

## EDITORIAL

**Long-Term Care: let's reflect on it!**

Worldwide, the observed population aging has profound implications for all public policies, especially health. It is estimated that, in 2050, 20% of the world's population will be over 65 years old, with projections that 80% of the elderly will live in low to middle-income countries<sup>1</sup>, such as Brazil<sup>2</sup>.

In Brazil, since the beginning of this century, the groups of under 15 years of age have been decreasing<sup>3</sup>, while adults and the elderly have grown, and, according to the 2022 Demographic Census, the elderly population (60 years or older) already represents 15.8% of the total population<sup>4</sup>. In addition, there is an epidemiological transition in favor of morbidity and mortality due to chronic-degenerative diseases and their complications that burden health services due to their high cost and expansion of use<sup>2</sup>.

However, in addition to the detection of diseases prevalent in the elderly, which underlie the demand for long-term care (LTC), the need to consider the functional status of the elderly person is emphasized so that care can be provided in a preventive, less expensive and more efficient way<sup>5</sup>.

The demands of LTC in old age configure the realization of access or lack of access to fundamental rights in the course of life. For this reason, the World Health Organization (WHO) warns of the need for a continuum of LTC in the community to be offered at home and in different settings, including long-term care institutions for the elderly (LTCE)<sup>6</sup>, since the response to the growing demand for LTC can no longer be postponed.

The COVID-19 pandemic - which already seems so far away! - made the neglect of the institutionalized elderly population clear, given the high mortality of the elderly in the northern hemisphere<sup>7</sup> and the total invisibility of data and information on the institutionalized elderly population in Brazil<sup>8</sup>.

This edition issue will address themes pertinent to the care of the elderly population that invite reflection and can support public health actions, as well as favoring accessible and appropriate LTC to the Brazilian reality, known for its deep social, racial and gender inequality.

Happy reading!

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