
RESILIENCE AND AGING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL CLASSES¹

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ABSTRACT. The growth in the number of elderly people in Brazil and around the world is a reality in socio-demographic statistics. This factor is a result of advances for the access to health services, as well as the treatment of some diseases that has provided greater longevity and life expectancy. Thus, resilience is an important psychosocial construct that enables the facing of adversities in the old age. This research aimed to study and compare the levels of resilience among elderly people of different social classes (low-income and high-income). The sample consisted of 20 elders, including men and women of both classes with ages ranging 61-84 years ($M = 67, 75$ SD = 6.17). In the contact with the participants, instruments were used, such as sociodemographic questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. For the analysis of semi-structured interview, Bardin content analysis was used. From the data of this research, it could be noticed that the elderly of both groups reported difficulties arising from the old age period, but the two are provided with ideas and resources to overcome the obstacles that life presents. It is expected that the survey data can support new researches, with the aim of adding innovative data regarding resilience in old age, with older people from different social classes, considering the scarcity of publications related to this topic and the limitations of this study.

Keywords: Resilience; aging; social classes.

RESILIÊNCIA E VELHICE: UM ESTUDO COMPARATIVO ENTRE IDOSOS DE DIFERENTES CLASSES SOCIAIS

RESUMO. O crescimento no número de idosos no Brasil e no mundo é uma realidade nas estatísticas sociodemográficas. Tal fator é resultado do avanço no acesso aos serviços socio sanitários, bem como ao tratamento de algumas doenças que têm propiciado maior longevidade e esperança de vida. Desse modo, a resiliência é um constructo psicossocial importante que possibilita enfrentamento das adversidades na velhice. A presente investigação teve como objetivos principais estudar e comparar os níveis de resiliência entre idosos de diferentes classes sociais (baixa renda e alta renda). A amostra foi composta por 20 idosos, entre eles, homens e mulheres, de ambas as classes sociais, com idades que variam de 61 a 84 anos ($M=67, 75$ DP= 6,17). No contato com os participantes, foram utilizados instrumentos como questionários sociodemográficos e entrevistas semiestruturadas. Para a análise da entrevista semiestruturada, foi empregada a análise de conteúdo de Bardin. A partir dos dados desta pesquisa, pode-se verificar que os idosos de ambos os grupos relataram dificuldades decorrentes do período da velhice, porém tanto o de nível social baixo como o de alto estão munidos de ideias e recursos para superar os empecilhos que a vida apresenta. Espera-se que os dados da presente pesquisa possam subsidiar novas investigações, com o escopo de somar dados inovadores, referentes à resiliência na velhice com idosos de diferentes classes sociais, considerando-se a escassez de publicações relacionadas a esse tema e as limitações deste estudo.

Palavras-chave: Resiliência; velhice; classes sociais.

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RESILIENCIA Y VEJEZ: UN ESTUDIO ENTRE PERSONAS MAYORES DE DIFERENTES CLASES SOCIALES

RESUMEN. El aumento en el número de personas mayores en Brasil y en el mundo entero es una realidad en las estadísticas socio-demográficas. Este factor es el resultado de los avances en el acceso a los servicios sociales y sanitarios, así como el tratamiento de algunas enfermedades que ha proporcionado una mayor longevidad y la esperanza de vida. Por lo tanto, la capacidad de recuperación es un importante constructo psicosocial que permite enfrentar a las adversidades en la vejez. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo estudiar y comparar los niveles de resiliencia entre las personas mayores de diferentes clases sociales (de bajos y altos ingresos). La muestra está formada por 20 personas de edad avanzada, incluyendo hombres y mujeres de ambas clases con edades entre 61-84 años ($M = 67.75$; $DT = 6.17$). En contacto con los participantes, instrumentos fueron utilizados como cuestionarios sociodemográficos y entrevistas semiestructuradas. Para el análisis de la entrevista semiestructurada se utilizó para el análisis de contenido de Bardin. A partir de los datos de esta investigación, se puede observar que los ancianos de ambos grupos informaron de las dificultades derivadas de período de la vejez, pero tanto el bajo nivel social como de alto, están provistos de ideas y recursos para superar los obstáculos que la vida presenta. Se espera que los datos de la encuesta pueden apoyar esta nueva investigación, con el objetivo de añadir innovadora capacidad de recuperación de datos en la vejez con las personas mayores de diferentes clases sociales, teniendo en cuenta la escasez de publicaciones relacionadas con este tema y las limitaciones de este estudio.

