ABSTRACT

Objective: to determine the presence of Hardiness in nurses managers of hospital institutions. Method: a cross-sectional, quantitative study carried out in five hospitals, three public, one private and one philanthropic, that provide care, of medium and high complexity, in Southern Brazil. The study population comprised 62 nurses who held positions of head of service or area coordinators. Two instruments were used to evaluate occupational stress and the Hardiness Scale. Results: it was identified that 56% of the nurse managers reported stress in their activities and that 40% of the participants were considered to have a stress resistant personality (Hardiness). There was an inverse correlation between Hardiness and Stress, since as the Hardiness increases, the stress decreased. Conclusion: Managing requires a high level of demand and the development of strategies to combat stress resulting from the responsibilities inherent to managerial positions.

Descriptors: Stress, Psychological; Nursing, Supervisory; Burnout, Professional; Occupational Health.

RESUMO

Objetivo: determinar a presença de Hardiness em enfermeiros gestores de instituições hospitalares. Método: estudo quantitativo, transversal, realizado em cinco hospitais, três públicos, um privado e um filantrópico, que prestam atenção, de média e alta complexidade, no Sul do Brasil. Fizeram parte da população de estudo 62 enfermeiros que ocupavam cargos de chefia de serviço ou eram coordenadores de áreas. Foram utilizados dois instrumentos para avaliar o estresse ocupacional e a Escala de Hardiness. Resultado: identificou-se que 56% dos enfermeiros gestores referiram estresse em suas atividades e que 40% dos participantes foram considerados com personalidade resistente ao estresse (Hardiness). Verificou-se uma correlação inversa entre o Hardiness e o estresse, uma vez que na medida em que o Hardiness aumentou, o estresse diminuiu. Conclusão: gerenciar requer um elevado nível de exigência e o desenvolvimento de estratégias para combater o estresse resultantes das responsabilidades inerentes aos cargos gerenciais.

Descritores: Estresse Psicológico; Supervisão de Enfermagem; Esgotamento Profissional; Saúde do Trabalhador.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: determinar la presencia de Hardiness en enfermeros gestores de instituciones hospitalares. Método: estudio cuantitativo, transversal, realizado en cinco hospitales, tres públicos, un privado y un filantrópico, que prestan atención, de media y alta complejidad, en el Sur de Brasil. Se realizaron parte de la población de estudio 62 enfermeros que ocupaban cargos de dirección de servicio o eran coordinadores de áreas. Se utilizaron dos instrumentos para evaluar el estrés ocupacional y la Escala de Hardiness. Resultado: se identificó que 56% de los enfermeros gestores refirieron estres en sus actividades y que 40% de los participantes fueron considerados con personalidad resistente al estrés (Hardiness). Se verificó una correlación inversa entre el Hardiness y el estrés, una vez que en la medida en que el Hardiness aumentó, el estrés disminuyó. Conclusión: administrar requiere un alto nivel de exigencia y el desarrollo de estrategias para combatir el estrés resultante de las responsabilidades inherentes a los cargos gerenciales.

Descritores: Estrés Psicológico; Supervisión de Enfermería; Agotamiento Profesional; Salud Laboral.
INTRODUCTION

Currently, psychological stress is one of the most studied variables due to its consequences both physically and psychologically and it is a nonspecific reaction of the body to any demand, internal or external. Depending on the level of stress, it can be considered as positive for the organism, resulting in reactions that lead the individual to move, to get enthusiastic, offering the best in himself for their work. However, if there is a level of stress that is beyond the control of the individual, they may present adverse reactions to his organism and compromising their work.

Nursing professionals represent the largest contingent of human resources in hospital institutions, being the center of their work the care of the human being. It is developed through a close connection between the patient/user and the worker, who experiences direct and uninterrupted pain, death, suffering and many other feelings and reactions triggered by the disease process, which can lead to stress.

