

ABSTRACT

This study intended to investigate the hansenian population believes in respect to their illness, to what they know about the disease, as well as the identification of feelings and emotions related to .their experiences in the course of desease. Health believes are ideas, concepts, convictions and attitudes related to both health and illness, and how these variables influen ce health quality.

The theoretic referential driving this investigation constituted in the "Health Believes Model" proposed by ROSENSTOCK²⁹, this Model try to explain a person behavior in face of knowledge and belief about is health, as well as understanding his role in his own health improvement. Based on this referential and adapted to a well-established state of the illness,it is sggested a "Health Believes Model" from patient believes.

The research approach was Humanist-Existential-Per sonalist, concerned to the human being carrying hanseniasis and re- garding man as person capable of feeling, thinking and acting in- dividually.

To identify how hansenians believe about their illness, interviews were developed based on a theoretical referential. The results obtained through this contact patient researcher demonstrate: the knowledge hansenians have about their illness through: the denomination given to the pathology, the way they think they have caught the disease, signs and symptoms noted, how they face the hanseniasis severity and cure; feelings and emotions from being hanseniasis carrier; facts and events due to hanseniasis; the actions taken to solve the problem, and in addition, suggestions offered to improve health assistance.

The results reveal that it is essential to understand the human being carrying hanseniasis, as stigmatizing illness in order to assist more effectively in the improvement of health quality, as well as help them to join inward forces to take attitudes more positive regarding their health and illness.

The research suggests the need of newer and deeper study in order to obtain better assistance to the hansenian population and to change the existent prejudice around this illness and the hansenian patient.