Palabras-clave: Resiliencia; Vejez; Clases Sociales.

Introduction

The growth of number of older people is a worldwide reality (Araújo & Fernández-Rouco, 2016; Debert, 2016). This fact is due to a higher access to social and sanitary services and the consequent increase of life expectancy, causing a significant raise of the old population in Brazil and in the world (Araújo, Amaral, & Sá, 2014; Araújo & Fernández-Rouco, 2016).

It is known that the developed countries first increased economically to cause the increase of their elderly population (Mota, 2014). In Brazilian reality, the opposite process occurred: the elderly were added to the age pyramid without an accumulation of richness to face the psychosocial disparity in old age (Santos et al., 2016).

The aging process has complex representations and concerns the increase of the number of lived years (Mota, 2014). Therefore, the present study aims to understand how resilience acts on the aging process among elders of different social classes. It is a comparison of the ways of living and the skills to face the adversity that elders of different classes or social levels (low income and high income) present. Thus, the term senescence or normal aging concerns the evolutionary and irreversible process, at which, as years pass or the age increases, individuals will go through some transformations, presenting dysfunctions due to the body changes, common to everyone who turns old (Ciosak, et al., 2011; Papalia & Feldman, 2016). Many times, aging is analyzed from a negative point of view, being considered as a simple, gradual and inevitable process of decline, economic unproductiveness and failure placed in life course (Regolin & Karnikowski, 2009).

Therefore, being old in a society in which the young body and the work force is the highest economic value, contributes to the emergence of different forms of social vulnerabilities in old age (Santos et al., 2016). It should be highlighted that the gender and the social class structure the expectancies and mold the social action in old age (Motta, 2015); women who are widowers, single, separated or divorced are more likely to live in poor conditions (Papalia & Feldman, 2016). This fact boosts the scientific researches to understand the relation among the socioeconomic factors related to the capacity to face the adversities of old age.

A relevant psychosocial construct to comprehend the mechanisms for overcoming adversities in old age is resilience. Resilience is defined as an acquired resistance to adversities or to psychosocial risks (Araújo, Teva, & Bermúdez, 2015; Coimbra & Moraes, 2015). Such phenomenon requires the attention to

a number of psychological issues, without being based upon only an individual's positive fact, but with a careful analysis of other determining factors (Rutter, 1999). For psychology, it is related to the personal resources, which lead to adaptive behavior, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and the capacity to solve problems. They act as protective factors before adversities (Rutter, 1987).

The interpersonal relations of modern life causes the human being to go through some kind of adversity during life (Araújo et al., 2015). Those adversities vary a lot, and can be an argument with the spouse, for example, or the end of a relationship, or even the death of a beloved one, or the loss of possessions in a natural disaster. This way, certain situations, for some, may be so traumatic that it be impossible for the individual to keep living. For others, facing difficulties is part of a process that is more elaborate, once the subject can be able to face the difficult moments and keep living despite of them (Angst, 2009).

In this study, resilience is not considered to be a trait, or, better, it is not seen as something that stems exclusively from the traits that the individual has; it also depends on the changes that occur in the spaces of each person, in the places where people exchange experiences (Araújo et al., 2015). It can be understood by means of physiological responses or through the modifications that occur in the body that responds to external stimuli. It will depend on each one's individual experiences (Rutter, 2007).

