



Journal of Nursing

Revista de Enfermagem

UFPE On Line

ISSN: 1981-8963

EXPERIENCE REPORT ARTICLE

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH TEACHING IN THE UNDERGRADUATE NURSING COURSE: AN EXPERIENCE REPORT

ENSINO DE SAÚDE DO TRABALHADOR NA GRADUAÇÃO EM ENFERMAGEM: UM RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA

ENSEÑANZA DE SALUD LABORAL EN LA GRADUACIÓN EN ENFERMERÍA: UN RELATO DE EXPERIENCIA

Lorena Fernanda Silva Oliveira¹, Soraya Maria Medeiros², Aline Dannyele Souza Oliveira³, Jailma Amanda Silva⁴, Alzeneide Fernandes de Oliveira⁵

ABSTRACT

Objective: to report the experience of undergraduate Nursing students when identifying the risks which can cause occupational health problems and analyze the use of individual protective equipment and collective protective equipment (CPE) as a safety measure in the work environment. **Method:** this is a descriptive study, with an experience report nature, about the experience of undergraduate Nursing students during technical visits to the University Restaurant of Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN). The practices took place from September to November 2011. **Results:** one observed that the restaurant workers are exposed to physical, chemical, biological, and ergonomic occupational risks, besides accidents. **Conclusion:** one hopes to encourage Nursing professionals and undergraduate students to think through the occupational health field and increase their scientific knowledge on the theme. **Descriptors:** Occupational Health; Nursing; Occupational Risks.

RESUMO

Objetivo: relatar a experiência vivenciada por acadêmicos de Enfermagem ao identificar os riscos que podem causar agravos à saúde do trabalhador e analisar a utilização dos equipamentos de proteção individual e equipamentos de proteção coletiva como medida de segurança no ambiente laboral. **Método:** trata-se de estudo descritivo, do tipo relato de experiência, acerca da vivência de acadêmicos de Enfermagem durante a realização de visitas técnicas ao Restaurante Universitário da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN). **Resultados:** observou-se que os trabalhadores do restaurante estão expostos a riscos ocupacionais físicos, químicos, biológicos e ergonômicos, além de acidentes. **Conclusão:** almeja-se estimular os profissionais e acadêmicos de Enfermagem a refletir sobre a área da saúde do trabalhador e ampliar seus conhecimentos científicos sobre a temática. **Descritores:** Saúde do Trabalhador; Enfermagem; Riscos Ocupacionais.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: relatar la experiencia vivida por estudiantes de graduación en Enfermería al identificar los riesgos que pueden causar problemas a la salud laboral y analizar el uso de equipos de protección individual (EPIs) y equipos de protección colectiva como medida de seguridad en el ambiente laboral. **Método:** esto es un estudio descriptivo, del tipo relato de experiencia, acerca de la experiencia de los estudiantes de graduación en Enfermería durante visitas técnicas al Restaurante Universitario de la Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte. **Resultados:** se observó que los trabajadores del restaurante están expuestos a riesgos laborales físicos, químicos, biológicos y ergonómicos, además de los accidentes. **Conclusión:** se tiene como objetivo estimular a los profesionales y estudiantes de graduación en Enfermería a reflexionar sobre el área de la salud laboral y ampliar sus conocimientos científicos acerca del tema. **Descriptores:** Salud Laboral; Enfermería; Riesgos Laborales.

¹Nurse, Undergraduate student at the Licentiate's degree in Nursing of Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN). Natal (RN), Brazil. Email: lorena.enf.2011@gmail.com; ²Nurse, Adjunct Professor at the Nursing Department and the Graduate Program in Nursing of UFRN. Natal (RN), Brazil. Email: sorayamaria_ufrn@hotmail.com; ³Nurse, Undergraduate student at the Licentiate's degree in Nursing of UFRN. Natal (RN), Brazil. Email: alinedannyele@hotmail.com; ⁴Nurse, Undergraduate student at the Licentiate's degree in Nursing of UFRN. Natal (RN), Brazil. Email: jailmaamanda@gmail.com; ⁵Nutritionist, Consultant in Food and Production Nutritionist at the University Restaurant of UFRN. Natal (RN), Brazil. Email: alzeneidefo@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Occupational health is an area within public health which has the relationship between work and health as its object for study and intervention; its aims are promoting and protecting workers' health through surveillance actions with regard to risks, conditions, and occupational diseases, as well as organizing and assisting workers.¹ Occupational diseases refer to the set of damages or injuries affecting workers' health, triggered or aggravated by risk factors found at work settings.²

