

RESEARCH ARTICLE

EVALUACIÓN DE LA EFECTIVIDAD DE UN PROGRAMA EDUCATIVO PARA LA PROMOCIÓN DEL CRECIMIENTO ESPIRITUAL EN CUIDADORES INFORMALES DE PERSONAS CON DISCAPACIDAD - REGIONAL PAMPLONA

EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE PROMOTION OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN INFORMAL CAREGIVERS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - PAMPLONA REGION

Mayra Alejandra Barajas Lizarazo ¹ , Laura Elisa Gutiérrez Pliego ² , Cesar Andrés Gómez Acosta ³ 

Recibido: 15 de enero de 2025.

Aprobado: 15 de Marzo de 2025

RESUMEN

Introducción: La espiritualidad es un componente importante del ser humano. Se establece que potenciar el sentido y propósito de vida influye en el bienestar y calidad de vida de las personas. **Objetivo:** Evaluar la efectividad de un programa educativo para la promoción del crecimiento espiritual en cuidadores informales de personas con Discapacidad de la Regional de Pamplona. **Metodología:** Estudio cuasiexperimental que contó con una fase descriptiva en la que se aplicó el instrumento HPLP-II a una muestra de 308 cuidadores informales. A partir de los resultados, se identificaron los 39 cuidadores más afectados, asignándose 20 al grupo de control y 19 al grupo de intervención. Posteriormente, se diseñó un protocolo de intervenciones, las cuales fueron evaluadas al finalizar el estudio. **Resultados:** En la fase descriptiva se encontró que el 87,7% de los cuidadores se ubicaron en la categoría “algunas veces realizan prácticas que fomenten el crecimiento espiritual” y el 12,66% no realizan prácticas saludables. En la fase de intervención se encontró que al analizar descriptivamente las diferencias de medias con la prueba *T Student* se encontraron resultados estadísticamente significativos

¹ Universidad Internacional Iberoamericana. mayra.barajas@doctorado.unini.edu.mx.

² Universidad Internacional Iberoamericana. México

³ PhD in Psychology, Universidad Católica de Colombia, Universidad de Pamplona.

How to cite this article: Cano-Barrios Allison, Huerta-González Sara, De La Hoz-Quintero Cristian, Montes-Mosquera Claudeth, De Arco-Castrillón Ángela, Characterization and Attitudes Towards Gender-Based Violence in Nursing Students in Colombia 2024. Revista Ciencias Básicas En Salud, 3(1):1-17. April 2025, ISSN 2981-5800.



en el post intervención y en el grupo experimental al compararlos con el grupo control. **Conclusión:** Al evaluar el programa de intervenciones educativas se encontró un mejor desempeño en las prácticas espirituales en los cuidadores después de las intervenciones desarrolladas.

Palabras clave: Espiritualidad, cuidadores, efectividad, actividades educativas.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Spirituality is a vital component of being human. It is established that enhancing the meaning and purpose of life influences people's well-being and quality of life. **Objective:** To evaluate the effectiveness of an educational program to promote spiritual growth in informal caregivers of people with disabilities in the Pamplona Region. **Methodology:** Quasi-experimental study that had a descriptive phase in which the HPLP-II instrument was applied to a sample of 308 informal caregivers. Based on the results, the thirty-nine most affected caregivers were identified, twenty being assigned to the control group and nineteen to the intervention group. Subsequently, a protocol of interventions was designed, which were evaluated at the end of the study. **Results:** In the descriptive phase it was found that 87.7% of the caregivers were in the category “they sometimes carry out practices that promote spiritual growth” and 12.66% do not conduct healthy practices. In the intervention phase it was found that when descriptively analyzing the differences in means with the Student T test, statistically significant results were found in the post-intervention and the experimental group when compared with the control group. **Conclusion:** When evaluating the educational intervention program, better performance in spiritual practices was found in caregivers after the interventions developed.

Keywords: Spirituality, caregivers, effectiveness, educational activities.

INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is considered an important dimension of the human being and constitutes a lifestyle that influences people's health (Bueno-Castellanos et al., 2020). The literature reveals that contemporary spirituality involves the

development of an individual process encompassing happiness, values, health, and well-being (Cornejo-Valle et al., 2019). Within this context, this dimension—which helps give meaning and purpose to life—is the capacity to transcend, move forward, and maintain a meaningful relationship

with a higher being (Muriel et al., 2019).

Nola Pender, a pioneer in including the dimension of spiritual growth in the health promotion model, highlights that spirituality is a protective factor that people use to optimize their internal resources in order to be in harmony with human existence (Sakraida, 2007). In fact, Tirro-Arias's study (2023) mentions that for caregivers, spirituality is a fundamental mechanism for coping with life's crises and problems.