This process involves succeeding, when it refers to the individuals' development. The resilient human being starts to progress, win and evolve, becoming able to adapt before the circumstances offered to them, even if they are exposed to adverse situations. An interaction between genetics and environment occurs (Ungar, 2011). Many researchers agree with the point of view that the process of facing adverse situations is related to biological issues of each individual under constant influence of the social environment where the relations changes take place.

This study becomes relevant as it sheds light on some issues, like the influence that the income has on people's health or welfare, more specifically on the elders, and its relationship with resilience. To guide the research, data from *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios* (PNAD – "National Research by Home Sampling") was used for a previous study on the family income, which comprises the lowest one, including people who own up to 1 minimum wage; Intermediate 1, from two to five minimum wages; Intermediate 2, from five to ten minimum wages; and the high range, corresponding to 10 or more minimum wages (Singer, 2015). Considering what has been exposed, the investigation aimed to study and compare the resilience level among elders of different social classes (low income and high income).

Method

Investigation Locus

The present investigation was performed in an *Unidade Básica de Saúde* (UBS – "Basic Health Unit"). It is worth to mention that the data collection from elders of high social classes was carried out in public places, such as universities, squares, gymnasiums, shopping malls, among other locations, respecting the criterion observed in the literature regarding the delimitations of social classes proposed by PNAD (Singer, 2015).

Investigation Type

This is an *ex post facto* qualitative and quantitative research, which uses transversal data.

Participants

The sample was composed of elders of two groups of different social classes (low and high); each group had 10 people of both genders. The delimitation indicator used was an age equal or above 60 (sixty) years old, in which people are considered to be elderly, according to *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE, 2014 – "Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics"). The participants

of the research within the class considered low have an age average ranging from 64 to 84 years; for the high-class participants, the age average ranges from 61 to 71 years. In total, the ages of the participants varied between 61 and 84 years ($M = 67, 75$ and $DP = 6.17$).

Table 1

Sociodemographic characteristics of the elders of both social classes

Low class	(%)	High class	(%)
Gender		Gender	
Women	60%	Women	40%
Men	40%	Men	60%
Schooling		Schooling	
Without studies	10%	Without studies	0%
Primary school	60%	Primary school	0%
Secondary School	30%	Secondary School	10%
Graduated	0%	Graduated	90%
Other	0%	Other	0%
Occupation		Occupation	
Housekeeper	30%	Housekeeper	0%
Public servant	20%	Public servant	90%
Other	50%	Other	10%
Monthly income		Monthly income	
1 Minimum wage	70%	1 Minimum wage	0%
2 minimum wages	30%	2 Minimum wages	0%
3 a 4 minimum wages	0%	3 a 4 Minimum wages	0%
5 or more minimum wages	0%	5 or more Minimum wages	100%

Instruments

The following instruments were applied: 1) Sociodemographic questionnaire, to obtain the information on gender, age, marital status, schooling, ethnicity, income, housing and health situation, to delineate the participants' profile and 2) Semistructured interview, aiming at understanding the elders' perception on the self-perception and the facing of adversities.

Procedures

The research was evaluated by the *Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa* (CEP – “Ethics Research Committee”), being approved under the *Certificado de Apresentação para Apreciação Ética* (CAAE – “Certificate of Presentation to Ethics Evaluation”): 52615115115.3.0000.5669. After the approval by CEP, the two groups of elders were informed about it, so that the data collection could start.

After that, the elders who agreed to participate of the research were asked to sign the consent form – TCLE. Individually, each participant received, from the researcher, information about the term, the research and the implications of his/her participation, together with the monitoring provided until the end

of the research. The term contains information regarding the research, as well as the proper explanations about the voluntary participation. The participant, in a free way, decided whether to participate of the study, being aware about the possibility to quit, without any harm.

A semistructured research was carried out. During it, the participants could describe their experiences from the point of view proposed by the researcher, giving free and spontaneous responses. The questions prepared for the interview considered the theoretical support of the investigation, together with the information regarding the social phenomenon collected (Bauer & Gaskell, 2016). Taking these points into account, the following questions were created: 1) *What are the main problems faced in your daily life?*; 2) *How do you react towards the problems of life?*; and 3) *How do you see your aging process?*. The application of the instruments lasted, in average, approximately 30 minutes to each subject. There were not records of any refusals to participate of the investigation.

