

THROUGH THE LENS- PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF AGING IN OLDER ADULTS LIVING IN RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

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Abstract: Aging is a natural process that involves physical, emotional, social, and cognitive changes, going beyond the simple absence of disease to include emotional, social, and cognitive vitality. This study explores the perceptions and experiences of aging in older adults living in Residential Care Facilities (RCF), using the Photovoice methodology to capture these perceptions through photographs and narratives. The results reveal two main themes: recognition of the passage of time and acceptance of the aging-related changes; and the quest for quality of life, inner peace, and personal fulfillment in old age. The participants value health, love, mental clarity, and acceptance of mortality as part of life.

Keywords: Aging; Photovoice; Perceptions; Experiences

INTRODUCTION

Aging is an inevitable phenomenon that accompanies the journey of every human being throughout life. It is a dynamic process that involves a series of physical, emotional, social, and cognitive changes. While some of these changes can be challenging, successful aging is emerging as a concept that goes beyond the mere absence of illnesses or disabilities (Rowe & Kahn, 2015; Troutman-Jordan, & Staples, 2014). This paper aims to explore the complexity of aging and discuss the key elements associated with successful aging, highlighting the importance of a multidimensional approach (Fernández-Ballesteros, 2007). Aging is a gradual process that involves a series of physical transformations, such as loss of muscle and bone mass, decreased sensory capacity, and increased vulnerability to chronic diseases (Terra, *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, emotional issues such as loneliness, anxiety, and depression can arise as people get older, especially when they face significant life changes such as the loss of loved ones

or retirement (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005). However, it is important to recognize that aging is not a homogeneous process. Each individual will experience aging in a unique way, influenced by a number of factors that include genetics, lifestyle, social environment, and access to health resources (Depp & Jeste, 2006). In this sense, the perspective of a successful aging gains relevance, as it seeks not only to understand the aging-related difficulties (Troutman-Jordan, & Staples, 2014), but also to identify the resources and strategies that enable people to age healthily and satisfactorily (Rowe & Kahn, 2015; Troutman-Jordan, & Staples, 2014). The concept of successful aging has been the subject of study and debate within the scientific community. Although there is no consensual definition, several researchers emphasize the importance of a multidimensional approach, which considers not only the physical, but also the emotional, social, and cognitive aspects of aging (Annele *et al.*, 2019). Rowe and Kahn (1997) have proposed a model of successful aging based on three main components: absence of disease and disability, maintenance of cognitive function, and active engagement with life. This approach recognizes that successful aging is not limited to mere survival, but to the ability to continue to grow, learn, and adapt to changes over time. In addition, other researchers have also emphasized the importance of emotional and social aspects. The theory of successful aging by Baltes *et al.* (1990), which highlights the importance of developing effective coping strategies and maintaining meaningful social relationships to promote healthy and satisfactory aging, is one such example. Promoting the successful aging requires an integrated approach that recognizes the complexity and diversity of individual experiences. This includes the implementation of policies and programs aimed not only at preventing disease and

disability, but also at promoting the emotional, social, and cognitive well-being of older adults (Reichstadt *et al.*, 2010). Evidence-based interventions, such as physical exercise programs, cognitive activities, and psychosocial interventions, have shown significant benefits in promoting the successful aging. Furthermore, policies aimed at reducing social inequalities, improving the access to health services, and promoting inclusion are also key to ensuring that all older people have the opportunity to age with dignity, respect, and quality of life (Silva Rocha *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, by adopting a holistic perspective on aging, we can work towards creating more inclusive and fair societies (Oliveira, *et al.* 2021). In Portugal, in 2020 (latest data), 99,234 elderly people (4.01% of the Portuguese elderly population) lived in Residential Care Facilities (RCFs) (National Health System, 2020). CRFs in Portugal are institutions that provide permanent or temporary collective accommodation for people aged 65 or over or at greater risk of dependency and/or autonomy (Ministry of Labor, Solidarity and Social Security, 2007). The main objectives of these institutions are to promote active aging, social integration, and preserve family relationships. The Photovoice methodology has emerged as a powerful tool for capturing and analyzing the perceptions and experiences of specific groups, allowing the participants themselves to share their stories and perspectives through photography. Photovoice is a participatory research-action methodology that dates back to 1997 and was developed by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris. Photography is a way of communicating, already used in various areas and contexts, particularly in health, education and social issues with fragile audiences (Chaves, 2017). Photovoice is a methodology in which the participants identify, represent, and promote the problem under study,

