OBJECTIVES: to identify the prevalent nursing diagnoses (ND) in the hospitalized elder care; to compare the prevalent ND with the duration of hospital stay and with the prescribed cares for their respective diagnoses. METHOD: Transversal historical study carried through in Porto Alegre, RS, by analyzing patient records age ≥60 years old, interned in clinical unities of a university hospital. RESULTS: 1665 records were analyzed; the four prevalent NANDA nursing diagnoses - within 62 identified ones - were: Self-Care Deficit - Bathing/Hygiene, Imbalanced Nutrition - Less than Body Requirements, Risk for Infection and Ineffective Breathing Patterns, varying from 14 to 17 days of hospital stay. THE MAIN CARES WERE: aiding bed bath, communicating diet acceptance, implementing routines of care in venous puncture and checking respiratory pattern. CONCLUSION: four prevalent ND were identified with the appropriate prescribed care. However, other care could have been established as a priority.

Keywords
Nursing, care, nursing process, nursing diagnosis, hospitalization, elder.