

Perceptions Of Dementia Among Primary Healthcare Professionals In Brazil: A Qualitative Study

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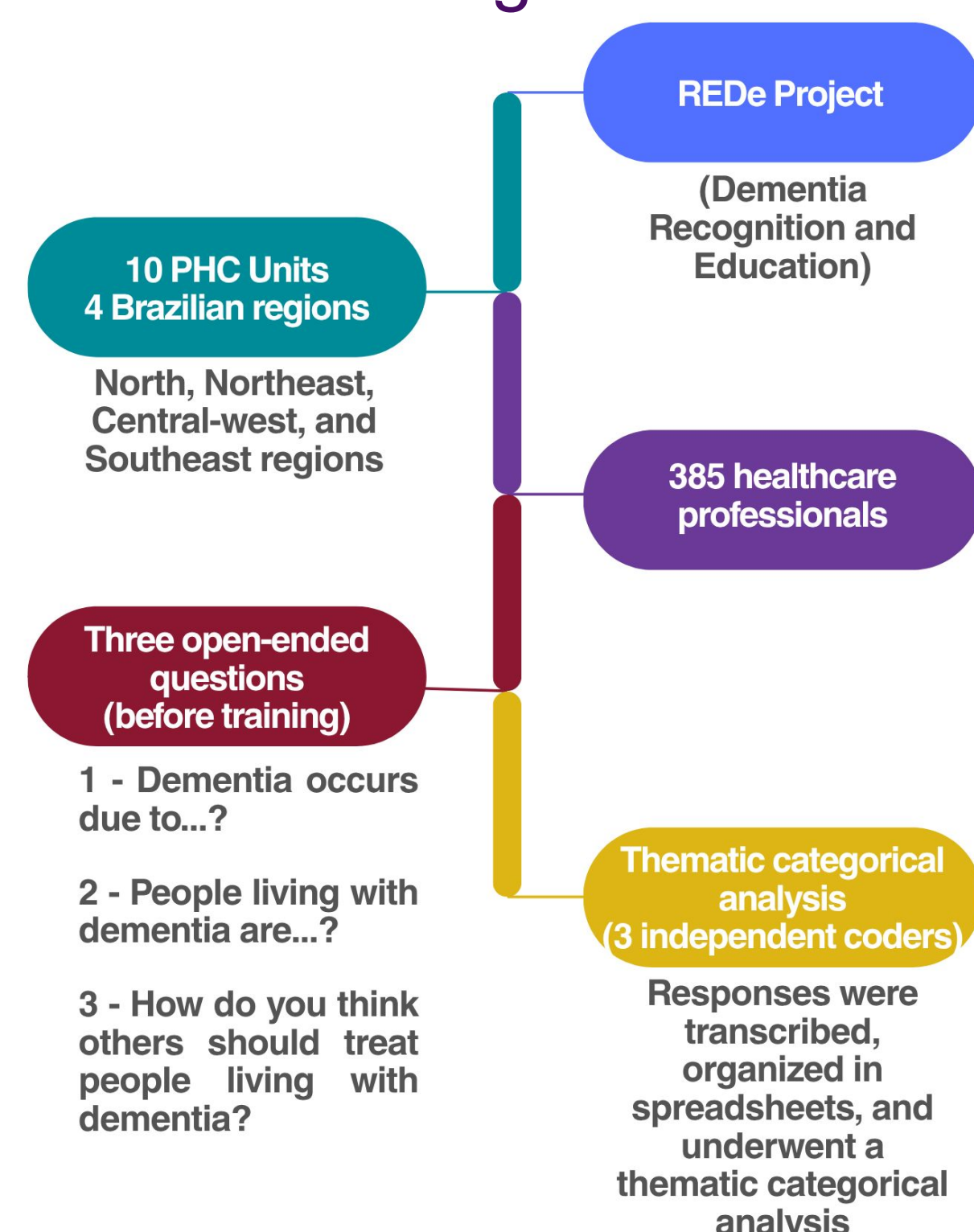
Improving dementia literacy among PHC professionals is a critical step toward better diagnosis, reduced stigma, and higher-quality care for people living with dementia.

INTRODUCTION

Dementia is a major public health challenge, requiring timely recognition and appropriate management across all levels of the healthcare system. Primary Health Care (PHC) professionals play a fundamental role in the early identification and care of people living with dementia (PLWD). However, insufficient knowledge and stigmatising beliefs may negatively affect diagnosis, treatment, and the quality of care. This study explored PHC professionals' perceptions of dementia before participation in an educational training program.