through their “lens”, by means of photography and voice (Wang & Burris, 1997). The visual power of photographs is used to express their experiences, their perspectives, and their knowledge, allowing them to become involved in the issue under study (Wang & Burris, 1997). This methodology aims to contribute to changes at a political and social level, emerging new ideas, methods, and resources that can help improve people’s quality of life (Wang, 2006).

In this study we used the Photovoice methodology to explore older adults’ perceptions of normal aging *versus* successful aging. By analyzing the photographs and the narratives constructed by the participants, the aim is to identify the main themes that emerge from these perceptions, as well as to understand the nuances and diversities of each individual experience. This study thus aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of aging in older adults living in CRFs. By examining these multifaceted perspectives, we hope to contribute to a broader and more inclusive understanding of aging, assisting in the promotion of well-being and quality of life in older adults living in CRFs.

METHOD

This is an exploratory, qualitative study that used the focus group technique to capture the participants’ practices in an interactive context of sharing and exchanging experiences (Webb & Kevern, 2001). The Photovoice methodology was used to meet the proposed objectives.

PARTICIPANTS

The 18 participants were aged between 61 and 95, of which 7 were men and 11 women. Regarding religion, 1 participant was Christian and 17 were Catholic (Table 1).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations of this research study were carefully planned and implemented. Written authorization was requested from the Institution for the development of the study. All participants signed a free, informed, and clarified consent form. Informed consent forms were provided to all the participants, which included detailed information about the study and a full guarantee of confidentiality. This was done to ensure that each participant fully understood the purpose of the study and could voluntarily choose to participate or withdraw from the study. The participant's anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study. Both the paper and the electronic versions of the survey package kept the responses anonymous. For each photograph to be used, a signed authorization document from the participant was obtained. Permission to use each photograph was requested, to ensure that only photographs with the participants' permission would be published. Whenever the participants could be identified, their faces were pixelized to guarantee total anonymity. The participants' privacy was ensured by assigning each of them a unique identification number. All the study-related documentation was stored securely on a password-protected computer in order to guarantee the confidentiality. The data is only stored for the duration of the study and is subsequently deleted. These actions were implemented to ensure that the study complied with ethical guidelines and respected the participants' rights and privacy.

PROCEDURE

The participants were recruited intentionally and non-probabilistically through a personal invitation to take part in the study. The inclusion criteria were being a CRF resident, wanting to take part, and having no or mild cognitive decline. The exclusion criteria were moderate to severe cognitive decline, depression or bereavement. At the initial contact, the study was explained and the inclusion criteria were confirmed. Those who met the criteria and agreed to collaborate were given more details about the study and informed consent was obtained. Of the 22 residents contacted, 18 took part in the study. During the contacts, the participants were asked about the best day and time to hold the focus group. Two focus groups were held, with each group participating in 4 weekly sessions (4 weeks), totaling 8 focus sessions. These sessions were conducted by the third author. The sessions took place between February and April 2024, lasting approximately 90 minutes each. Using the Photovoice methodology, the following procedures were followed (Wang & Burris, 1997): the selection and recruitment of participants (8 to 12 participants per group for in-depth discussions); introduction of the participatory photography methodology to participants and facilitation of group discussion; obtaining the informed consent; introduction of the core theme and explanation of how the images were taken; negotiating the time for the participants to take photos; holding meetings to discuss the photographs (selection, interpretation, and narratives of the photographs); e planning together with the participants on the format for sharing the photographs and their narratives. Every week, each participant was asked to take photographs or bring photographs to the sessions that they felt best represented normal aging *versus* successful aging. Each participant selected 2 or 3 photographs to build up the

narrative. In each session, the photographs were discussed, building narratives about their meanings. To help analyze the photographs, we used a script whose central theme was the representation of aging for the participant. The sessions were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and submitted to content analysis (Catalani & Minkler, 2010). Content analysis methodologies were used to analyze the audiovisual content and the photographs (Teodoro & Oliveira, 2024). The data was analyzed using the software *Web Qualitative Data Analysis* (Souza, 2011).