In this regard, various studies have shown that informal caregivers who engaged in activities to enhance spirituality, such as religious practices, experienced improved mood and were better able to cope with stress, anxiety, and fears (Barbosa & Romero, 2008; Britt et al., 2023). Indeed, it has been established that strengthening caregivers' relationship with a Higher Being contributes to fostering an optimistic purpose in life (Lorenzo, 2018).

Indeed, spiritual growth becomes an important factor for caregivers of people with disabilities, as it fosters hope, provides comfort, and helps them better cope with the demands of their daily activities, such as sleep disturbances, fatigue, and anxiety (Álvarez-Tello & Morales-Asencio, 2007; Parra et al., 2023; Ross et al., 2016).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of an educational program aimed at promoting spiritual growth in caregivers of people with disabilities from the Pamplona Regional area, Norte de Santander.

METODOLOGY

This is a quantitative quasi-experimental study aimed at informal caregivers from the Pamplona Regional area, Norte de Santander.

For the descriptive phase, the sample was selected through non-probabilistic convenience sampling; the group consisted of 308 informal caregivers.



The 'Spiritual Growth' dimension, composed of 6 questions, was used from the health-promoting lifestyle profile II (HPLP-II) instrument, which contains a total of 52 questions.

Procedure and data collection

The questions from the 'Spiritual Growth' dimension were entered into Google Forms, along with the informed consent form and the evaluation of sociodemographic characteristics; each participant voluntarily and autonomously completed the requested information.

The survey team received one week of training on research instrument application techniques. After data collection was completed, the Excel database was downloaded for subsequent analysis, identifying the caregivers most affected in the 'Spiritual Growth' dimension according to the author's proposed cutoff value of less than or equal to 103 points.

A total of 39 caregivers were identified as affected. Therefore, 20 were

assigned to the control group and 19 to the intervention group.

Next, the intervention protocol for promoting spirituality in informal caregivers was implemented, focusing on identifying aspects that give meaning to the caregiver's life and providing support to utilize existing strategies that enhance or improve spirituality.

The activities were supported by professionals in psychology, priests, and spiritual missionaries, whose goal was to assist caregivers in exploring their feelings, recognizing the aspects that give meaning to their lives, their goals, qualities, and attributes.

Additionally, support was provided by a priest experienced in promoting spaces for reflection and motivation to face daily life situations through the identification of internal resources that enhance self-care.

To determine if there were changes between the control and experimental groups, the HPLP instrument was

administered again for subsequent analysis, including descriptive statistics, mean differences using the student's t-test, and, complementarily, Cohen's effect size.

RESULTS

Below, Table 1 presents the sociodemographic characteristic variables of the informal caregivers from the Pamplona Regional area,

showing a predominance of adult women, with completed primary education, belonging to socioeconomic stratum one, and holding Catholic religious beliefs.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of informal caregivers.

Sociodemographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	245	79,5
	Male	63	20,5
Life stage	Youth	37	12,0
	Adult	205	66,6
	Older Adult	66	21,4
Religious belief	Catholic Christian	280	90,9
	Non-Catholic Christian	24	7,8
	Christian	4	1,3
Marital status	Married	86	27,9
	Divorced	12	3,9
	Single	128	41,6
	Common-law Union	65	21,1

	Widowed	17	5,5
Education level	Completed primary	127	41,2
	Completed high school	101	32,8
	Technological degree	39	12,7
	Higher education	27	8,8
	None	14	4,5
Social stratum	One	174	56,5
	Two	110	35,7
	Three	23	7,5
	Four	1	0,3
Health System Affiliation Regime (SGSSS)	Contributory	54	17,5
	Subsidized	241	78,2
	Special	3	1,0
	None	3	1,0
Health Provider (EPS)	Coosalud	16	5,2
	Nueva EPS	120	39,0
	Comfaoriente	54	17,5
	Sanitas	83	26,9
	Compensar	17	5,5
	OIM	1	3
	Other	17	5,5
Municipality of residence	Cácota	24	7,8
	Chitagá	43	14,0
	Cucutilla	22	7,1
	Mutiscua	24	7,8
	Pamplona	137	44,5
	Pamplonita	30	9,7

	Silos	28	9,1
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Table 2. Frequencies of the dimension 'Spiritual Growth' in caregivers of people with disabilities.

