



## **COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK AND ITS REPERCUSSION ON THE COMPREHENSIVE CARE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE**

### **TRABAJO SOCIAL COMUNITARIO Y SU REPERCUSIÓN EN LA ATENCIÓN INTEGRAL DE LAS PERSONAS ADULTAS MAYORES**

Tuárez-Sánchez Enny <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Máster en Trabajo Social. Los Ríos, Ecuador. ennyta44@hotmail.com <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5246-3483>

#### **ABSTRACT:**

The objective of this work was to make a theoretical and practical analysis, on the role of the social worker, in the field of intervention of the elderly, at the same time as it is to know the satisfaction of this priority group with the work performed by community workers during the COVID 19 pandemic, where two variables have been discussed, one of them related to community social work, and within it intervention in support networks, family and state co-responsibility, and the other related to Empathy. Development of skills, technical aids, family co-responsibility, motivation for the comprehensive care of older adults in the Valencia Province of Los Ríos Canton, during the period 2019-2020, for which we have relied on various theories to understand the social problem.

**Keywords:** Community Social Work, Empathy, Communication, Motivation, support network, family co-responsibility.

#### **RESUMEN:**

El objetivo de este trabajo de investigación fue hacer un análisis teórico y práctico, sobre el papel del Trabajador Social, en ámbito de la intervención de las personas adultas mayores, a la vez que se trata de conocer la satisfacción de este grupo prioritario con el trabajo desempeñado por los Trabajadores Sociales Comunitarios durante la pandemia del COVID 19, tratando dos variables una de ellas relacionadas con el Trabajo Social comunitario, y dentro de ella la intervención en redes de apoyo, y corresponsabilidad familia y estado y en la otra temas relacionados con la Empatía. Desarrollo de habilidades, ayudas técnicas, la corresponsabilidad familiar, la motivación para la atención integral de las personas adultas mayores en el Cantón Valencia Provincia de los Ríos, durante el período 2019-2020, se basa en varias teorías para entender la problemática social.

**Palabras Clave:** Trabajo Social Comunitario, Empatía, Comunicación, Motivación, red de apoyo, corresponsabilidad familiar.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research was carried out through an analysis of Social Work in Latin America, in Ecuador and especially the Canton of Valencia Province of Los Ríos, which has allowed me to inquire about community Social Work and the empathy that exists with older adults, to understand the feelings and emotions, experiencing objectively and rationally within family relationships, conflicts and family co-responsibility in the context of the community.

"This approach to intervention, during the life cycle of the elderly, is very important and it must be given in a dynamic and flexible way" (Navarro, 2016, p. 215).

In the province of Los Ríos and within the Canton of Valencia, those who carry out community Social Work are men and women dedicated to social service work, hired to work in social programs and services for attention to priority groups, as is the case of older adults.

In the face of the COVID 19 crisis, a great social, family and community problem has arisen, where the social worker must take on new challenges, and carry out actions and mediation strategies, for intervention,

especially with older adults who are more vulnerable and provide comprehensive care, which guarantees a better quality of life.

One of the actions or strategies is the articulation with the support networks that help the community Social Worker, to assume a commitment with society through the intervention of the elderly so that they can stand out from the emotional and psychological crisis that thinking involves that could be infected in the context of the health crisis of COVID 19, which will help guarantee comprehensive care.

Carrying out activities together with the families aimed at improving their balance and emotional security that will help them maintain their autonomy in the performance of their duties without leaving family co-responsibility behind.

For this research, 206 older adults have been surveyed. The data obtained allowed us to know the level of satisfaction with the services or care programs offered by the State for the elderly, specifically in the framework of the COVID 2019 health emergency.



"Through alternative and transformative proposals that contain creativity and social commitment, which foster a good relationship between the professional and the elderly within the framework of their rights." (Quezada, Rojas, & Sepúlveda, 2018, p. 34)

To establish the problem, the following problem is formulated: How does community Social Work affect comprehensive care for older adults in the Canton of Valencia, Los Ríos province during COVID 19?

This urges to establish an approach to the problem, showing that community Social Work is one of the fields that carries out the greatest interventions, in the Canton of Valencia, where it is known that the community of Social Workers has shown since the beginning of the pandemic that people Older adults are more vulnerable, therefore, they need the participation of Social Work professionals, adopting measures within the time of quarantine.

Given the above, the general objective is proposed, which is: Establish the impact of community Social Work on comprehensive care for older adults in the Canton of

Valencia, Los Ríos province, from technical aids, psychological support, and emergency care, during the COVID pandemic 19.