Classically, the risk factors for workers' health and safety, related to the work environment, may be classified into five major groups: physical (noise, vibration, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation, extreme temperatures, abnormal atmospheric pressure), chemical (chemical agents and substances, whether in the liquid or gaseous state or as mineral and vegetable particles and dust), biological (viruses, bacteria, parasites, usually associated to work at hospitals, laboratories, agriculture, and animal husbandry), ergonomic and psychosocial (deriving from work organization and management), and accidents (related to protection of machinery, physical arrangement, order and cleanliness in the work environment, signalling, product labeling).³

Dangers and risks for workers' health must be continuously recognized and evaluated, and the implementation of collective protective equipment (CPE) and the use of individual protective equipment (IPE) are important measures of prevention and protection in the work environment.^{4,5}

The importance of the theme occupational health surveillance as a means for the development of health actions in the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) brings up the need for including content on the theme in the nursing professional's training.⁶

In the curricular component Supervised Internship II – Axis Occupational Health, offered in the undergraduate Nursing course of Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), undergraduate students conduct technical visits to the University Restaurant (UR) of this institution, in order to evaluate the work environment, observe the occupational risks to which workers are exposed, discuss the use of IPE and CPE, as well as the individual and collective strategies for coping with these risks.

The aim of this study is to report the experience lived by undergraduate Nursing

students when identifying the risks which can cause occupational health problems and analyze the use of IPE and CPE as a safety measure in the work environment, during technical visits to the UR of UFRN.

METHOD

Descriptive study, with an experience report nature, on the experience of undergraduate Nursing students from UFRN, carried out through technical visits to the UR of the institution.

The Supervised Internship II is a curricular component of the undergraduate Nursing course and it combines to the practical part of the discipline Integral Health Care II, where the axis Occupational Health is included. The theme Occupational Health is addressed only by the Nursing course in this institution. The practices are developed during one semester, when the undergraduate student is supervised by a tutoring professor. This teaching-learning tool allows the student to live experiences and develop technical, scientific, and reflective skills with regard to occupational health.

The practices take place from May to July in the first semester and from September to November in the second semester of each school year, in different settings, for the analysis of work environments such as: civil construction building works, the Worker's Assistance Department (DAS) of the Human Resources Pro-Rectorship (PRH) of UFRN, the Reference Center for Occupational Health (CEREST/SMS), and the UR, the study site of this experience report. The technical visit to the UR occurred during the second semester of the 2011 school year.

The UR of UFRN was created by the Resolution 58/63, enacted on 16 December, 1963, constituting an organ of the institution directly connected to the Pro-Rectorship for Student Affairs. It aims to meet the needs of faculty, students, and administration from the university, offering meals prepared according to a balanced diet considering the food availability in the region.⁷ The site was chosen for the development of the study due to the large number of workers involved in a work process characterized by monotony and the requirement of productivity.

During the technical visits, students are encouraged to write their impressions of each service visited. Some services are analyzed with the use of an instrument for checklist on aspects related to: occupational risks, employment status, workload, occupational exams, among others.

At the time of the practice, the tutoring professor incites discussions questioning the reality of the current work world, as a means to allow an understanding on the complexity of the theme under study with regard to its political, economic, social, and cultural aspects.

RESULTS

One can observe that the workers from the UR of UFRN are exposed to physical, chemical, biological, and ergonomic occupational risks, besides accidents.

In the workers' access to the restaurant, there're changing rooms where the employees may exchange domestic clothing for the working uniform, in order to reduce the risk of food contamination, as well as to prevent the spread of microorganisms – risk biological – from the work environment to the home environment. At the very entrance of the UR, one can identify a physical risk, characterized by excess noise, detrimental to workers' health. The noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is caused when workers are continuously exposed to high levels of sound pressure.^{8,9}

In the area of juice and dessert processing, one observes that workers spend most of their time standing, assuming an improper posture, while they manipulate fruits to produce juice, making circular motions with their fists. Repetitive movements, abnormal postures, and the use of physical force characterize exposure to ergonomic risk, an important trigger of musculoskeletal disorders.¹⁰ Noise can also be identified in this sector, something which is aggravated by the lack of use of ear muffs by some workers. It's noteworthy that some of them show some resistance to the proper use of IPE, alleging discomfort.

