

## **Background**

Health literacy is one of the main investment areas in Portugal, to promote health and self-care. It is necessary to identify opportunities and people's and families' specific needs, considering their development stages. When promoting health literacy during people's life cycles (during childhood, especially), health professionals should consider the following dimensions: relationship with family, school partners and community. The objective of this study is to characterize health literacy levels among 9 and 10 year old children, in a school environment. It is expected that nurses can use the information collected among participating children in health promotion, in school environment.

## **Methods**

Deductive-inductive, exploratory-descriptive study. It is part of CrAdLiSa international project, whose goal is to increase health literacy among children and teenagers. 16 children, with 9 and 10 years old, from 2 different elementary schools in Santarém District (rural and urban areas), took part in this study. First phase consisted of filling in a form, followed by a semi-structured interview, based on the form categories. Data subjected to content analysis, with a priori and a posteriori categorization.

## **Results**

Preliminary results point to low and medium levels of health literacy, among participating children. Those with best levels of health literacy appear to have better quality of life. Identified data: residence in urban areas; better financial resources; less likely to develop obesity, or low weight; better self-perception of school performance; good relationship with family members; parents with higher schooling levels.

## **Conclusions**

Results suggest the need to invest in children's and families' health promotion, according to the identified personal, environmental and socioeconomic determinants.

School environment arises as the most privileged to improve children's (and, as a result, families' and communities') health literacy levels.

## **Main message:**

The identification of levels of health literacy in children aged 9-10 years in school settings is important for the planning of individual and family health promotion strategies.