Data analysis

The data of the semistructured interview were treated according to the Content Analysis of Bardin (2016). This method adds up to the techniques of communication exploration, which use systematic and objective procedures to describe the messages' content, provided by means of the stories acquired (Bardin, 2016). Finally, descriptive statistics were used by means of the software SPSS, version 22, to obtain the sociodemographic data of both studied groups.

Results and discussion

The data obtained from the analyses of the interviews with the elders generated three thematic categories: 1) Problems faced in old age; 2) Ways to face old age adversities 3) Psychosocial conceptions about old age. The categories had nine subcategories in total. Regarding the first category, related to the problems faced in old age, the following subcategories were found: psychological distress, physiological distress and social distress. In the second thematic category, concerning the ways to face the adversities in old age, the following categories can be highlighted: socio-cultural activities and the individual resources. Finally, there is the third thematic category on the psychosocial conceptions about old age, with the following subcategories: vitality, senescence and adversities.

Table 2

Problems faced in old age

Subcategories	Low-income elders		High-income elders	
	F	%	F	%
Psychological distress	19	53	11	30
Physiological distress	08	22	01	03
Social distress	09	25	24	67
Total	36	100%	36	100

In the first category, regarding *Problems faced in old age*, it was demonstrated that the elders of both social classes have difficulties stemming from the normal aging (senescence). The issue related to psychological distress appeared in a higher proportion, with 53% (understood as the presence of signs and symptoms: anxiety, depression, low self-esteem in old age) among the elders of the low class (see Table 2). Regarding the elders of the high class, the subcategory social distress (understood as the social living of the old age: dealing with the negative stereotypes, the prejudices, lower social status and the depreciation of old age) had a greater proportion, with 67% of the thematic units. While the low class elders highlighted the psychological distress, with speeches representing the suffering caused by the psychological problems, the fact of missing their relatives, worries about the demands of life, the incapacity to perform daily activities and loneliness. With a smaller frequency, social and physiological exhaustion were highlighted, with references to losses and wins of old age, such as daily struggle, difficulty in the relation with the family, hypertension, intestinal and visual problems.

Within this thematic category, related to problems faced in old age among the elders in a low socioeconomic condition, it was demonstrated that the psychological distress was the most frequent among all the problems that they had along life, such as the change in lifestyle. It contributes to the occurrence of difficulties in their interpersonal relationships. In this sense, it can be supposed that one factor is related to the other, being put that, if a certain elder faces psychological problems, they end up altering their social life negatively. The compromised physiological factors appear, and they can stem from issues characteristic of the senescence process, as well as from the psychological factor, causing psychosomatic diseases (Ciosak et al., 2011; Papalia & Feldman, 2016).

The speech of a male elder, aged 80, when he was questioned about the main problems faced in his aging process can illustrate that: *"I wanna do things and I can't. Being sick, facing diseases and not feeling fine. I'm by myself, far from my family. I miss my children; I have negative thoughts for being lonely. I miss a son to help me"*. By means by what is said, the exhaustion in the psychological factor can be clearly noticed, like the suffering for some impossibilities, the social aspect, such as the lack of social support that causes loneliness, the presence of an illness, occurring then the union of three factors that affect the elderly's life.

As for the data collected among the elders of the high socioeconomic class, some issues concerning social distress appear, such as: facing the chaotic traffic of the city, the lack of politeness and respect among people, the marginality in society, the difficulties to have remunerated activities, difficulties to follow new technologies, difficulties resulting from interpersonal relationships, the lack of safety and the multiple daily tasks that leave family debts. In a smaller proportion, there are the subcategories physiological and psychological distress, with issues like loneliness, annoyances, stress, insomnia and the body tiredness.