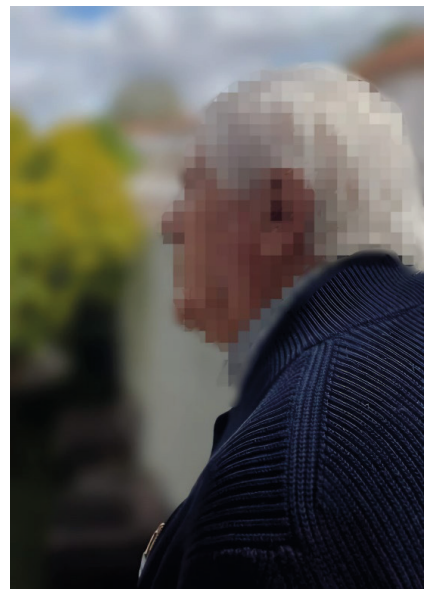
RESULTS

Older adults living in the RCF, after collecting the photographs and exploring the narratives, identified two major themes: one associated with Normal aging *versus* Successful aging. Regarding Normal aging, the main theme identified was (1) Recognizing the passage of time and accepting the aging-related changes (7 participants). The emerging theme of Successful aging was identified as (2) The quest for quality of life, inner peace, and personal fulfillment in old age (13 participants). On the other hand, these themes include several subthemes. In the case of Normal aging, 2 subthemes emerged: (i) Recognition of one's own condition and the inevitability of aging (11 participants), and (ii) Reflection on the continuity of life from birth to the present day (7 participants). In the case of Successful aging, 3 subthemes were identified: (i) Valuing physical and mental health as the basis for a fulfilling life (5 participants), (ii) Nurturing love, positivity, and gratitude (4 participants) e (iii) Acceptance of one's own mortality as a natural part of life (4 participants) (Table 2).

THE MAIN THEME OF NORMAL AGING

RECOGNIZING THE PASSAGE OF TIME AND ACCEPTING THE AGING-RELATED CHANGES (7 PARTICIPANTS)

This theme of normal aging deals with the perception and acceptance of the inevitability of aging: "Spending the time I have since I was born (P2)" (picture 1). Participants who fit in here recognize that time goes by and that physical and mental changes are a natural part of the aging process: "It's seeing that I'm still alive, even with everything that happens (P16)" (picture 2). They also show an attitude of acceptance towards these changes: "Aging is part of life, everything gets older (P7)" (picture 3). "As long as I keep living, aging is my legs running away at the same time as my mind (P12)" (picture 4). Self-portraits, as well as a photograph of a bridge, were the photographs selected by the participants as a way of constructing narratives about their own aging or the analogy with a bridge, which has a beginning and an end.



Picture 1. Participant's own photograph (P2)

SUBTHEMES OF NORMAL AGING

Recognizing one's own condition and the inevitability of aging (11 participants).

Here, the participants recognize their own aging condition and the inevitability of this process: "Letting the time pass, getting older (P3)" associated with a path that you follow throughout your life (picture 5). They are aware of the changes that occur in their bodies and minds as they age. "That's my situation, years and years go by, all of which add up to old age (P18)". The participant photographed a white-haired lady as a way of describing the physical changes resulting from the aging process (picture 6). The participants also recognize that they may face challenges related to physical and mental health as they get older and refer to the perceived deterioration of physical and mental capacities associated with aging: "The loss of physical and mental abilities (P11)", opting for a photograph that mirrors the physical changes inherent to aging (picture 7); "Getting more annoying, wanting to do things and not being able to (P17)", whose photograph she has chosen is of a Basilica she has visited throughout her life (picture 8).



