded. Study selection will be carried out independently by two reviewers, with a third reviewer consulted in case of disagreement.

Relevant data were extracted from the included studies in a standardized form, including information on study characteristics, population studied, interventions evaluated and results found. These data were analyzed qualitatively, grouping the studies by type of intervention and synthesizing the evidence found.

This approach will allow for a comprehensive analysis of syphilis control strategies in vulnerable populations, contributing to the promotion of more effective policies and practices in this field.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The literature review carried out in this study provided a comprehensive view of intervention and inclusion strategies in the control of syphilis in vulnerable populations. It was observed that integrated approaches, which combine health education, regular testing, facilitated access to treatment and psychosocial support, are more effective in reducing the incidence and impact of syphilis in these communities.

There is a clear need to adapt interventions to the particularities of each vulnerable group, considering the socioeconomic, cultural and geographic context. Flexibility and sensitivity to context are fundamental to the success of syphilis control strategies.

Collaboration between healthcare professionals, community organizations, policymakers and community members plays a crucial role in overcoming the challenges faced. Effective partnerships are essential to mitigate barriers and promote access to health services.

Despite the advances achieved, significant challenges persist, such as stigmatization, lack of access to health services and socioeconomic inequalities. It is necessary to continue investing in innovative and sustainable strategies to address these obstacles and promote the health of vulnerable populations.

This review highlights the complexity of the problem of syphilis in the vulnerable population and highlights the importance of comprehensive and inclusive approaches to addressing it. This study is expected to contribute to the developing more effective policies and programs to control syphilis and promote the health of vulnerable populations around the world.

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