Occupational stress is one of the main difficulties faced by workers and a managerial challenge for the institutions. Its concept is related to a reaction that the individual may have to the demands and pressures at work that do not fit his knowledge and abilities, and which tests his ability to face the situation. The negative impacts of stress are manifold and can include physical, psychosomatic and psychosocial problems that can lead to work accidents and low productivity.

To minimize occupational stress and its influences on the health of the professional, as well as all negative repercussions for the organization, some strategies are used. Among them, is the identification of the Stress-Resistant Personality - Hardiness.

The Hardiness would be the finding that some individuals develop a resistance in relation to experienced stressors events. These characteristics would be derived from three components: commitment, control and challenge.

Commitment is expressed by the ability to engage with what is done or what is relevant to you, identifying the events, things and people that are meaningful to you within your environment. Control, however, refers to the tendency to act and feel as if it were not influenced by the contingents of life. The challenge comprises a conviction, a belief that instability is a normal occurrence in the individual’s life, but that changes are interesting for personal growth and not a threat to safety.

The interactions of the three characteristics indicate that Hardiness has interventions in the preservation of health, functioning as a resistance resource to protect individuals from stressors and is a possibility of coping with stress in the work of the nurse. Thus, the individual with the hardy personality presents a more optimistic, valued and improved attitude, which can increase satisfaction with work and profession, as well as decrease health problems due to stress.

The aim of this study, was to provide information on the presence of hardiness, in nurse managers, and, thus, contribute to the identification of the weaknesses in these nurses in the face of stressful situations and the search for coping strategies used to optimize the work process. Through the above, the purpose of this study, was to determine the presence of Hardiness in nurse managers of hospital institutions.

METHOD

A quantitative cross-sectional study in five hospitals located in a municipality of the State of Paraná, Brazil. Three are public, one private and one philanthropic, and they provide care of medium and high complexity.

The study population comprised 62 nurses who held positions of head of service or coordinators of areas, called supervisors, managers or directors. Nurses with at least, one year of work in the management function were included in the study, and professionals who were on leave or leave were excluded. They were considered as losses when they were not found after three search attempts, or, still, those that refused to participate in the study.

Data were collected in 2014, through the application of two instruments. The first questionnaire was about occupational stress and was created in France by Professor Benjamin Stora of the HEC-ISA Center, who authorized replication in Brazil. The second questionnaire was about the Hardiness Scale, a validated instrument for the Portuguese language and for the use in nurses.

The first instrument has two parts, the initial one seeks the socio-demographic and occupational data, and the second part, refer to data on occupational stress, subdivided into three blocks. Block I has 59 statements related to stress symptoms.

In order to classify the subjects of the research as stressed or not in relation to the
questions of blocks I and II, the average of the questionnaire was calculated, and, after that, of each of the participants. It was considered stressed what was equal to or above the average, and as not stressed those who were below average.

Block III is composed of questions regarding working conditions and was analyzed by means of simple frequency. The Hardiness Scale is a self-report instrument that features 30 Likert-type items with affirmations about life, and the interviewee should mark how he feels about each. Their score ranges from zero (nothing true) to three (completely true). The result of the Hardiness Scale is obtained by summing the items, having the scores of items three, four, five, six, eight, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28 and 30 inverted to then, be added, allowing for the result for total composition of the scale and by three domains, as follows: Commitment (one, six, seven, 11, 16, 17, 22, 27, 28 and 30), Control (two, two, three, eight, nine, 12, 15, 18, 20, 25 and 29) and Challenge (four, five, ten, 13, 14, 19, 21, 23, 24 and 26). Scale scores can range from zero to 90 for the full scale composition; and for domains between zero and 30.

The hardy individual was the one who obtained a high score in the sum total of the three domains, or at least two of them. The mean value above 20 points for each subscale (commitment, control and challenge) was considered for this study and as hardy the individual who obtained the value in two or more of these subscales.

To verify if there was a relationship of Hardiness to stress, the Correlation Coefficient Test (Spearman) was used, with a significance of p <0.05 and a 95% confidence limit. For the data analysis, the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics 20, BioEstat 5.0 and Microsoft Excel 2010 were used.

