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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

KNOWLEDGE OF NURSING PROFESSIONALS ABOUT BURNOUT SYNDROME CONHECIMENTO DOS PROFISSIONAIS DE ENFERMAGEM SOBRE A SÍNDROME DE *BURNOUT* CONOCIMIENTO DE LOS PROFESIONALES DE ENFERMERÍA SOBRE EL SÍNDROME DE *BURNOUT*

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to identify nursing professionals' knowledge about Burnout Syndrome. **Method:** this is a quantitative, descriptive, exploratory study with 32 professionals, ten nurses and 22 nursing technicians. Data was collected through two questionnaires. After the data collection, the analysis of the material for the exploration of the content and the interpretation of the results, which were presented in tables and figures, began. **Results:** it was identified that 40% of the participants did not know the Syndrome, 50% had a limited perception and only 10% knew it. The most frequently mentioned Burnout syndrome triggers are listed: excessive hourly workload (31%); stress (21%); the exhaustive routine (15%) and the workload (12%). **Conclusion:** it is concluded that 40% of Nursing professionals do not know Burnout Syndrome and 50% have limited knowledge. **Descriptors:** Professional Exhaustion; Nursing Team; Perception; Workplace; Syndrome; Consequences.

RESUMO

Objetivo: identificar o conhecimento dos profissionais de enfermagem sobre a Síndrome de *Burnout*. **Método:** trata-se de um estudo quantitativo, descritivo, exploratório, com 32 profissionais, dez enfermeiros e 22 técnicos de enfermagem. Executou-se a coleta de dados por meio de dois questionários. Iniciou-se, a operacionalização do processo de análise, após a coleta de dados, a leitura do material para a exploração do conteúdo e a interpretação dos resultados, que se apresentaram em tabelas e figuras. **Resultados:** identificou-se que 40% dos profissionais participantes não conheciam a Síndrome, 50% tinham uma percepção limitada e apenas 10% a conheciam. Elencam-se os fatores desencadeantes da síndrome de *Burnout* mais citados: a carga horária excessiva (31%); o estresse (21%); a rotina exaustiva (15%) e a sobrecarga de trabalho (12%). **Conclusão:** conclui-se que 40% dos profissionais de Enfermagem não conhece a Síndrome de *Burnout* e 50% tem um conhecimento limitado. **Descritores:** Esgotamento Profissional; Equipe de Enfermagem; Percepção; Ambiente de Trabalho; Síndrome; Consequências.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: identificar el conocimiento de los profesionales de enfermería sobre el Síndrome de *Burnout*. **Método:** se trata de un estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo, exploratorio, con 32 profesionales, diez enfermeros y 22 técnicos de enfermería. Se realizó la recolección de datos por medio de dos cuestionarios. Se inició, la operacionalización del proceso de análisis, después de la recolección de datos, la lectura del material para la exploración del contenido y la interpretación de los resultados, que se presentaron en tablas y figuras. **Resultados:** se identificó que el 40% de los profesionales participantes no conocía el Síndrome, el 50% tenía una percepción limitada y sólo el 10% la conocían. Se describen los factores desencadenantes del síndrome de *Burnout* más citados: la carga horaria excesiva (31%); el estrés (21%); la rutina exhaustiva (15%) y la sobrecarga de trabajo (12%). **Conclusión:** se concluye que el 40% de los profesionales de Enfermería no conoce el Síndrome de *Burnout* y el 50% tiene un conocimiento limitado. **Descritores:** Agotamiento Profesional; Grupo de Enfermería; Conocimiento; Ambiente de Trabajo; Síndrome; Consecuencias.

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INTRODUCTION

It is known that changes in the economic, political, technical and socio-cultural spheres are increasingly dynamic, resulting in new influences on workers' health and requiring that tasks be organized under the vision of greater efficiency and productivity, enabling the employee to meet this demand.¹

It is pointed out that some types of work, such as health care services, due to their characteristics, need more attention and cause more emotional exhaustion related to the activities developed, such as the constant interaction with people. Emphasis is placed on nursing, as a profession that is vulnerable to stressors, given its accelerated care routine.²

It is pointed out that professionals in the Nursing area work directly with patients, with death and with nursing care, which require constant attention, whether in the act of medicating or in the act of performing procedures. It is also worth noting that computerization and technologies are in all professional areas, including Nursing, generating a new challenge for many professionals, which helps to trigger stressors in the professional's body.³

It is determined, among the main stressors that affect Nursing, the low number of employees that compose the team, the intense workload, the need to perform tasks in a reduced time, discontent with work, lack of experienced supervisors, the lack of communication and understanding by the supervision of the service, equipment technology, patient care and the relationship with family members.⁴

In this context, Burnout syndrome is defined as a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors, related to the workload, and that is installed as a consequence of the chronicity of the stress resulting from the work, causing personal, professional, family and social damage.⁵

It is believed that this syndrome is a process that develops in the interaction of characteristics of the work and personal environment, considering that it is a problem that reaches professionals in the service, mainly, those directed to activities of care with others, in which the offering of care or service often occurs in situations of emotional changes. Thus, the exercise of the professions that involve care implies a relationship permeated by ambiguities, such as living with the tenuous distinction between professional involvement and personal distancing in helping others.⁶

OBJECTIVE

- To identify the knowledge of Nursing professionals about Burnout syndrome.