The vegetable processing sector presents itself as an area which offers risks for occupational accidents, while constantly remaining in wet floor conditions, increasing the risk of falls and also posing the risk of shock due to handling electrical equipment. Furthermore, the permanence of workers standing, due to the height of the table for cutting vegetables and the repetitive movement of the cutting process constitute ergonomic risk factors. The steel mesh glove, suitable for workers handling knives, isn't often used during the activity.

In the cooking or final processing area, one observes that the professionals are exposed to heat, steam (physical risks), and fat droplets suspended in the air (chemical risk). The refectory's washing room is an area where

there's excessive heat exposure, due to the need to eliminate fecal coliforms and bacteria of the genus *Salmonella* from the dishes, cutlery, and trays which will be shared by users of this service, in order to avoid food poisoning. The loud noise caused by the process of cleaning utensils is identified, again, and it's regarded as the site with the highest noise production in the UR. The refectory's washing room is also responsible for a high incidence of circulatory system and musculoskeletal diseases, due to the fact that workers remain plenty of time standing, assuming improper postures, when washing pans and other utensils.

Despite the high number of occupational risks to which the professionals from the UR of UFRN are exposed, one observes that IPE was available in the work environment, although they weren't used by some workers at their own option, for the sake of comfort. During the technical visits, workers were wearing uniform, closed non-skid shoes, bonnets, aprons, burrows, gowns, and mantles, some were wearing glasses, earplugs, and steel mesh gloves. However, one observed that, even though some of them don't use IPE, everyone was aware of the importance of using the devices designed for protection from risks likely to endanger safety and health at work. The perception of risks in the professional activity is important in order to avoid negligence with regard to adequate protection.¹¹

In addition to the IPE, collective protective measures were also observed, such as the physical structure of the loading and unloading area, where there're access ramps, cargo carts, and unevenness of the floor to prevent damage to the musculoskeletal system. The existence of sinks for handwashing, fire extinguishers, environments illuminated by lamps with protective acrylic, used as protection means in case of explosion and production of sharp splinters and flames, non-skid floor, the presence of locks inside and outside the doors for accessing the cold rooms (cold cuts, frozen products, produce, and leftovers), providing some areas with air-conditioning, electrical outlets designed so that there's no contact between the switch and the worker's finger, avoiding shocks.

Regarding safety in food handling, the Sanitary Surveillance Technical Advisory (COVISA) requires making admission and periodic medical examinations, accompanied by laboratory tests, according to medical criteria, taking into account the activities performed by the employee. The frequency of medical laboratory tests should be at least

every six months. This is an important control practice for workers' health, especially those who manipulate food.¹²

FINAL REMARKS

During the technical visits to the UR of UFRN, it was possible to discuss the occupational health surveillance, an important area of nurse's work. To evaluate the various work environments should be part of the investigation of risk factors compromising the health-disease process.

One hopes that this experience report encourage the Nursing professional and undergraduate students to think through the importance of the work field related to occupational health, as well as to increase their scientific knowledge on the theme.

One also stresses that this experience has been highly valued by the undergraduate Nursing students, since most of them use the service of this restaurant and, so, they have an opportunity to evaluate it under a perspective different from that to which they're accustomed to.