Prior to this, the following specific objectives are formulated:

- Knowing the empowerment of Community Social Work in the face of stimulation of the integral society in support of the elderly.
- Know how the motivation of the Community Social Worker influences the comprehensive care of the elderly.
- Know how the development of skills of the Community Social Worker influences the comprehensive care of Older Adults.
- Analyze relationships and family co-responsibility and how it influences the comprehensive care of the Elderly.

Among the description, the methodology used was through a mixed quali-quantitative approach, because a population of 445 older adults from the Canton of Valencia, Los Ríos Province was taken. This study corresponds to a correlational court where we want to know the satisfaction with the services provided by community Social Work.



When establishing the theoretical fundamental part, it is important to know what Cevallos affirms that "the Social Worker is an intervener who allows the active participation of its members to be promoted from the community, it is also within their functions to be that management bridge between users and institutions between resources and needs "(2018, p. 33)

Social Work is the one who deals with knowing the causes and effects of social problems, in this case focused on the priority attention of older adults than due to confinement. by COVID 19 are exposed and vulnerable to contagion, prior to this, community Social Work must go hand in hand with networking, which can be made up of family, friends, and community social actors, in search of solution strategies, exchanging ideas or information that help solve problems or situations that affect the lives of older adults.

However, the WHO insists that it must be ensured that "older people are protected from Covid-19 without being isolated, stigmatized, left in a situation of greater vulnerability or without being able to access

basic provisions and social care" (2020, p. 11).

What the WHO mentions is emphasized, that social and community work are the set of social determinants, related both to the social context and to the processes by which social conditions translate into health consequences.

Regarding the interventions carried out through the community empowerment of the Social Worker, Becerril states:

Sustained collaboration with older adults to increase awareness about rights, the creation of safe spaces (reception centers), run by the community, the training of different groups that determine the diversity of services to be provided. (2017, p. 58)

Due to the aforementioned, it is important to know that currently older people constantly interact with the health care system, prior to this it is important to establish measurable parameters of protection through interventions by the Social Worker to face situations of violation of their human rights by the COVID 19 pandemic.

When referring to the motivation of the community Social Worker, Gómez affirms



that "it should be considered as a form of practical intervention that requires a theoretical and knowledge base that is more sociological than psychological, unlike what happens in other levels of Labor intervention. Social" (2016, p. 06)

In the case of older adults, the intervention of the Community Social Worker can directly influence the comprehensive care of older adults, raising awareness collectively, where the difficulties involved in solving problems that may arise in the experiences of individuals, groups, and communities.

It is important to know that comprehensive care for the elderly should have priority attention, where the National Service for the Elderly (SENAMA) states that "national and local governments are preparing guides based on what is currently known about COVID 19, in order to help household members, prepare for the transmission of the virus " (2020, p. 61)

The need to create emergency plans and continually reinforce prevention measures. In the case of older adults, one of the most relevant instruments is the emergency plan of the people who receive care, which must be adjusted to the needs of the person being

cared for and must consider at least creating a demographic database of the most vulnerable people with catastrophic illnesses, with details of their ongoing treatments and medications.

The professional in Social Work due to the fact of belonging to a humanistic profession, where López y Merino affirms that:

He must put into practice his skills and knowledge acquired, taking into account the ethics as a professional in the branch of social sciences, obtained during his training and experience for the adequate care of the elderly population. (2015, p. 75)

To increase the autonomy of dependent older adults, it is essential, on some occasions, to resort to technical aids, which are coordinated with institutions such as the Ministry of Public Health (MSP), and the Manuela Espejo mission.

Social Worker skills, framed in helping older adults focused on the work of helping individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities so that they can make their own informed decisions to protect integrity, where they can establish various skills that allow intervention to determine the status of



older adults, manage conflicts that may arise, contribute to solving problems.

Flores, García and Calsina (2018) present evidence of "the effectiveness of the experiential model for the development of social and interpersonal skills, including empathy with the use of experiences as context and support for behavioral and cognitive procedures and techniques" (p. 14).

Regarding work with the community and social support networks, a Person-Centered Comprehensive Attention Model should be established, highlighting two components to improve the quality of life of people in a situation of dependency; integrity and orientation to the person.

Social Work aims to intervene in the responsibility between the person and their environment.

The intervention of the Social Worker must comply with the requirements demanded in the social treatment of the elderly, since it offers a comprehensive therapeutic response in the problem of: prevention, promotion and assistance (not only in the satisfaction of basic needs of interaction between individuals and the environment

(family, institutions, community). (Nieto, 2018, p. 94)

At present, there is a trend towards holistic work, the new configuration of the field requires it, a greater participation of older adults in their spaces of social interaction.