It can be verified on the speech of a 69-year-old male Elder, when he listed the main problems faced in daily life: *"I have trouble facing the chaotic traffic in the city; people don't respect the others' rights, the growing marginality caused by the lack of opportunities and the bad behavior of the others"*. A priori, it can be inferred, from the speech, that the difficulties faced are related to the social factor; linked to that, the difficulties to deal with those issues, which lead to a compromising of the psychological factors of most subjects.

The human process of aging causes some physiological and functional declines, and they may contribute to frailty and incapacity (Papalia & Feldman, 2016; Seguin & Nelson, 2003). The scientific literature explains the physiological distress as a process inherent to the biological aging during the life course (Araújo & Fernández-Rouco, 2016), fact verified in this research in a higher proportion among the elders of the low socioeconomic class, when compared to the ones of high class.

It must be highlighted that, among the data of this research, the social distress was demonstrated by the elders of both socioeconomic classes, being more evident among the elders of the high socioeconomic class. This factor may contribute to resilient behaviors as an individual protective factor for the elders to deal with their psychosocial issues (Araújo et al., 2015). Given that, the resilient old person may employ favorable contingencies in the try for obtaining individual skills to deal with their

personal difficulties, without avoiding the negative factors, but being able to face their adversities (Araújo et al., 2015; Cowan, Cowan, & Schulz, 1996).

Table 3

Ways to face old age adversities

Subcategories	Low-income elders		High-income elders	
	F	%	F	%
Socio-cultural activities	33	53	16	37
Individual resources	29	47	27	63
Total	62	100	43	100

The second thematic category among the elders concerns the *Ways to face old age adversities*. Two subcategories were identified here: socio-cultural activities and individual resources (see Table 3). The elders of the low socioeconomic class represented 53% of the issues related to socio-cultural activities, a higher level than the one noticed among the elders of the high socioeconomic class, representing 37%. As for the individual resources to face the difficulties noticed because of the senescence in old age, the elders of the low class present a lower level, 47%, with 63% in the high class. These data can be possibly explained by the socioeconomic differences among the elders, for our current economic model does not provide access to the same material and spiritual goods to everyone. This fact may have influenced the way to face the old age for each group investigated.

In the socio-cultural activities, the elders of the low socioeconomic class mentioned their participation in senior living groups, dance groups, physical activities, craft activities, poetry production, talking to close people, being in a work environment, playing soccer and going out with friends as a way to relax. In relation to the subcategory individual resources, some aspects appear, such as: calmness, unwinding, listening to music, showing strength and determination, Faith, optimism, the use of communication means to face the fact of missing beloved people, in a try to have positive thinking in relation to the different situations. It can be understood that the ways to face the old age that the low-income elders have are related to the life conditions of this group, as they look for public psychosocial devices as resources to protect them from the losses of old age. It is known that this group is mainly formed by old women (60%), corroborating a recent publication that shows that old women are more economically dependent and more prone to live in poverty (Papalia & Feldman, 2016).

On the other hand, the elders belonging to the high socioeconomic class present, as socio-cultural activities: driving, looking for activities that require qualified professionals and that can meet their individual demands, going to church, watching movies and listening to music. As for the individual resources, they use some alternatives, for example: patience, love to the others, trying to have a good living with people around them, trying to overcome the difficulties by means of individual resources, with courage, serenity and calmness to face life. It is worth to highlight that 90% of the elders of the high class are graduated, fact that has certainly influenced them to use individual resources (self mechanisms) to face the losses and gains inherent to the aging processes.

The elders of the low socioeconomic class participate in socio-cultural activities, also having individual resources to face their difficulties. Taking part of activities that provide social relations with the others was a frequent factor. In this sense, this corroborates what has been noticed about the resilience factor and the ways to face the difficulties by participating of different contexts, allowing the exchange, by means of the interpersonal relations, causing the individual will for the subject and his/her movement towards something that provides him/her pleasure in life.