Picture 2. *Photograph of an elderly person (P16)*



Picture 3. *Photograph of the Bridge Luís I (P7)*



Picture 4. *Photograph of an elderly person wandering the street (P12)*



Picture 5. *Photograph of a path (P3)*



Picture 6. *Photograph of snow-white hair (P18)*



Picture 7. *Photograph of a hunchbacked person (P11)*



Picture 8. *Photograph of Basilica Menor (P17)*

REFLECTING ON THE CONTINUITY OF LIFE FROM BIRTH TO THE PRESENT DAY (15 PARTICIPANTS)

In this subtheme, the participants reflect on their own life journey, from birth to the present moment. They consider the time that has passed and how their experiences have shaped who they are today. They reflect on the continuity of life from birth to this day: “Living my lifetime since the day I was born (P2)”; “We don’t think about age, old age; whenever there is life, there is action (P13)” reflecting hope and the importance of spirituality through an angel (picture 9), “That’s what I’ve got (P6)”, the participant chose a photograph of a wristwatch as a representation of the continuity of life over time (picture 10).



Picture 9. *Photograph of an angel (P13)*

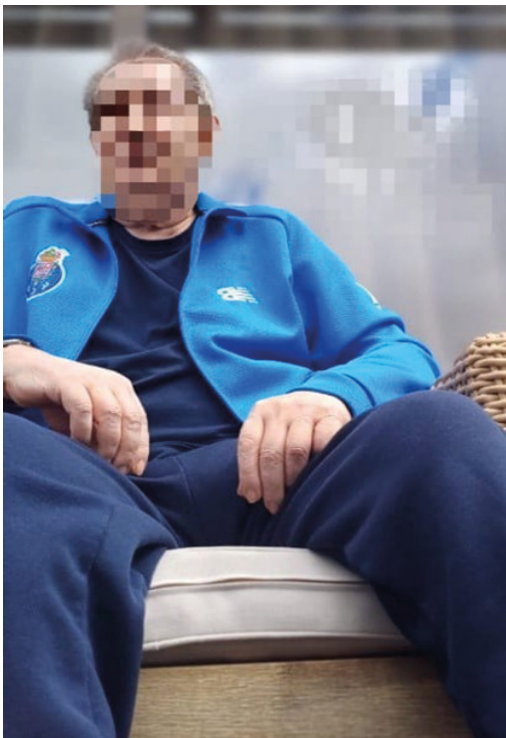


Picture 10. *Photograph of a wristwatch (P6)*

THE MAIN THEME OF SUCCESSFUL AGING

THE QUEST FOR QUALITY OF LIFE, INNER PEACE, AND PERSONAL FULFILLMENT IN OLD AGE (13 PARTICIPANTS)

Here, the participants highlight the importance of seeking a fulfilling life, with quality, inner peace, and personal fulfillment. The participants value aspects such as health, happiness, and purpose in life: “Living healthy; health is at the core of everything, if you’re healthy, you’ve got everything (P6)”, the participant opted for a selfie as a way of portraying himself (picture 11).



Picture 11. *Participant’s own photograph (P6)*

SUBTHEMES OF THE SUCCESSFUL AGING

VALUING PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AS THE BASIS FOR A FULFILLING LIFE (5 PARTICIPANTS)

In this subtheme, the participants recognize that physical and mental health are fundamental to enjoying a fulfilling life in old age: “Ahahah, that’s mine, I’m a good example (P12)” the participant opted for a self-portrait playing soccer, just as he has done throughout his life (picture 12). The participants also highlight the need to take care of the body and mind in order to achieve well-being: “It’s about trying to keep the brain cells going at all times, and doing what I’ve always enjoyed with joy (P3)”, with the participant opting for a self-portrait reading the “The Lusids”, reflecting his passion for reading and its contribution to his successful aging (picture 13).



Picture 12. *Photograph of the participant with a ball (P12)*



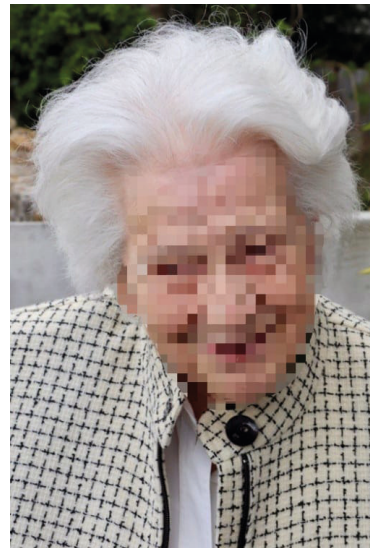
Picture 13. Photograph of the participant reading “The Lusíads” (P3)