According to article 36 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador: "Older adults will receive priority and specialized attention in the public and private spheres, especially in the fields of social and economic inclusion, and protection against violence. (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

What the Magna Carta indicates is rescued of the State that establishes public policies and care projects for the elderly, and in particular must adopt actions that allow care to be carried out in the centers of specialization for the elderly, which must prioritize their health, education and care.

When referring to family co-responsibility it is necessary to know that "the family is the fundamental cell of society and as such must provide support to all its members" (Arias, 2018, p. 64). Consequently, it can be known that Gómez y Jiménez is "important in the establishment of adequate family



relationships, it is important for all people; but for the elderly it acquires a special character "(2015, p. 104). Feeling needed, cared for and protected within the family are predictors of active aging.

It is important to dedicate quality time and warmth to our elderly, generating an environment of assertive communication and enhancing the rapprochement between all the generations that live in the home.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The present research work had a mixed approach, which establishes a qualitative-quantitative investigation, the same one that aims to collect data based on the acquired qualities of several individuals and the necessary quantities established in a population approach, which consists of going to the particularities of the results of interviews and surveys.

The type of research was descriptive and exploratory, because the objective of this research was studied, and the relationship between the variables was determined by applying statistical and analytical data.

In this research project the inductive and analytical method was applied to analyze and associate qualitative research.

Surveys were applied as a collection instrument based on a questionnaire prepared by the Lcda. Enny Mercedes Tuárez Sánchez, in the research work and the application of semi-structured interviews to professionals in the area of Social Work.

The tools used were a questionnaire by the Microsoft Forms system composed of closed questions, and the application of an interview.

Since the research was based on the analysis of the level of influence that community Social Work has and its impact on the comprehensive care of the elderly, a data analysis was developed using the SPSS software, which allowed determining the relationship of the variables and indicators. The population was 445 older adults according to data presented by the Services for Older Adults, where a simple probabilistic sample formula was applied that results in 206 people to be surveyed and 3 professionals in the area of Social Work.



### 3. RESULTS

Within the results obtained through the instruments, it was possible to verify the specific objective that tries to know the empowerment of the Community Social Worker in the face of stimulation of the integral society as support to the elderly, where they are presented in questions 7 and 8 of the survey and question 4 of the interview.

**Table 1.** Community Social Work is a support in your experience when you are in confinement.

	Totally agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	In disagreement	Strongly disagree
65 to 70 years	100%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%
70 to 80 years	74.7%	25.3%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%
80 to 90 years	, 0%	91.8%	8.2%	, 0%	, 0%
Over 90 years old	, 0%	, 0%	100.0%	, 0%	, 0%
<b>Total</b>	64.1%	33.5%	2.4%	, 0%	, 0%

*Source: Older adults of the Canton Valencia, province of Los Ríos*

It is observed that 100% of the people surveyed between 65 and 70 years of age totally agree that the Community Social Worker is a support in their experience, however, 100% over 90 years old affirm that they neither agree nor disagree, However, 91.8% in ages 80 to 90 refer to agree, 74.7%

in ages 70 to 80 mention fully agree and finally 25.3% of older adults affirm to agree.

**Table 2.** Activities carried out by the Community Social Worker to improve integral development.

	Totally agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	In disagreement	Strongly disagree
65 to 70 years	100.0%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%
70 to 80 years	72.6%	27.4%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%
80 to 90 years	, 0%	89.8%	10.2%	, 0%	, 0%
Over 90 years old	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	100.0%	, 0%
<b>Total</b>	63.1%	34.0%	2.4%	, 5%	, 0%

*Source: Older adults of the Canton Valencia, province of Los Ríos*

It was found that 100% of people surveyed between 65 and 70 years of age claim to be in complete agreement, as well as 100% of those over 90 years of age affirm to disagree, in the same way 89.8% in ages of 80 At 90 years of age, they mention that they agree and 72.6% of those between 70 and 80 years of age consider they totally agree with the activities carried out by the Community Social Worker.

In the interview applied to the Social Worker, she responds that in the face of the action in the empowerment of the Community Social Worker in the face of stimulation of the integral society in support



of the elderly, they act in different ways not only with the users but for the welfare of the families, for example the arrangements for medical care, ambulances if required, stimulating activities that cover the biopsychosocial spheres of the elderly.

Consequently, the objective can be verified that allows knowing the motivation of the Social Worker and the influence on the comprehensive care of the elderly, who are represented in it to next table.

