ABSTRACT

Objective: to evaluate the knowledge of the neonatal nursing team about Burnout Syndrome. Method: qualitative and exploratory study carried out with 23 nursing professionals, who work in the neonatology units of a public maternity unit, located in the city of João Pessoa. For the collection of the empirical material, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview script were applied, with Content Analysis and construction of thematic axes. Results: the empirical material indicated the profile of the nursing team that cares for neonates and the following thematic axes were observed: health professionals and burnout; work overload and risk of burnout; physical exhaustion and stress; Burnout and the health consequences of workers. Conclusion: it is concluded that this work will serve as a support to help in the indispenability of dissemination of knowledge about Burnout Syndrome, with emphasis on nursing, since most health professionals do not know this pathology. Descriptors: Worker Health; Occupational stress; Professional Exhaustion; Nursing team; Neonatal Nursing; Knowledge. Descritores: Salud del Trabajador; Estrés Ocupacional; Esgotamiento Profesional; Equipe de Enfermagem; Enfermagem Neonatal; Conhecimento.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: evaluar el conocimiento del equipo de enfermería neonatal acerca del Síndrome de Burnout. Método: estudio cualitativo y exploratorio realizado con 23 profesionales de enfermería, que atienden las unidades de neonatología de una maternidad pública, localizada en el municipio de João Pessoa. Para la recolección del material empírico se aplicaron un cuestionario y un guión de entrevista semiestructurados, con Análisis de Contenido y construcción de ejes temáticos. Resultados: el material empírico indicó el perfil del equipo de enfermería que cuida de neonatos y los siguientes ejes temáticos fueron observados: profesionales de salud y el acostumbramiento por Burnout; sobrecarga de trabajo y el riesgo de Burnout; esgotamiento físico y el estrés; Burnout y las consecuencias para la salud de los trabajadores. Conclusión: concluye que este trabajo servirá de soporte para auxiliar en la indispenabilidad de diseminação do conhecimento sobre o Síndrome de Burnout, com destaque para a enfermagem, já que grande parte dos profissionais de saúde não conhece essa patologia. Descritores: Saúde do Trabalhador; Estresse Ocupacional; Esgotamento Profesional; Equipe de Enfermagem; Enfermagem Neonatal; Conhecimento.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: evaluar el conocimiento del equipo de enfermería neonatal acerca del Síndrome de Burnout. Método: estudio cualitativo y exploratorio, realizado con 23 profesionales de enfermería que atienden las unidades de neonatología de una maternidad pública, ubicada en el municipio de João Pessoa. Para la recolección del material empírico, se aplicaron un cuestionario y un guión de entrevista semiestructurado, con análisis mediante técnica de Análisis de Contenido, y construcción de ejes temáticos. Resultados: a partir del material empírico se apuntó el perfil del equipo de enfermería que cuida de neonatos y se formalizaron los siguientes ejes temáticos fueron observados: profesionales de salud y el afecto por Burnout; sobrecarga de trabajo y el riesgo para Burnout; el agotamiento físico y el estrés; y Burnout y las consecuencias para la salud de los trabajadores. Conclusion: se concluye que este trabajo servirá de soporte para auxiliar en la indispenabilidad de diseminação do conhecimento sobre el Síndrome de Burnout, con destaque para la enfermería, ya que gran parte de los profesionales de salud no conoce esa patología. Descritores: Salud Laboral; Estrés Laboral; Agotamiento Profesional; Grupo de Enfermería; Enfermería Neonatal; Conocimiento.
INTRODUCTION

Over the years, a process of physical and mental changes is observed in the lives of the population. The system of financial globalization, technological innovations and new management models demonstrated involvement with the goals of work in the community, highlighting the professional subjectivity and the greater dissemination of the subject of mental health of the worker in the scientific community.¹

It should be noted that the consequences of the technological changes affect several professionals and cause high levels of tension and stress in the work environment. These factors can lead to an increase in the diagnosis of work-related mental illnesses, such as Burnout Syndrome.²