Healthy Lifestyle - 'Spiritual Growth' Dimension	Never		Sometimes		Frequently		Routinely	
	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%	Fr	%
	29	9,4	118	38,3	98	31,8	63	20,5
Feels you are growing and changing in a positive way	10	3,2	94	30,5	114	37,0	90	29,2
Believes your life has purpose	23	7,5	84	27,3	116	37,7	85	27,6
Looks to the future	14	4,5	102	33,1	123	39,9	69	22,4
Feels satisfied and at peace with yourself	52	16,9	114	37,0	81	26,3	61	19,8
Works towards long-term goals in your life	39	12,7	121	39,3	87	28,2	61	19,8
Finds each day interesting and challenging	21	6,8	93	30,2	99	32,1	95	30,8
Is aware of what is important to your life	36	11,7	97	31,5	90	29,2	85	27,6
Feels united with a force greater than yourself	35	11,4	115	37,3	76	24,7	82	26,6

When performing the correlation analysis, it was identified that the dimension ‘Spiritual Growth’ showed a significant relationship with sex (0.029), education level (0.43), and marital status (0.038).

When developing the protocol related to activities that promote spiritual growth, the items that make up the ‘Spiritual Growth’ dimension were taken into account (Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of sessions for the ‘Spiritual Growth’ Dimension (Sakraida, 2007).

SPIRITUAL GROWTH	
6	I feel that I am growing and changing in a positive way.
12	I believe my life has a purpose.
18	I look forward to the future.
24	I feel satisfied and at peace with myself.
30	I work toward long-term goals in my life.
36	I find each day interesting and challenging (stimulating).
42	I am aware of what is important to me in life.
48	I feel connected to a force greater than myself.
52	I expose myself to new experiences and challenges.

Below, Table 4 presents a generalized overview of the planning of activities and the thematic axes that were developed.

Table 4. Summary of sessions for the ‘Spiritual Growth’ Dimension.

Activity	Content	Duration
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1	Workshops: Exploration of feelings, recognizing aspects that give meaning to life.	60 minutes, 3 sessions
1	Spiritual retreats: support for using existing strategies that enhance or improve spirituality.	60 minutes, 2 sessions
1	Accompanying the caregiver to find himself/herself: valuing significant others, belief in a higher Self, religious practices.	30 minutes, 15 sessions

Additionally, Table 5 shows the comparison between the control group and the experimental group, with the latter demonstrating better performance.

Table 5. Comparison between experimental and control groups of the dimension of spiritual growth proposed by the Nola Pender Model.

FACTOR	Role	Media	DE	Min. Max.	t de Student (sig.)	d de Cohen (I.C. 95%)
Spirituality	Experimental	17.32	4.61	6 - 25	4.12 (<.001)	1.321 (.548-2.07)

Additionally, a comparison between the pre- and post-intervention

measurements of the Model's dimensions was conducted within the experimental group (Table 6).

Table 6. Comparison between Pre and Post in the dimension of spiritual growth.

FACTOR	Rol e	Medi a	DE	Min. Max.	t de Student (sig.)	d de Cohen (I.C. 95%)
Spirituality	Pre	9.21	3.68	2 - 16	5.99 (<.001)	1.94 (1.036-2.83)
	Post	17.32	4.61	6 - 25		

DISCUSSION

The results related to sociodemographic characteristics showed that adult, single, Catholic women with low levels of education reported significant prevalence, which are consistent with findings from other studies (Del Ángel et al., 2020; Donjuan et al., 2023; Raile, 2015). In the present study, prior to the interventions, the caregiver population fell into the category of *sometimes adopting habits that promote spiritual growth*—data similar to those from the study by García and Acosta (2016), in which the instrument was applied to

nursing students. However, these results differ from the majority of studies that found positive outcomes when evaluating spirituality as part of a healthy lifestyle. Among them is a study conducted with 129 informal caregivers, which showed high scores for the dimensions of spirituality and interpersonal relationships (Ross et al., 2020). Likewise, the present study aligns with findings from a pilot study, which reported that the most commonly used coping strategy among this population was spirituality, represented by 80% (Robinson et al., 2021), and also with a study conducted in Quito, Ecuador, in which

participants reported experiencing spiritual growth, represented by 49.8%, correlating it with a sense of coherence and caregiving self-efficacy (Parra et al., 2023). When comparing pre- and post-test measurements in the experimental group, there was an increase of 6.47 points, which demonstrated good performance among caregivers after the interventions. These findings are in line with a study conducted with families, in which results showed a pre-score of 25.57 that increased to 30.85 after the intervention (Díaz & Arias, 2021). Similarly, in the research titled *"Religion, Spirituality, and Coping During the Pandemic: Perspectives of Dementia Caregivers"*, post-intervention results reported prayer habits, reading of religious texts, enhanced spirituality, and improved mood (Britt et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Informal caregivers, after the educational intervention, demonstrated healthy practices in the dimension of spiritual growth. It was evident that the majority of informal

caregivers were women, with primary-level education, single marital status, and the presence of underlying chronic diseases.

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