**Table 3.** Actions carried out by the Social Worker.

	Totally agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	In disagreement	Strongly disagree
65 to 70 years	100.0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%
70 to 80 years	72.6%	27.4%	,0%	,0%	,0%
80 to 90 years	,0%	87.8%	10.2%	2.0%	,0%
Over 90 years old	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	63.1%	33.5%	2.4%	,5%	,5%

**Source:** Older adults of the Canton Valencia, province of Los Ríos.

100% of older adults surveyed from 65 to 70 years of age fully agree with the actions carried out by the Social Worker, carried out with motivation by using technical aids, psychological support and emergency care, during the COVID pandemic 19, while 100%

over the age of 90 affirm they totally disagree, in the same way 87.8% of older adults from 80 to 90 years old agree, 72.6% totally agree.

Similarly, the Social Workers interviewed responded that their vocation in this type of work should be inspired by the simple fact of serving the most vulnerable, where they dedicate themselves with care in their activities to the older adults of the community.

Regarding the objective that allows knowing the development of the skills of the Community Social Worker and the influence on the comprehensive care of the elderly, the results presented in the following table can be seen:

**Table 4.** Skills possessed by the Social Worker in dealing with problems related to the pandemic.

	Totally agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	In disagreement	Strongly disagree
65 to 70 years	100.0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%
70 to 80 years	72.6%	27.4%	,0%	,0%	,0%
80 to 90 years	,0%	85.7%	14.3%	,0%	,0%
Over 90 years old	,0%	,0%	,0%	100.0%	,0%
<b>Total</b>	63.1%	33.0%	3.4%	,5%	,0%

**Source:** Older adults of the Canton Valencia, province of Los Ríos



100% of adults over 65 to 70 years of age, who affirm that they fully agree that the Social Worker has the necessary skills to address problems that may arise during the COVID 19 pandemic, while another 100% of Adults over 90 years of age state that they totally disagree, while 85.7% respond to agree, while 72.6% refer to totally disagree and 27.4% agree. The Social Workers interviewed mention that it is important to nourish oneself through training to face a virus that only seeks to disturb the mind and healthy physical state of the elderly, where they directly apply the necessary skills to prioritize attention to problems that may arise in situations that are clearly family decisions. Consequently, it is possible to verify the objective that allows to analyze the relationships and family co-responsibility and the influence on the comprehensive care of the elderly, as shown below.

**Table 5.** Activities carried out by Community Social Workers in emergency care during the pandemic.

	Very often	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
65 to 70 years	100%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%
70 to 80 years	33.7%	54.7%	11.6%	, 0%	, 0%
80 to 90 years	, 0%	, 0%	32.7%	30.6%	36.7%

Over 90 years old	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	100%
<b>Total</b>	45.1%	25.2%	13.1%	7.3%	9.2%

**Source:** Older adults of the Canton Valencia, province of Los Ríos.

It can be seen that there is 100% of older adults between the ages of 65 and 70 years where they affirm that very frequently the activities carried out by Community Social Workers in the family contribute to emergent care during the COVID 19 pandemic, while Another 100% of adults over 90 years of age consider that never, however 36.7% in ages 80 to 90 say never and 33.7% of adults over 70 to 80 years of age, express that very frequently the activities carried out by Community Social Workers in the family contribute to emergent care during the pandemic.

**Table 6.** Co-responsibility of the family in tasks entrusted by the Social Worker.

	Very often	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
65 to 70 years	100%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%
70 to 80 years	36.8%	55.8%	7.4%	, 0%	, 0%
80 to 90 years	, 0%	, 0%	26.5%	32.7%	40.8%
Over 90 years old	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	, 0%	100%
<b>Total</b>	46.6%	25.7%	9.7%	7.8%	10.2%

**Source:** Older adults of the Canton Valencia, province of Los Ríos.



100% of older adults over 90 affirm that their family is never responsible for the tasks entrusted by the Social Worker, however, 100% in ages 65 to 70 affirm that very frequently, while 55.8 % of adults older than 70 to 80 years old answer that frequently and 36.8% answer that the family very frequently performs the assigned tasks.

As for the professionals interviewed, they make reference that the family is the fundamental basis of support and responsibility in the face of the vulnerability of the elderly, where when there are people trained to guide families in the tasks that must be carried out, co-responsibility is important for the integration of families, because they play one of the most fundamental roles in any social process, within any modality of care, prior to this it is appreciated that a large part of the families do all the activities and tasks.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

Regarding the empowerment of the Community Social Worker in the face of the stimulus of the integral society in support of the elderly, they affirm that they fully agree that the Community Social Worker is a support in their experience, however, older

adults over 90 years of age affirm not agree or disagree, however a large part of older adults mention that they totally agree with the activities carried out by the Community Social Worker to improve their integral development, consequently professionals in the area of Social Work respond that they act in different ways not only with users but for the welfare of families.