This research had the project approved in the Committee of Ethics in Research with human beings with opinion CEP / UEL no. 116/2012 and CAAEE 0580381 2.4.0000.5231.

**RESULTS**

The research was composed of 62 nurses, 43 of whom answered the questionnaires. The majority of the population was composed of women (84%), aged between 25 and 57 years, with a mean age of 39 years. Regarding marital status, 56% had a stable union, 14% were divorced and 30% were single. Those who had children totaled 63% of the interviewees, of whom, 40% had two children.

With respect to graduate studies, 7% had a doctorate degree, 14%, master's degree and 77%, specialization. Only one person did not perform any graduate studies. Of the specializations, 15% were focused on health management.

Regarding the employment bond issue, it was highlighted that 63% of the statutory, 14%, of contractors and 23% had other types of ties. The statutory employment relationship was the one that had the largest number of participants due to the participation of three public hospitals in the research. Of the 44% of nurses who were stressed according to the sources of stress, 74% were statutory. When linking stress and double employment, only two of the five who worked in two jobs were stressed. In relation to the time of work in the position, there was predominance of up to two years, with 37% of the individuals. From two to four years, 19%; four to eight years, 23%; eight to 12 years, 7%; and over 12 years were found 14% of those studied.

As for the working time in the institution, 25% were identified in the institution for more than 20 years and 14% in less than two years.

Regarding work shifts, 60% worked full time; 19%, at night; 16%, in the morning; 2.5%, in the evening and 2.5% in rotation between schedules. Nursing managers who had another employment relationship corresponded to 12% of respondents.

Of the participants, 58% did not have this job as the main source of family income. When questioned if they had leisure, 72% answered affirmatively, being leisure with the family the most cited. When questioned if they perceived stress in their work, 56% of nurse managers reported stress in their activities.

When verifying if the participants of the study had resistance to the stress (Hardiness), it was verified that 40% were considered hardy individuals. Regarding its subscales, the control strategy was the one with the highest score (39.5%), followed by the control (37%) and the challenge, with only one individual (2%).

When performing the correlation between stress and Hardiness through the Spearman Coefficient Test, it was verified that there was no significant value (correlation coefficient = -0.44 and the value of ρ = 0.08). However, although there is no significance, an inverse correlation can be seen once the result is negative. That is, this result demonstrated that as the Hardiness increases the stress decreases.
DISCUSSION

The research population was composed, mostly of females, a common situation found among Nursing professionals in Brazil. This fact occurs through the professionalization of the human capacity to care, present in the characteristics of women.10

The mean age of 39 years showed that the population was composed of more experienced nurses, an important fact to occupy a managerial position, which requires professional experience, among other things. The time in the organization or in the sector in which they act is indicated as a factor that accredits the nurse to carry out their activities, giving them greater autonomy and decision power. This, together with the technical knowledge of the managers and associated with the conceptual and relational aspects, is consolidated as a fundamental competence for the exercise of the management.

Emphasis is placed on the significant number of professionals who have undergone a postgraduate course, evidencing the concern that nurses are having with the professional improvement, since the products of the training performed can revert to the quality of care provided to clients. The realization of a specialization course stimulates the performance of others, as shown in a study about the profile and competencies of Nursing managers in accredited hospitals, showing that after the specialization, a large part of the professionals opted to undertake postgraduate courses Stricto sensu (masters and doctorates), which are of an academic and research nature, with essentially scientific objectives, while specialization has a practical / professional meaning.11

Only five nurses took graduate courses in Nursing Administration. Although not a relatively high number, the experience gained in the management of care over the years, attitudes, managerial skills, personal values, and the ability to work with what the institution can offer, are also issues important for the nurse to be competent for the management and considered by the organization in the selection of management positions. Care management requires knowledge and experience, since it is a process that materializes through a set of practices that are interdependent and complementary to one another.11