METHOD

It is a quantitative, descriptive, exploratory study that provides the most familiarity with the problem, making it more explicit and allowing the construction of hypotheses.⁷

The study was carried out in a private institution located in Teresina (PI), specialized in pediatric care, both in emergency and emergency situations, as well as in routine care, composed of a multiprofessional team of nurses, technicians, pediatric physicians, nutritionists and physiotherapists.

The research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Integral Differential College (FACID), under the number of opinion 2,640,010, and all aspects contained in Resolution No. 466/12 of the National Health Council were respected. It should be pointed out, still in compliance with this resolution, that all participants signed the Free and Informed Consent Form in two ways, one being in the possession of the participant and another, the researcher.

Thirty-two Nursing professionals were selected for the study, of which ten nurses and 22 Nursing technicians who worked at the institution during the period of data collection and who agreed to participate in this research.

Nursing professionals of both sexes who worked during the day period for at least one year at the institution were chosen as inclusion criteria; already the exclusion criteria covered all the professionals who were on vacation, maternity leave or medical certificate.

Data was collected through two questionnaires containing mixed questions during the period from May to June 2018. The variables investigated were related to the sociodemographic profile of the study participants and to the professionals' perception about Burnout syndrome. The instruments were handed over to the professionals, who, individually, answered the questions. The operation of the analysis process was started, after the data collection, the reading of the material for the exploration of the content and the interpretation of the obtained results.

RESULTS

The data analysis was based on sociodemographic information in order to

characterize the sample and also to correlate the perception of Nursing professionals about Burnout syndrome.

It was verified that all the surveyed belonged to the female gender, 50% were between 21 and 29 years old and 53.1% were single; in relation to vocational training, 69% were nursing technicians and 31.2% were nurses. It is pointed out that 81.2% of respondents said they had been in the profession for a decade and 94% had been working in the institution for only one year, being that 81% worked only in the location where the research was performed.

The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 53 years, with 50% of them between the ages of 21 and 29 years old, and the majority of them were single (53.1%); in relation to vocational training, 69% were Nursing technicians and 31.2%, nurses.

Emphasis is given to the sociodemographic data of the sample in table 1, and it is added that 81% had no other employment relationship. It should be noted, however, that the workday of the professionals at the research site corresponded to 12 hours per day, thus obtaining a 12x36 hour journey (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of the data regarding the sociodemographic characteristics of the research participants. Teresina (PI), Brazil, 2018. (n = 32).

Variables	n	%
Sex		
Female	32	100
Male	0	0
Age (years)		
21 - 29	16	50
30 - 38	11	34.3
39 - 47	4	12.5
48 - 56	1	3.1
Marital status		
Single	17	53.1
Married	15	47
Professional qualification		
Nursing course	10	31.2
Nursing technician	22	69
Time working in the area (years)		
1 - 10	26	81.2
11 - 20	4	12.5
21 - 30	2	6.2
Tempo de serviço na instituição (anos)		
1 - 10	30	94
11 - 20	1	3.1
21 - 30	1	3.1
TOTAL	32	100

It is worth noting that, when questioned about refresher courses, 62% of those surveyed reported not having performed them. It was observed that, in relation to nurses, most of them (70%) declared attending

refresher courses at least once a year; on the other hand, 77% of nursing technicians reported not doing these refresher courses (Table 2).

Table 2. Number of professionals who carry out refresher courses annually. Teresina (PI), Brazil, 2018. (n=32).

Variables	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	f	%	n	%
Update courses	7	70	3	30	10	100
Nurses	5	23	17	77	22	100
Nursing technicians						

It is understood, in relation to the perception about Burnout syndrome, which the questions discussed about the concept, the triggering factors and their consequences, besides the investigation of the presence of signs and symptoms in the participants.

After the analysis of the questionnaire responses, it was observed that 40% of the participants did not know the syndrome, 50% had a limited perception about the theme and

10% knew the syndrome, responding adequately to the definition of the syndrome.

It was recorded, regarding the factors triggering the Burnout syndrome, that 40% reported not being able to inform them. Excessive workload (31%), stress (21%), exhaustive routine (15%) and work overload (12%) were the most reported by participants (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Burnout-triggering factors cited by health professionals. Teresina (PI), Brazil, 2018. (n=32).

It was noted, regarding the consequences, that 40% also reported not being aware; on the other hand, the most cited consequences

between thos who informed that they knew them were, depression (21%), impatience (9.3%), and absenteeism (9.3%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Consequences of burnout syndrome cited by health professionals. Teresina (PI), Brazil, 2018. (n = 32).

The participants of the study were also questioned about the presence of some symptoms caused by Burnout syndrome. It was observed that all had at least one of the

symptoms, being predominant symptoms such as impatience (65%), headache (56%) and muscle pain (53%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Symptoms of burnout syndrome present in health professionals. Teresina (PI), Brazil, 2018. (n=32).