It is stated that Burnout Syndrome is a professional disease, due to physical and / or mental overload and excessive stress in the work environment. The main manifestations of this syndrome are emotional exhaustion, distancing and low personal fulfillment.³ It reaches several professional categories with a higher incidence in workers who have direct contact with people, such as health professionals, social workers, teachers and police officers.³⁵

The main causes of Burnout Syndrome in health professionals are anguish, difficulty coping with problems, work overload, lack of incentive to good productivity, warnings about poor performance in employment and death.³ In addition, the fact that health professionals deal with the suffering of the other and experience situations of extreme pressure and stress, depending on the work that they do.⁶

From this perspective, the relationships between working conditions and the quality of life of pediatric professionals are impaired. They are evidenced by workplace insecurity, increased levels of stress, work-related overload, low pay and change in the level of sleep.⁷

However, the perception of health professionals about Burnout Syndrome is still a little discussed in the area of nursing, especially among teams that work in neonatology. In view of the above, this study has as a guiding question: what is the knowledge of the neonatal nursing team about Burnout Syndrome?

It is reported that Burnout is a little discussed topic in the nursing area and, regarding the care of newborns, there is a shortage of studies published in this regard. Thus, it is important to carry out a survey, which evaluates the knowledge of neonatal nursing professionals about the higher incidence of this syndrome, which also addresses their relationship with the practice of care.

It is considered that, because it is not very noticeable to some health professionals, it is indispensable to have a greater dissemination on the involvement of the phenomenon of Burnout Syndrome. When professionals are aware of the manifestations and causes of this pathology, they seek the appropriate forms of prevention or intervention.

OBJECTIVE

- To evaluate the knowledge of the neonatal nursing team about Burnout Syndrome.

METHOD

This is a qualitative and exploratory study carried out with the nursing team, which provides care to the neonates in the sectors of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the Neonatal Intermediate Care Unit (NIMCU) and the Kangaroo Nursing. The place chosen for the research was a reference maternity hospital, located in the municipality of João Pessoa, in the state of Paraiba, Brazil.

It is emphasized that the universe of the study included 52 nursing workers, who care for neonates. The sample was obtained for convenience and totaled 23 professionals of the neonatal nursing team, being 15 nurses and eight nursing technicians.

In the research, inclusion criteria were considered workers with work time greater than six months and work activity, at the time the research was taking place. Thus, workers with a professional activity of less than six months, on leave, on medical leave and who were not in work at the time of the study were excluded.

Data collection took place in April 2017. A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview itinerary were used to obtain information about the participant and his / her work in order to achieve the proposed research objectives.

It should be emphasized that the empirical material obtained from the semi-structured interview had the answers transcribed by the researcher. After this step, the data was archived in Word format documents. In order to analyze the participants’ discourses, the content analysis technique proposed by Bardin was used through the steps of pre-analysis, coding, inference and interpretation of data.⁸ The evaluation of the empirical material

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It is noteworthy that this research obeyed the requirements of Resolution 466 of 2012, of the National Health Council (NHC) 9, which deals with research involving human beings. Therefore, we sought to ensure the well-being of all the interviewees involved in the research and respect their autonomy. It was also made a free and clear statement to all who participated in the study. This research was approved by the Research and Ethics Committee (REC) of the University Center of João Pessoa - UNIPÊ and was registered under the number CAAE 65770917.7.0000.5176.

Twenty-three workers of the neonatal nursing team of a hospital located in the municipality of João Pessoa, state of Paraíba were interviewed. Regarding the data characterizing the research, it was observed that the majority of respondents were female, with 95.6% (n = 22). 56.5% of the participants were married (n = 13), followed by singles, with 34.8% (n = 8) and divorced, with 8.7% (n = 2). As for ethnic groups, 60.9% were brown (n = 14), followed by whites, with 39.1% (n = 9). Among the participants’ demographic profile, 56.5% (n = 13) were aged between 21 and 40 years, 56.5% (n = 13) with children and 65.2% with a family income of one to two minimum wages (n = 15).