Occupational stress was present in 24 nurses who managed this study. In the Nursing work process, managing requires a high level of demand, due to the competencies assigned to its position, related to the continuous need for personnel management and conflicts generated by the diversity of professional profiles, as well as to the collections of the superior heads and subordinates on the conduct and decisions to be taken or have already taken place.7

When analyzing the participants regarding whether or not they possessed Hardiness, it was observed that only 17 had this personality resistant to stress. The research also demonstrated an inverse relationship between Hardiness and stress. Corroborating with a study carried out with medical residents, one confirms the assertion that one of the positive effects of Hardiness is the modification of the perception of the stressors.14

It is noted that all individuals, who were considered Hardiness, scored on the control subscale. This shows that the nurse with high control tries to maintain an influence on the results, instead of being impotent and passive in the face of the situations (14). These characteristics are evident in nurse managers who have responsibilities to their staff and to the work process.

The ability to control allows the individual, to perceive, in many stressful events, predictable consequences, and consequently to manipulate the stimuli to their benefit. In this way, they benefit mainly, by the high degree of autonomy. In addition to a stress-control training, it is worth emphasizing the importance of institutional programs that aim to develop social skills related to communication and interpersonal relationship skills.15-16

Research4 shows that the higher the Hardiness value in the commitment subscale, the greater is the nurse appreciation. These professionals do not easily give themselves up to the pressure and get deeply involved in what they do. This being, of great relevance, because they are in an environment where the focus is not only the patient, but, also, the family.

Only one nurse obtained the Challenge subscale. This means that, for a portion of this population, there is a difficulty in dealing with the unexpected and with the changes, in order to seek resources to meet sudden situations evaluated as stressors. The Challenge domain refers to the belief that change is customary, which is understood as an opportunity for personal growth. Thus, the effects of stress are minimized, since the situation is assessed by the individual as a challenge rather than a threat. Organizations and their managers can no longer afford not
to learn how to respond effectively to the challenges posed by stress. 17

A study conducted on Bournout Syndrome 18 and associated factors in health professionals from a public hospital suggest through the results that personalities characterized by commitment, control and challenge are associated with higher levels of personal fulfillment and lower levels of exhaustion and distant attitudes. They emphasize that the resistant personality can, therefore, preserve health, improve performance and promote a less stressful lifestyle.

Another research carried out on the formation of the resistant personality in Nursing managers, was raised strategies that stimulate the Hardiness. With regard to commitment, it can encourage and reward the risks associated with working with patients, group discussions about commitment to problem solving in conflict management and assertiveness. In control, it is suggested to create a creative work environment, encouraging and rewarding creativity related to new ideas and new practices and to give greater autonomy to the individual. As for the challenge, strategies can be focused on promoting new learning experiences among employees, changing practice and behavior, engaging in group activities, engaging people with practice in change processes to promote positive change. 19

It can be said that Hardiness is a tool in the face of stress, since this Tough Personality allows a different way of dealing with situations evaluated as stressors in order to minimize them. In this sense, the relevance of studying the Hardiness Personality is highlighted in order to know how different professionals behave in front of the stressors and the benefits that Hardiness presents. 2 20

CONCLUSION

It was verified that only 40% of the nurses managers of hospital institutions had the personality resistant to the stress (Hardiness) and presented a significant predisposition to the commitment and the control. This indicates that they are professionals engaged in their activities and involved with people and what happens around. However, because they are deficient in the Challenge domain, they are estimated to be absorbed by the desire for convenience and security.

Occupational stress and Hardiness were inversely proportional. A greater number of stressed nurses (56%) than those who had a stress-resistant personality (40%), however, being hardy does not mean that the person will eliminate the stressors , but, rather, will modify the perception to stress and instigate strategies for its confrontation. Because it can be apprehended, it is suggested that institutions, through the sectors of permanent education and human resources, have it as an alternative to minimize labor stress, and, as a consequence, will bring valuation and motivation to the professional.

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