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Abstract

Relationship Between Leprosy and Education in UBS in Cuiabá and Várzea Grande-MT †

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Introduction: Leprosy remains a major notifiable disease and a neglected public health problem in Brazil. Its persistence requires in-depth epidemiological studies to support control and elimination efforts. The objective of the study isto analyze the relationship between the level of education and the diagnosis of leprosy in patients treated at Basic Health Units (UBSs) in Cuiabá-MT and Várzea Grande-MT. **Methodology**: This is an observational, descriptive and retrospective study conducted in primary health care units (PHCs) in Cuiabá, Mato Grosso and Várzea Grande. This research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee under opinion number 6.836.110/2024. **Results**: At the Várzea Grande UBS, 36.5% had completed higher education, while 21.15% had incomplete primary education, classified as low education. Similarly, in Cuiabá, 21.7% of patients had incomplete primary education and 21.7% had completed higher education. This profile differs from the national statistics who, based on the 2023 DATASUS survey, indicated that only 4.8% of leprosy patients had completed higher education. Furthermore, the national leprosy response plan emphasizes that educational and diagnostic strategies should prioritize populations with low education levels, reinforcing the notion of social vulnerability being linked to the persistence of the disease. **Conclusions**: The analysis of leprosy in Cuiabá and Várzea Grande shows that the educational profile of patients is more diverse than the national standard. Contrary to the common association between disease and low educational levels, local data show a more heterogeneous distribution. Therefore, combat strategies must be adapted to specific situations in each region. Health policies to combat leprosy must be rethought.

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Data Availability Statement: The data used in this study are publicly available from the DATASUS database (https://datasus.saude.gov.br/ (accessed on 4 August 2025)). The processed data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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