This analysis category can be verified in a speech excerpt from a 65-year-old woman, in which strategies to face the life problems in the old age are highlighted: *"I try to talk, look for my friends, tell stories and jokes, listen to music, watch TV and movies, do physical exercises at the square, take part of a senior group, for there I have dance and stretching practice"*.

Nevertheless, an old man, at the age of 61, of the high socioeconomic class, demonstrated his strategy to overcome the adversities of the aging process this way: *"First, recognizing that it exists, and then absorb the idea of it, work on it and just then overcome it. Therefore, I use music as a ludic recomposition form. I like to try the available resources for they are something concrete. I like yoga, reading. Yoga helps on breathing, and breathing is life; by means of it, I control my sleep and the tiredness for conducting life well. I believe in the spiritual side. Yoga contributes not only to the physical part, but also to the spiritual one, I mean, it ends up contributing to human being's subjective issues as a whole (nowadays I'm a bit apart from it due to the lack of time)"*.

The current state-of-the-art claims that resilience is the capacity that the individual has to solve his daily demands in a positive way, despite of the difficulties; such capacity is part of the skills of the individual himself, from his family, cultural and social environment (Coimbra & Morais, 2015; Noronha, Cardoso, & Moraes, 2009).

Resilience is developed if the elder feels that he/she is cared of, if the environment where he/she lives makes it possible for him/her to see their his/her importance, if the old person takes care of him/herself, if he/she respects his/her own limitations and, above all, if he/she recognizes that he/she has potential (Araújo et al., 2015). Resilience is not something innate in the human being, but a construction that happens continuously and that is related to various factors, among them, the biological, the social and the cultural ones (Secunho, 2012).

In the socio-cultural activities of the elders of both socioeconomic classes, the social exchanges are kept during the life course. The elder is not the one who participates, but all the people who are part of their living during the realization of the tasks, which happen direct or indirectly. Resilience can be constructed and lived with the subject's reserves or skills, stemming from his/her individual resources, added to the activities of the social environment, where relations are exchanged.

As can be verified in Table 4, this research also demonstrates data regarding Conceptions about the old age. Three subcategories were raised: *vitality, senescence and adversities*. The elders of the low socioeconomic class, as well as the ones of the high class, presented a high level of vitality, without much difference between the groups, being 53% for the low class, and 57% of the high class (higher level). In relation to the aging process and the facing of the adversities, there have not been significant differences.

In the issues related to vitality, the elders of the low socioeconomic class raised issues like: being autonomous to realize their daily activities, willingness to their daily activities, comparing to the past, when they were young, they see the passing of the years in a positive way, added to good expectations, determination and will to face the difficulties that are always present. For the high class, examples of vitality include being in full activity, being active (always doing physical exercises), participating of activities like yoga and meditation, which contributes to the spiritual welfare.

Table 04*Psychosocial conceptions about old age*

Subcategories	Low-income elders		High-income elders	
	F	%	F	%
Vitality	18	53	28	57
Senescence	06	18	08	16
Adversities	10	29	13	27
Total	34	100	49	100

In the subcategory senescence, the elders of the low socioeconomic class reported issues like: health problems that appear due to the transformations related to the aging, changes of the appearance such as dry skin and white hair. The elders of the high class mention: a natural process of the human being and the reduction of physical strength.

As for the adversities, the elders of the low class mention the following aspects: discouragement, discomfort, lack of structure to face the problems, suffering and reduction of years to be lived. However, the elders of the high class show aspects like facing the wear of the body, which is becoming more fragile, facing diseases, the impossibility to perform daily activities, the acceptance of their conditions, with the realization of aging in a natural way.

Related to the data exposed on the profile of the elders in a lower social level, on the categories and subcategories defined, it is shown that they have a great vitality, which is demonstrated by means of their reports concerning their lifestyles, even facing adversities. They seem to like to be active and do activities that bring them pleasure of living and welfare. The sensation of youth is present, with vitality to perform the different daily tasks, including mental and physical activities.

Both groups place senescence and adversities in the background, presenting a lower percentage compared to vitality. This factor reinforces the idea that even in the middle of the adversities of old age, the elders acquire self resources, such as the young feeling to face life. Below are two reports of elders of both classes.