NURTURING LOVE, POSITIVITY, AND GRATITUDE (4 PARTICIPANTS)

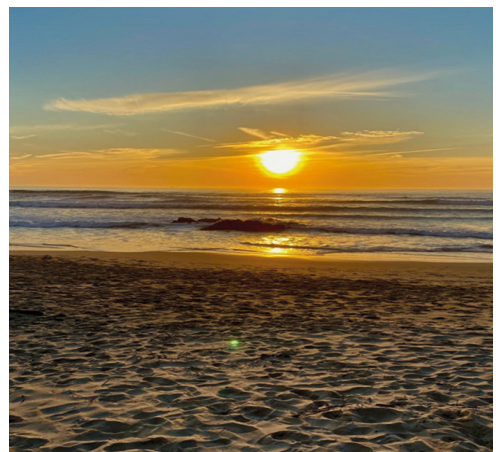
The participants emphasize the importance of love, maintaining relationships with their family and the people closest to them, a positive attitude and gratitude in everyday life, particularly having the grandchildren present (picture 14). They recognize the power of optimism and appreciation of small things in promoting emotional well-being: “It’s the passage of the years, but may they forgive my body (P18)”, the participant opted for a smiling self-portrait, reflecting how he recognizes his own successful aging (picture 15). “Aging is part of life, everything gets older; but aging with quality is one thing, without quality that’s bad (P7)” the participant photographed the sea, exposing as a narrative the vastness and the seemingly infinite, suggesting the extension of life and experiences over time participant photographed the sea, exposing as a narrative the vastness and the seemingly infinite, suggesting the extension of life and experiences over time. This vastness symbolizes the wealth accumulated over the years, including knowledge, wisdom, and memories (picture 16).



Picture 14. Photograph of the participant with her grandchildren (P7)



Picture 15. Photograph of the participant with a big smile (P18)



Picture 16. Photograph of the sea in Matosinhos (P7)

ACCEPTING ONE'S OWN MORTALITY AS A NATURAL PART OF LIFE (4 PARTICIPANTS)

This subtheme deals with the serene acceptance of one's own mortality as a natural part of the cycle of life. The participants recognize that death is inevitable and find inner peace in accepting this aspect of human existence. An example of this state of being is described by one participant: "She's a laid-back person who reads books and seeks out the reasons for life; she is still looking for an answer (P4)" (picture 17). The participant chose a self-portrait praying in front of an altar, suggesting a moment of reflection, spiritual connection, and peaceful acceptance of life and its finitude. This image captures the idea of finding meaning and comfort in the context of mortality, valuing the search for understanding and the practice of spiritual rituals as an integral part of successful aging.



Picture 17. Photograph of the participant on her knees praying (P4)

DISCUSSION

The results reveal a rich diversity of perspectives and experiences of older adults living in RCFs in relation to normal aging *versus* successful aging. This diversity highlights the complexity of the aging process and the importance of considering multiple theoretical approaches in order to understand the nuances involved. The Photovoice methodology helps to capture the experiences and perceptions of older adults and to conduct engaging and empowering research, facilitating interaction, reflection, and connection among the participants. Therefore, Photovoice has great potential for use in gerontological research (Mysyuk & Huisman, 2020), to capture this richness and complexity of narratives, experiences, and perceptions. It was possible to observe that, in general, the themes that emerged from the participants' accounts of normal aging denote a much more passive attitude, an attitude of acceptance and recognition, than those that resulted from the analysis of their definitions of successful aging. Here the participants highlighted a more active, dynamic, and participatory role, as well as an optimistic attitude and involvement in the aging process itself. The main theme identified for normal aging was recognizing the passage of time and accepting the aging-related changes. Sub-themes included reflecting on the continuity of life from birth to the present day and recognizing one's own condition and the inevitability of aging. The notion of the continuity of life suggests an appreciation of past experiences and an understanding of one's own identity in constant evolution. This reflection can be interpreted in the light of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, which postulates that individuals face a series of crises throughout their lives, culminating in the search for wholeness *versus* despair in old age (Erikson, 1950). On the other hand, the