Concerning the permanence in the institution, it was observed the predominance of employees with seven to nine years of work, with a percentage of 34.8% (n = 8), followed by 30.4% (n = 7) of professionals with hiring time greater than nine years. According to the work hours per week, the majority of the professionals worked for 40 hours, with 47.8% of cases (n = 11), followed by 43.4% (n = 10) with 30 hours.

It is noteworthy that 65.2% (n = 15) of the interviewees never heard of or did not know about Burnout Syndrome, which made it impossible to use these testimonies throughout the research. On the other hand, it was possible to explore the speeches of 34.8% (n = 8) participants, based on the identification of central thematic axes and subtopics, developed through the Bardin content analysis and expressed in Figure 1.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Central Thematic Axes</th>
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Figure 1. Distribution of the central thematic axes and associated thematic axes. Paraíba (PB), Brazil, 2018.

♦ Health professionals and sickness due to Burnout

It is reported that the reports of the neonatal nursing team showed, for the most part, that health professionals constitute the group most vulnerable to the development of Burnout, especially nursing professionals. This perception about occupational vulnerability can be observed in the following reports.

Health professionals, nurses, nursing technicians, etc. (P9)
Nursing workers, professionals in general working in the hospital area. (P22)
It should be noted that professionals working under pressure, such as those working in an intensive care unit and the night shift, may also be prone to acquiring the complaint, as follows.

(...)), professionals who work in intensive care units, etc.. (P5)

It is a physical or mental exhaustion closely related to the professional aspect, especially professionals working at night and health professionals. (P2)

The high degree of exposure of teachers in the area of health and nursing to this occupational disorder were highlighted. Such reference was cited by only two interviewees, as explicitly stated in the discourse.

Teachers, in the area of health, nursing, etc. (P5)
Health professionals, teachers. (P13)

It is inferred that the statements of the interviewees highlight only health professionals as being affected by Burnout Syndrome.

♦ Work overload and risk of Burnout

It is presented that the deponents of this investigation mention that the Burnout Syndrome occurs due to the working...
It consists of a syndrome that affects health professionals due to overwork and the stress of the hospital environment. (P14)

It is pointed out that, although stress has been referenced as a consequence of Burnout Syndrome, some testimonials understand it as a cause of the illness, which is closely associated with the high workload.

The syndrome is caused by everyday stress, due to the professional deficit, many accumulated tasks. (P22)

It is a syndrome related to the performance of the health professional, regarding stress, workload (....). (P19)

It is something related to work overload, those more exposed to stressors. (P20)

In this context, it can be seen that working conditions can be considered as risk factors for the development of burnout. Generally, these circumstances lead to overload in the work environment, with high workload, professional deficit and task accumulation.

Characteristics of Burnout: physical and mental exhaustion

It is shown in the reports of the professionals inserted in this study, physical and mental exhaustion was mentioned with emphasis, according to the following records.

It is a physical or mental exhaustion, closely related to the professional aspect. (P2) It is a psychic disorder of depressive character, proceeding from mental and physical exhaustion, stress. (P5)

In view of the above, it is verified that burnout is a psychic disorder, related to the work performed, caused by stressors, which can have physical and mental implications.

Burnout and the health consequences of workers

In addition to physical and mental damages, it is pointed out that the onset of Burnout is capable of producing serious manifestations in the health of the worker and affect their quality of life, as seen in the speeches below.

Interferes in the social life of the worker, disinterest in work, irritability. (P14)

The professional begins to get sick, jeopardize their income at work. (P9)

Malaise with colleagues, meaningless discussions (....) discussions at work, loss of ethical structure (....). (P22)

In the face of the reports, it is evident that the professional affected by Burnout becomes ill, becomes disinterested in the work to be performed, irritated with himself and with his colleagues, with a consequent compromise of income.