A 65-year-old woman of low socioeconomic level, when questioned on the way that she sees her old age, says: *"I feel fine, despite of the difficulties; I keep fighting the battles, I have disposition to face the problems, I don't let them put me down, I feel happy"*. Regarding this report, it is noticeable that the old woman has vitality to deal with her daily routine, in spite of the difficulties she goes through. The adversities exist, together with the idea of senescence, but the vitality prevails even before those factors, which is positive for the elderly to face life difficulties.

Another relevant speech is the one of a 62-year-old woman, of high socioeconomic class, who, after being questioned on how she sees her old age, reports: *"My appearance shows me that I'm going old, but I don't feel old because I'm in full activity, I like to use technology in my free time to chat with my children and grandchildren. I see myself as an active person, and not as a disabled one. I do varied activities just like I did when I was young. Only my appearance shows my age, for I have the same energy I had when I was young. It's all about being used to. I've been used to working since early age, for I was encouraged by my parents. I always take care of the family and work with everything, I do activities like*

sewing, cooking, handcraft, deal with many people, paint the house, do embroidering, knot, cut hair, wash the car, clean the house”.

Resilience is a mediating and protective element. By means of it, stress is confronted, as well as depression and anxiety problems and the traumas that the individual acquires because of the negative events lived, among others. It also prevents physical diseases. People can be resilient, even if they live in a psychosocially vulnerable environment (Araújo et al., 2015).

For the elders of both social classes, overcoming is the main measure to be adopted before the facing strategies. Overcoming is winning and acquiring courage, having capacity to keep living, in spite of the difficulties. In the old age, calmness (low class) and maturity (high class), are present, adding positive aspects that surpass the negative ones.

Both groups present problems that stem from the old age period, like psychological and physiological distress, which occur more frequently in the low class. The elders of the high class present more factors that are related to the social distress. The socio-cultural activities are more common for the elders of the low class. It is worth to mention that the elders of the high class use individual resources (of the own elder), as strategies to face life adversities.

From the data set of this research, we have not observed significant differences between the investigated groups. In first place, it can be highlighted that the elders of both groups constructed a positive self-perception on their aging process, independently from the belonging to one or another socioeconomic class, or the access to the differentiated socio-sanitary services to each group of elders. In second place, it is worth to mention that facing adversities (resilience) in the old age was present in both groups, as a resource to deal with the losses inherent to the human aging.

Final considerations

The present study aimed to identify the resilience in the old age in a comparative form, between elders of different socioeconomic classes (low income and high income). In this sense, the data collected among the elderly of both groups present positive aspects before the negative life stimuli within the sociocultural context of each group.

It is considered that the differences inherent to the psychosocial context of the elders of both classes and each one's singularity reflect on a broad context, which shows different forms of expression. Therefore, it can be concluded that the elders who are in a low socioeconomic level, as well as the ones who are in a better financial condition present factors (resilience) to overcome life course adversities. The positive aspects surpass the negative ones.

It is important to highlight an important aspect of this investigation. Most elders belonging to the low socioeconomic class do activities more related to the psychosocial devices and of public health, while the ones of the high socioeconomic class do not take part of the same context, with a significant difference as for the resources used by both groups. Nevertheless, both groups try to find ways to overcome the adversities within their own social environment.

The present study has limitations, once the data are restricted to a small number of participants in specific sociocultural contexts. Because of that, parsimoniously, the results cannot be generalized to other sociocultural contexts and populational groups. However, it is expected that such data can be basis for new investigations, with more populational comprehensiveness, as well as future psychogerontological interventions that aim to reduce the negative stereotypes and the prejudice against the old age, and increase the positive conceptions and the ways to face the adversities inherent to the process of human aging. Finally, future investigations that relate sociodemographic variable, such as schooling level, gender and people with whom the old people live with the ways to face life adversities (resilience) among elders of different socioeconomic contexts are suggested.

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