REFERENCES

1. Mantovani MF, Lacerda MR, Ulbrich E, Bandeira JM, Gaio DM. Panorama da produção do conhecimento em enfermagem na saúde do trabalhador: impacto e perspectivas. Rev Bras Enf [Internet]. Sept-Oct 2009 [cited 2012 Jan 23];62(5):784-88. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/reben/v62n5/24.pdf>
2. Brasil. Ministério da Saúde. Secretaria de Políticas de Saúde. Departamento de Atenção Básica. Área Técnica de Saúde do Trabalhador. Saúde do trabalhador/Ministério da Saúde, Departamento de Atenção Básica, Departamento de Ações Programáticas e Estratégicas, Área Técnica de Saúde do Trabalhador. - Brasília: Ministério da Saúde; 2001.
3. Mauro MYC, Muzi CD, Guimarães RM, Mauro CCC. Riscos ocupacionais em saúde. Rev Enferm UERJ [Internet]. 2004 [cited 2012 Jan 30];(12):338-45. Available from: <http://www.facenf.uerj.br/v12n3/v12n3a14.pdf>
4. Veiga MM, Duarte FJCM, Meirelles LA, Garrigou A, Baldi I. A contaminação por agrotóxicos e os Equipamentos de Proteção Individual (EPIs). Rev bras Saúde ocup [Internet]. 2007 [cited 2012 Jan 30];32(116):57-68. Available from: <http://www.fundacentro.gov.br/rbso/BancoAnexo/RBSO%20116%20Ensaio%20Agrot%C3%B3xicos%20e%20EPIs.pdf>
5. Miranda FMA, Junior AVS, Petreli S, Pires MR, Soares LG, Ribeiral BN, et al. Uma contribuição à saúde dos trabalhadores: um guia sobre exposição aos fluídos biológicos. Rev Esc Enferm USP [Internet] 2011[cited 2012 Jan 25];45(4):1018-22. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/reeusp/v45n4/v45n4a33.pdf>
6. Monteiro MS, Santos EV dos, Kawakami LS, Wada M. O ensino de vigilância à saúde do trabalhador no curso de enfermagem. Rev Esc Enferm USP [Internet] 2007 [cited 2012 Jan 27];42(2):306-10. Available from: <http://www.ee.usp.br/reeusp/upload/pdf/718.pdf>
7. Brasil. Conselho Superior Universitário da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (CONSUNI). Resolução Nº 35/79 de 19 de março de 1979: aprova Regimento do Restaurante Universitário. Ministério Da Educação e do Desporto: Universidade Federal Do Rio Grande Do Norte, 1979.
8. Ogido R, Costa EA, Machado HC. Prevalência de sintomas auditivos e vestibulares em trabalhadores expostos a ruído ocupacional. Rev Saúde Pública [Internet]. 2009 [cited 2012 Jan 29];43(2):377-80. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/rsp/v43n2/7239.pdf>
9. Guida HL, Morini RG, Cardoso ACV. Audiological evaluation in workers exposed to noise and pesticide. Braz J Otorhinolaryngol [Internet]. July-Aug 2010 [cited 2012 Jan 28];76(4):423-27. Available from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/bjorl/v76n4/en_v76n4a03.pdf
10. Fernandes RCP, Assunção AA, Carvalho FM. Tarefas repetitivas sob pressão temporal: os distúrbios musculoesqueléticos e o trabalho industrial. Ciênc Saúde Coletiva on line [Internet]. 2010 [cited 2012 Jan 27];15(3):931-42. Available from: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/csc/v15n3/v15n3a37.pdf>
11. Oenning NSX, Araújo NMM, Brito VMF de, Santos CMF dos. Assunção de riscos ocupacionais no Serviço de Atendimento Móvel de Urgência (SAMU). J Nurs UFPE on line [Internet]. 2012 Feb [cited 2012 July 03];6(2):346-52. Available from: http://www.ufpe.br/revistaenfermagem/index.php/revista/article/view/2179/pdf_807
12. Prefeitura do Município de São Paulo. Secretaria Municipal de Saúde. Coordenação de Vigilância em Saúde. Gerência de Produtos e Serviços de Interesse à Saúde. Manual boas

Oliveira ADS, Alves AEC, Silva JA et al.

Occupational health teaching in the...

práticas de manipulação de alimentos [Internet]. São Paulo: Secretaria Municipal de Saúde. 2006 [cited 2011 Jan 30]. Available from:

http://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/upload/Manual_Alimentos_Seguros_1255033506.pdf

Sources of funding: No
Conflict of interest: No
Date of first submission: 2012/06/25
Last received: 2012/11/11
Accepted: 2012/11/12
Publishing: 2012/12/01

Corresponding Address

Lorena Fernanda Silva de Oliveira
Rua Ferreira Nobre, 1412 – Alecrim
CEP: 59040-230 – Natal (RN), Brazil