

RESUMO - SAÚDE E ESPIRITUALIDADE

INTEGRAL HEALTH IN PRIESTLY FORMATION: AN EXPERIENCE REPORT OF A MEDICAL INITIATIVE AT THE BRASÍLIA SEMINARY

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Introduction: The rigorous journey of priestly formation and the daily pastoral demands often lead to a sedentary routine, resulting in the inadvertent neglect of physical health—the consequences of which may only manifest decades later. While seminarians are trained to provide pastoral care, their own integral well-being—encompassing physical, mental, and preventative health—must also be addressed. **Objective:** This experience report describes the implementation and impact of a continuous medical assistance and health education program conducted by MedCAI, a student-led Catholic initiative, at the Brasília Seminary, from January to December 2025, aimed at promoting integral health among seminarians while enriching the ethical and spiritual formation of future physicians. **Methods:** Coordinated medical students, a multidisciplinary team conducts monthly visits to the seminary. The intervention follows a dual-focus methodology: spiritual/bioethical formation and healthcare assistance. First, missionaries receive deacon-led spiritual formation, with themes collaboratively chosen by the MedCAI coordination and the seminary for the entire year. Following this, the team provides on-demand healthcare, psychological, and

nutritional assistance. Additionally, it delivers customized health education lectures based on identified needs. Results: The initiative conducted clinical screenings for the entire cohort of first-year seminarians to identify potential risk factors, ensuring optimal preventative care and long-term health maintenance, as well as continuous nutritional monitoring and on-demand medical guidance to advanced-year seminarians, including those from visiting dioceses residing at the seminary, yielding dozens of annual consultations. Moreover, lectures on human biology, preventative medicine, healthy dietary habits, and physical exercise, addressed topics requested by seminarians. In turn, the deacon responsible for formations offered the medical team continuous bioethical and spiritual insights, linking themes from month to month. This indirect monthly immersion into seminary life, provided many missionaries with their first real understanding of vocational discernment and seminarians' routine, while granting some seminarians their first structured access to preventative care. Crucially, the shared reality of demanding academic formation and proximity in age acted as a catalyst to bridge the gap between these future healthcare professionals and the seminarians. Conclusion: The partnership between MedCAI and the Brasília Seminary establishes a highly effective model for healthcare delivery in religious communities, especially where the access is difficult. By addressing the specific medical and educational needs of seminarians, the initiative fosters a culture of physical well-being, ensuring that future priests are healthy to serve, while providing the medical team with the experience of caring for those who are the heart of the Church.

Palavras-chave: preventative medicine; clergy health; pastoral care; health education.