



Impact of burnout syndrome amongst nurse professionals

A comment on: Global prevalence of burnout symptoms among nurses: A systematic review and meta-analysis, by Woo T, Ho R, Tang A, Tam W. J. Psychiatr. Res. 123: 9-20, 2020. doi: 10.1016/j.jpsychires.2019.12.015

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Healthcare professionals experience a very stressful work environment, especially because they are repeatedly subjected to a labor regime that is much higher and distressful than recommended, which ultimately causes physical and psychological exhaustion, intensely aggravated for the deal of the constant risk of mortality of their patients. Thus, it is not uncommon for medical professionals to be affected by occupational stress (Teraoka and Kyougoku, 2019).

Burnout syndrome (BS), a syndrome firstly identified by Herbert Freudenberger (1974), is a disorder directly associated with the exhaustive condition experienced by healthcare professionals. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) burnout is defined as an occupational phenomenon correlated with chronic job-related stress, being characterized by “feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job, and reduced professional efficacy” (WHO, 2018).

Among the health professionals, nurses are the mostly affected by BS (Moss et al., 2016). In light of this, a comprehensive systematic review and meta-analysis by Woo and co-workers (2020) brings some alarming data. In that study, the authors point to a burnout prevalence of more than 11% in nurses worldwide, especially in African continent, with pediatric nurses being the most affected (Woo et al., 2020). In addition, the authors state that, due to varying burnout instruments, cutoff score recommendations and definitions, there is significant heterogeneity in investigated rates of SB prevalence across distinct studies. Intervention studies and public policies should be adopted around the world in order to minimize the risks of BS development in nursing professionals, focusing on the improvement of labor conditions, looking for strategies that aim to avoid work stress.

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