attitude of resignation in the face of inevitable transformations reflects elements of the disengagement theory, which postulates that individuals tend to progressively disengage from social roles and responsibilities as they age, accepting their physical and social decline as a natural part of the process (Cumming & Henry, 1961). In the case of successful aging, the emerging theme of the quest for quality of life, inner peace, and personal fulfillment in old age reflects a more active and positive approach to aging. Here the participants stressed the importance of physical and mental health, as well as cultivating love, positivity, and gratitude. In addition, the acceptance of one's own mortality in a natural way also emerged as a sub-theme. These narratives are in line with the theory of active aging, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining an active and participatory lifestyle to promote well-being in old age (WHO, 2002). Other theories, such as the theory of resilience and the theory of positive psychology, are also relevant to understanding the quest for quality of life and emotional well-being in old age. These theories emphasize the importance of adapting to change, cultivating positive emotions and finding meaning and purpose in life to promote successful ageing (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Masten, 2001). Previous studies have already shown that older adults see successful aging as a balance between self-acceptance and self-contentment on the one hand, and engagement with life and self-growth in adulthood on the other (Reichstadt *et al.*, 2010). In another study, maintaining good physical and mental health and adopting a positive attitude were the two most frequent themes in older people's accounts regarding successful aging (Lee *et al.*, 2018). Wortman and Lewis (2021) also found similar results, with participants' stories highlighting the importance of reflection, personal growth, and psychosocial development and providing

clear evidence that they experience aspects of gerotranscendence.

In a qualitative study with elderly people over 90, it was also possible to observe in the participants' narratives the dimensions of the main theories of successful aging. Other themes include: the importance of having your own home and living in it for as long as possible, being independent in various aspects of life, and having a "good death". In this investigation, similarly to what was observed in the present study, many of the participants also considered themselves to be examples of successful aging. The authors concluded that the elderly value health, but more in the sense of being pain-free than illness-free. In addition, the social and cognitive aspects seemed to be more important than physical health (Nosraty *et al.*, 2015), seems to be in line with the results of this study. Successful ageing includes involvement with other people; dealing effectively with changes; and keeping physical, mental, and financial health. Within these themes, lifelong learning has also emerged as an important dimension (Duay & Bryan, 2006). In the study by Hörder *et al.* (2013), an overarching theme was formulated as "self-respect through the ability to keep the fear of frailty at a distance". This formulation embraced 4 categories: "having sufficient bodily resources for security and opportunities", "structures that promote security and opportunities", "feeling valuable in relation to the outside world" and "choosing gratitude instead of worries". The authors conclude that aging is a dynamic process rather than a static structure and might therefore be susceptible to actions. Thus, paying attention to attitudes and treating the older adults with respect, especially in relation to concerns about increased vulnerability, can result in a more effective promotion of successful aging. Other authors have also observed that aging with a disability is a complex phenomenon, which

requires a combination of self-acceptance, self-determination, remaining active and engaged, and having a support system to age well (Minor & Knight, 2017). A recent review of the literature concluded that there are many aspects of successful aging that are cross-sectional and common to various populations, namely the desire for autonomy, mental, cognitive, and physical health, life purpose, access to healthcare, social relationships, and community involvement (Howell & Peterson, 2020). Another systematic review found that the most common themes were social engagement and adopting positive attitudes. In addition, the participants also identified themes linked to independence and physical health (Reich *et al.*, 2020). It is therefore possible to conclude that there is a great diversity of results in the literature, which once again demonstrates the complexity and richness of older adults' perspectives on the aging process. Likewise, the photographs associated with the themes of normal aging and successful aging show a high diversity of perspectives. An interesting result was the choice of photographs of the participants themselves or of important elements of their personal lives as examples of successful aging: P12 (picture 12), P3 (picture 13), P7 (picture 14), P18 (picture 15) e P4 (picture 17). Other studies have also found results suggesting that many older adults consider themselves examples of successful aging, despite chronic physical illness and some degree of disability (Montross *et al.*, 2006; Tkatch *et al.*, 2017). The analysis of the results highlights the importance of individual differences in the experience of aging. Each participant brings a unique perspective, influenced by their personal experiences, values, and beliefs. This highlights the need for personalized, person-centered approaches to care and the promotion of well-being (Baltes & Smith, 2003). In short, the discussion of the results

shows that aging is a multifaceted and complex process, influenced by an interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors. Understanding these processes requires an integrative approach that incorporates multiple theories and takes into account the individual experiences of older adults.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES