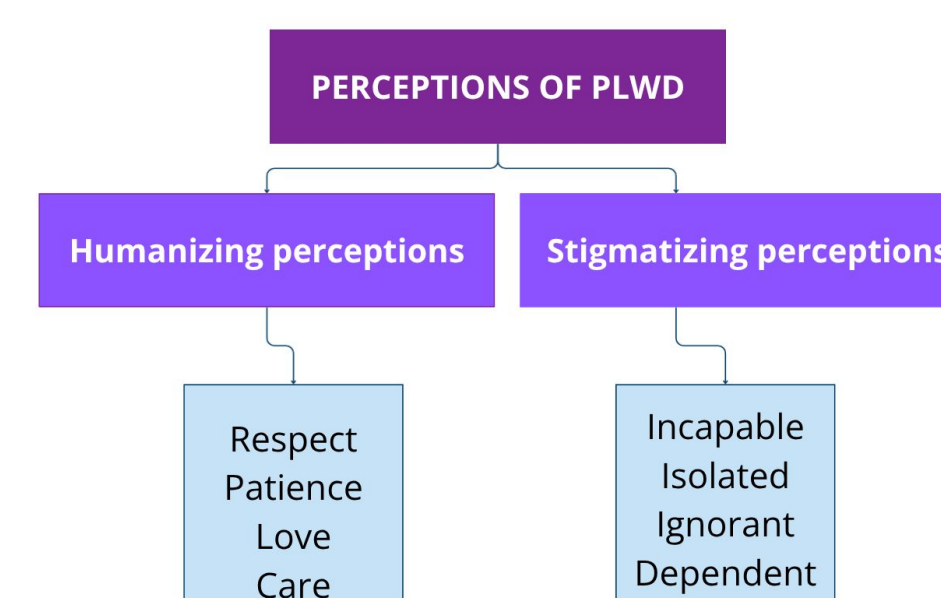
METHODS

Data were analysed qualitatively using brief written responses collected during a training session conducted as part of the REDe study within the ReNaDe2 Programme.



RESULTS

- Mean age: 42.1 years
- 84.6% women
- 73% technical or higher education



Dementia occurs due to...?
 "Brain diseases, and I suppose with old age."
 "Due to the initial memory loss? I don't know."
 "The lack of affection."
 "Excess sugar in the brain—and sometimes one is born that way."

The study is ongoing. Preliminary results show that:

- Dementia was commonly associated with a neurological or brain disease.
- Many participants were unable to identify the cause of dementia or provided vague answers.
- Dementia was frequently considered a normal consequence of aging.
- Perceptions of people living with dementia ranged from person-centered to stigmatizing views.
- Respect and compassion were frequently emphasized, whereas the professionals rarely mentioned specialized dementia care.

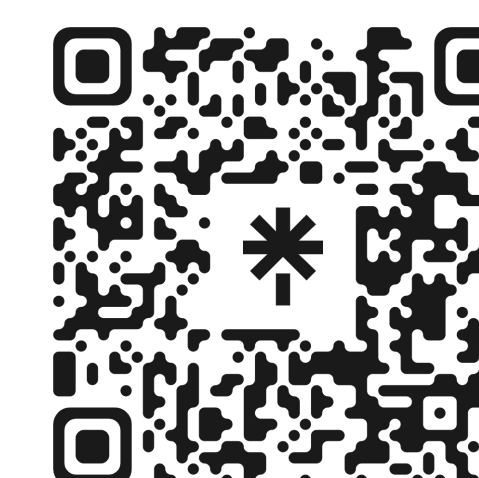
People living with dementia are...?
 "Suffering and sad."
 "People with slowed-down responses."
 "Unable to make coherent decisions."
 "Absent from the present."
 "Sometimes aggressive."

How do you think others should treat people living with dementia??
 "Respectfully."
 "With patience. With empathy."
 "Tailored to your needs, as it requires specialized handling."
 "With much love."
 "With dignity and respect."

Some responses from healthcare professionals

CONCLUSION

Primary Health Care professionals demonstrated important misconceptions regarding dementia etiology, recognition, and management. Continuous professional education is essential to improve early diagnosis, reduce stigma, and strengthen dementia care.



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