Given the community empowerment of Social Worker Becerril (2017), affirms that sustained collaboration with older adults should increase awareness about rights, the creation of safe spaces (reception centers), run by the community, training of different groups that determine the diversity of services to be provided, or the tasks of dissemination and protection.

Given the results, it is important that the Social Worker take the necessary actions to protect the integrity of the elderly, this with the direct contribution of the participation of government entities, establishing parameters to measure the need and degree of intervention, in the face of confinement by COVID 19.

Older adults affirm that they fully agree with the actions carried out by the Social Worker,



which they carry out with motivation by using technical aids, psychological support and emergency care, improving their comprehensive care during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Gómez (2016) refers to the motivation of the Social Worker as a form of practical intervention that requires a theoretical and knowledge base that is more sociological than psychological, unlike what happens in other levels of intervention.

The motivation that the Social Worker has, to face problems of social, psychosocial, family, emotional reason or of any kind that threaten the integrity of vulnerable people, they have through their training, acting as a mediator in the events that may arise in this case in the care and attention of the elderly, allowing to safeguard the integrity, who currently carry out a greater intervention to determine the status due to confinement by COVID 19.

It is possible to know the results presented in question 11 of the applied survey and question 6 of the interview with professionals, that older adults affirm that they fully agree that the Social Worker has the necessary skills to attend to the

problems that may arise during the COVID 19 pandemic, while the professionals surveyed respond that it is important to nourish oneself through training to face a virus that only seeks to disturb the mind and healthy physical state of the elderly, where they directly apply the necessary skills to prioritize the pay attention to problems that may arise.

López and Merino (2015) mention that the Social Worker must put into practice their acquired skills and knowledge, for the adequate care of the elderly population, taking into account the needs and interests of the old age stage.

Regarding the results and the theory described, it is evident that the Social Worker exercises his labor actions applying his abilities, creating, designing, coordinating activities to improve the integral development of the older adults.

Regarding family co-responsibility, older adults affirm that very frequently the activities carried out by Community Social Workers in the family contribute to the emergency care during the COVID 19 pandemic, however, they refer to the fact that their families are never responsible. of



the tasks entrusted by the Social Worker to improve their comprehensive care.

Gómez and Jiménez (2015) affirm that it is important for families to show interest in the activities carried out to protect the integral state of the elderly, where they need more attention due to their limitations.

It was found that not all the relatives of older adults carry out the activities designated by Community Social Workers, since they often lack the time or financial resources to improve their comprehensive development based on care, but they do apply support in the internal relationships.

## **5.CONCLUSIONS**

1. Older adults fully agree that the Community Social Worker is a support in their experience, because they act in various ways not only with the users but for the well-being of the families, in the arrangements for medical care, ambulances if required, stimulating activities that cover the biopsychosocial spheres of the elderly.
2. Older adults feel satisfied with the actions carried out by the Social Worker, which they carry out with motivation by

using technical aids, psychological support and emergency care, improving their comprehensive care during the COVID 19 pandemic, however, it was appreciated that there is a low rate of older adults who do not receive the necessary care during this stage of confinement.

3. The Social Worker has the necessary skills to attend to the problems that may arise during the COVID 19 pandemic, however, they consider that it is important to nourish themselves through training to face a virus that only seeks to disturb the mind and the healthy physical state of people older adults.

4. Family co-responsibility in older adults was observed to be carried out in a normal way despite the fact that several families do not carry out the activities recommended by Community Social Workers, destabilizing the fundamental base of support and responsibility in the face of the vulnerability of older adults during the phase of confinement by COVID 19.



## LIMITATIONS

The limitations that could arise in the research development, was to establish parameters for the inquiry and application of the surveys to the elderly, despite them the minimum help was obtained from the families for the gathering of information, however, it was also complicated because not all had access to the internet or did not know how to use a device, much less answer the questionnaire.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Plans should be established according to the range of care that each elderly person should receive, which must be analyzed by each Social Worker to consider the people at greatest risk from the contagion of COVID 19.
2. Directly urge the state to designate the necessary resources so that Community Social Workers can provide better care to older adults through the self-management of the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, establishing the various parameters of care and prevention against COVID 19
3. Analyze the mediate actions that must be carried out for the benefit of the

elderly according to the range of intervention and mediation that will be applied, having to induce more government actions to prioritize care and direct attention.

4. Establish talks and community programs that are aimed at the families of older adults, indicating that participation is necessary to maintain a better environment and care for older adults, being vigilant about their health, nutrition, care for their integral development.

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