DISCUSSION

The results related to the sociodemographic profile of the study participants, including nurses and nursing technicians, showed, in their totality, a profile of female professionals, revealing that the Nursing activities in the hospital institutions are developed by professionals of the female sex, as described in other studies.^{1,8-9}

It is suggested, from these data that work in health services is characterized by greater participation of women. It is understood that the reflection on the different sociocultural requirements between men and women, socially constructed since childhood, is one of the possible considerations about the greater number of women in health services, an area associated with the care and help functions.¹⁰

It is pointed out that, in relation to the perception of ptofessionals about Burnout syndrome, the results of this study coincide with those found in a study conducted in São Paulo, where it was identified that 31% of the sample did not know Burnout syndrome, 65% knew or had already heard and 3.4% did not answer the question.¹¹

It is evidenced, due to the lack of knowledge of nursing professionals about this syndrome, the little emphasis given to this subject during university education in health. It was revealed in a study about burnout syndrome with health professionals that this factor is due to the distorted view that the contents related to the health of this type of worker can be learned during the professional life. This is a cause for concern, since it implies the absence of the implementation of combat measures, in order to provide a better quality of life in the work environment.¹²

Similar results were found in a study about the factors that can trigger Burnout syndrome, in which it was evidenced that Nursing, during its historical walk, over time, has been facing and adapting to the changes that occurred in the work environment, such as the overload of the professional.¹³

A number of other factors that trigger Burnout syndrome, such as lack of material and human resources, interpersonal relationships, excess of noise and lack of systematization of work due to lack of protocols and routines have been pointed out in a study developed with professionals from an intensive care unit.¹⁴

In another study, in addition to these factors, the lack of autonomy, low self-esteem, negativism, mistaken professional choice and lack of preparation and competence may also contribute to the onset of Burnout syndrome.¹⁵

It was demonstrated, from the data of a study developed in a philanthropic hospital in the city of São Paulo, half of the participants had symptoms equivalent to Burnout syndrome and the predictive factors were exhaustive working hours, lack of recognition of the institution for the work done and the deficit remuneration.¹⁶

It should be emphasized, in relation to the stress mentioned by the study participants, that the burns caused by this factor can lead the professional to Burnout syndrome, a term that describes the reality of chronic stress in professionals who perform activities that require a high degree of contact with the people.¹⁰

It was identified, in relation to the consequences, in a survey carried out with 534 nursing technicians, that the majority of professionals (69%) had at least one health leave in the last two years; 23.9% were due to

musculoskeletal causes and 4.8% were attributed to mental disorders.¹

Other consequences have been reported in other studies, such as constant fatigue, sleep disturbance, lack of attention, memory disorders, neglect, irritability, withdrawal tendency, feeling of omnipotence, depressed mood, increased rates of work rotation, chronic fatigue and reduced work capacity, thus increasing the risks of adverse events, and resulting in decreased quality of care. These symptoms are justified by the workload of these women, since they often reconcile domestic activities, play the role of mother and wife, and some exercise double or triple working hours.¹⁷⁻⁹

As for Burnout syndrome symptoms, the majority of participants in this study reported impatience, headache, and muscle pain. A similar result was found in a study carried out in a hospital in the public network of João Pessoa (PB), involving Nursing professionals, in addition to these symptoms, lack of air, insomnia, mood swings, difficulty concentrating, anxiety disorder, depression, discouragement, irritability, aggressiveness, among others.²⁰ In another study, symptoms such as physical and emotional exhaustion, tiredness and fatigue.²¹

The symptoms mentioned above are typical symptoms of Burnout syndrome, which include feelings of physical and emotional exhaustion, reflected in negative attitudes such as absences at work, aggression, isolation, abrupt mood changes, irritability, difficulty anxiety, depression, pessimism, low self-esteem, headache, migraine, fatigue, high blood pressure, muscle aches, insomnia, and gastrointestinal disorders.²²

It is inferred, from what has been reported, that Burnout syndrome is an experience of a subjective nature, which can trigger a set of physical and psychic signs and symptoms, resulting from poor adaptation to work and an intense emotional load, and which may be accompanied by frustration about self and work.²³

It is noticed, however, that many situations can lead to the development of burnout syndrome in nursing professionals. It is suggested, therefore, that they should be attentive, both to face adequately these stress situations, and to perceive, in advance, the symptoms that may manifest and that require an appropriate treatment.²⁰

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings of this study that a significant number of Nursing

professionals do not know the Burnout syndrome, and that another significant part has limited knowledge about the subject matter.

Therefore, it is important to take into account the results found and the importance of the prevention of Burnout syndrome in the health area, especially for the Nursing profession, the contribution of this study with regard to information, reflection and, consequently, health promotion and quality of life, as well as the prevention of Burnout syndrome in hospital settings.

Thus, in the study, the need to carry out educational programs in health institutions was evidenced in order to inform, raise awareness and favor the reflection of professionals on the subject in a more profound and comprehensive way.

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