This study has some limitations, particularly with regard to the sample used. A larger and more comprehensive sample would certainly bring richer contributions. Including non-institutionalized older adults would also have been an added value, as a way of comparing perspectives and perceptions within these two populations. In future studies, it would be important to make this comparison. In fact, other studies have observed that there seem to be differences in the narratives of institutionalized elderly people and elderly people living in the community, in the sense that the latter value different factors and characteristics of successful aging, probably due to the institutionalization itself. In particular, older people living in the community seem to value independence and autonomy more, the ability to manage their home and stay active (Sixsmith *et al.*, 2014). The vast majority of the studies cited in the discussion of the results involved elderly participants living in the community, and there is a scarcity of studies with institutionalized elderly people and with the Portuguese population, thus not allowing for conclusions as solid as desired. Furthermore, the vision of successful aging depends on cultural factors and therefore varies with the geography (Amin, 2017; Howell & Peterson, 2020; Reich *et al.*, 2020). Age (Carr & Weir, 2017) and sociocultural issues (Zanjari *et al.*, 2016) seem to be two more relevant factors that influence older people's perspectives on

successful aging. These aspects, as well as other demographic, economic, contextual, and religious issues, help to justify the diversity of narratives found in the literature. For all these reasons, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other populations.

CONCLUSION

Carried out using the Photovoice methodology, this study provided a rich and diverse insight into the perceptions of normal and successful aging in institutionalized elderly people, revealing a wide range of experiences and interpretations among the participants. Based on the results presented, it is clear that the perception and experience of aging among older adults living in RCFs is multifaceted and complex. The emerging themes, which range from the recognition of the passage of time to the quest for quality of life and personal fulfillment, reflect just that. The acceptance of the inevitable aging process, together with the reflection on the journey of life and the quest for quality of life and well-being, emerge as central aspects in

these narratives. Moreover, the participants demonstrate a realistic understanding of the challenges associated with aging, while emphasizing the importance of cultivating a positive attitude, maintaining meaningful interpersonal relationships, and taking care of physical and mental health. These findings have significant implications for the development of healthcare policies and practices aimed at older adults, highlighting the importance of holistic approaches that recognize and promote quality of life, autonomy, and dignity. The results highlight the need for intervention programs that encourage acceptance of aging, promote positive coping strategies, and strengthen older adults' personal resources to deal with the challenges of aging. In short, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and experiences of aging among older adult living on CRFs, providing valuable insights for the promotion of healthy and successful aging in contemporary society.

Conflict of interests: The authors declare no competing interests.

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Participants	Age	Gender	Religion
P1	95 years	Male	Catholic
P2	79 years	Male	Catholic
P3	95 years	Male	Catholic
P4	82 years	Female	Catholic
P5	95 years	Male	Catholic
P6	61 years	Male	Catholic
P7	88 years	Female	Catholic
P8	71 years	Female	Catholic
P9	92 years	Female	Catholic
P10	81 years	Male	Catholic
P11	75 years	Female	Catholic
P12	87 years	Male	Catholic
P13	89 years	Female	Catholic
P14	90 years	Female	Catholic
P15	92 years	Female	Christian
P16	89 years	Female	Catholic
P17	75 years	Female	Catholic
P18	90 years	Female	Catholic

Table 1. *Sociodemographic Distribution of Participants*

	Normal Aging	Successful Aging
Mains Themes	Recognizing the Passage of Time and Accepting the Aging-related Changes	The quest for quality of life, inner peace, and personal fulfillment in old age
Subthemes	Recognition of one's own condition and the inevitability of aging	Valuing physical and mental health as the basis for a fulfilling life
	Reflection on the continuity of life from birth to the present day	Nurturing love, positivity, and gratitude.
		Acceptance of one's own mortality as a natural part of life

Table 2. *Themes and Subthemes*