DISCUSSION

It is noteworthy that, with regard to the most vulnerable workers to develop the phenomenon, it was identified through the reports of the interviewees that among the group that operates in the hospital area, nurses and nursing technicians present a high prevalence of the syndrome. These data corroborate studies with nursing professionals, developed by national researchers.4,10

It is asserted that health professionals establish a constant bond with the patient and their families during the period of hospital stay. With this, they fit into a more vulnerable category, constantly exposed to periods of tension and stress, predisposed to the appearance of Burnout Syndrome.11

It is noteworthy that due to the work execution and excessive work, nurses are more predisposed to present two of the three phases of Burnout. They are emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, due to their work overload.12

It is agreed that emotional exhaustion involves the physical exhaustion of the worker, to perform activities in the work environment. Depersonalization of the professional may involve irritability and cynicism with colleagues. Both cases were reported in the present study. The lack of interest in work, in turn, is characterized by low professional achievement.

It is demonstrated in an international study evaluated the presence of Burnout Syndrome in nurses, who work in the neonatal intensive care unit. And, that the majority presented moderate and high levels of exhaustion and low professional achievement.13

It is shown that because it is more prevalent in employees who have more contact with the individual, it is essential to point out that Burnout Syndrome affects several workers, such as health professionals, teachers and social workers.4,9 It is important to point out that teachers are listed as possible professionals presenting Burnout due to professional demands, work overload and little time to perform leisure activities.14 Studies confirm this data, when they specify the emotional exhaustion associated with the excessive workload of the professional.15

It is prioritized that work overload is the main factor that triggers the onset of Burnout Syndrome. Because of this, and due to the difficulty in the precise conclusion of its diagnosis14, it is essential to carry out research, which contributes to the greatest knowledge about work sickness.16
It is emphasized that among the labor factors that influence the appearance of Burnout Syndrome, overload and inadequate working conditions stand out. In addition, conflicting interpersonal relationships, lack of professional expectation and salary dissatisfaction predispose the emergence of the dimensions of the syndrome.10

From this perspective, it is known that Burnout Syndrome is a disease that comes from depression and labor stress. Its symptom is the physical and mental exhaustion in professionals of multi-professional teams.17

In many cases, Burnout Syndrome is confused with depression or stress. This is because a Burnout professional lives better in one environment than another; in depression the symptoms appear in the course of life, in their daily life, regardless of the environment in which they are. Compared with stress, in Burnout Syndrome the worker is accompanied by an overload of work, while in stress the professional presents their altered stimuli.18

It is identified that the worker’s health instability has greater visibility due to factors such as anxiety and stress, and can progressively progress to the onset of Burnout Syndrome. Some causes are absenteeism, elevation of stress and occupational accidents, which cause a decrease in their labor productivity.19

It is shown that, faced with the symptomatology, the individual affected by the syndrome may present: sleep disturbance, chronic fatigue, pain, distraction, impatience, decreased self-esteem, irritability and absenteeism.20 Besides these manifestations, there may be a lack of interest in work, isolation and conflicts with colleagues and users, impairing the worker’s quality of life and his income in the company.

About what was presented in the speeches, we identify the magnitude of the effects that Burnout Syndrome can cause to the worker. In this way, strategies capable of combating or reducing this disorder must be stimulated. Therefore, attention to professionals should be holistic, from the perspective of self-care, to favor the treatment of the other with excellence.

CONCLUSION

It was verified with this study that the majority of the interviewees do not have the understanding about the Burnout Syndrome, becoming indispensable the propagation of the subject in the scientific community. It is therefore essential to update the professionals who make up the neonatal health team, due to the innumerable changes that nursing has undergone over the years. These renewals in the process of academic formation are inevitable, due to the constant search for a better quality of patient care.

It is known that research on what nursing professionals who attend newborns know about Burnout Syndrome is fundamental, to consolidate arguments about the level of information and potential harms to the occupational health of these workers. Among the few professionals who have already heard about the syndrome and answered the questionnaire, it is understood that they have an understanding, although limited, about the dimensions of Burnout Syndrome.

It is concluded that because it is not evident by the health professionals, it is emphasized the indispensability of a greater dissemination on the Burnout Syndrome; when they are unaware of the manifestations of this pathology, do not seek the proper forms of prevention or intervention. In the neonatology practice scenarios of the present study, such discussions seem indispensable, which suggests the broadening of access to the topic in health care. Finally, it is still important to hold discussions at the undergraduate level.

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