

Illness and mental health facing the covid-19 pandemic scenario experienced by nursing professionals

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Enfermedad y salud mental ante el escenario de pandemia covid-19 experimentado por profesionales de enfermería

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar o processo de adoecimento e saúde mental diante do cenário de pandemia COVID-19. Método: trata-se de uma revisão integrativa realizada na base de dados da biblioteca virtual SciELO, com descritores "Adoecimento" "Saúde mental" "Profissionais de enfermagem", "Coronavírus AND Profissionais de saúde" "Pandemia". Resultados: estudos têm indicado que os medos de ser infectado, da rápida disseminação, geram incertezas, preocupações, com carga horária exaustiva de trabalho que resultam em sentimentos que podem afetar a saúde mental. Conclusão: A pandemia é um acontecimento que torna mais evidente as condições de trabalho que eram prejudiciais no cotidiano da saúde mental e as necessidades de estratégias nos serviços de saúde que visem o cuidado ao cuidador.

DESCRIPTORES: Adoecimento, Saúde Mental, Profissionais de Enfermagem, Coronavírus, Pandemia, Profissionais de Saúde.

ABSTRACT

Objective: to analyze the process of illness and mental health in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic scenario. Method: this is an integrative review carried out in the SCIELO virtual library database, with descriptors "Disease" "Mental health" "Nursing professionals", "Coronavirus AND health professionals" "Pandemic". Results: studies have indicated that fears of being infected, of rapid dissemination, generate uncertainty, concerns, with exhaustive work hours that result in feelings that can affect mental health. Conclusion: The pandemic is an event that makes more evident the working conditions that were harmful in daily mental health and the need for strategies in health services aimed at caring for the caregiver.

DESCRIPTORS: Illness, Mental Health, Nursing Professionals, Coronavirus, Pandemic, Health Professionals.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: analizar el proceso de enfermedad y salud mental ante el escenario pandémico COVID-19. Método: se trata de una revisión integradora realizada en la base de datos de la biblioteca virtual SCIELO, con descriptores "Enfermedad" "Salud mental" "Profesionales de enfermería", "Coronavirus Y profesionales de la salud" "Pandemia". Resultados: los estudios han indicado que los temores de contagiarse, de rápida diseminación, generan incertidumbre, inquietudes, con jornadas laborales exhaustivas que derivan en sentimientos que pueden afectar la salud mental. Conclusión: La pandemia es un evento que evidencia las condiciones laborales nocivas en la salud mental cotidiana y la necesidad de estrategias en los servicios de salud dirigidas al cuidado del cuidador.

DESCRIPTORES: Atención a la Salud; Enfermedad, Salud Mental, Profesionales de Enfermería, Coronavirus, Pandemia, Profesionales de la Salud.

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, the first cases of pneumonia of unknown origin appeared in Wuhan, it is currently classified as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS - CoV -2), in January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the disease of the new coronavirus 19 (COVID 19) a public health emergency.¹

In Brazil, according to the Ministry of Health, the first case of the disease was confirmed at the end of January 2020,¹ generating social, economic and health impacts on the population and more intensely on health professionals. Studies portray the psychodynamics of activities, especially of the nursing professional, the work situation raises feelings and an ambiguity in the exercise of the profession, experiencing emotional exhaustion that can cause mental disorders.²

The work and emotional overload directly implies greater occupational risks and mental exhaustion that can lead to compromised performance of functions. At this time of the pandemic crisis, there is the intense precariousness of health services, the quantitative and qualitative shortage of professionals, which causes long working hours, enhancing the psychic suffering of the nursing team.³⁻⁴

Each profession retains its own characteristics of its work in health, but they share several aspects of the activities developed within the multidisciplinary team. Within this panorama, the importance of highlighting the specific needs related to the dynamics of the work activity of each profession

is highlighted.⁵

In particular, nursing, as it has a female predominance, contemplates a context of double working hours, as well as the devaluation of female labor, despite the historical advances achieved in women's movements. In the current scenario of the new COVID-19, this situation tends to be enhanced, with psychological implications, which are often underestimated or neglected.⁵⁻⁶

Health professionals experience situations of stress and anxiety in their work activities, because with the emergence of COVID-19, the team works both on the front line in combating the pandemic and in caring for people with different types of diseases, conditions that generate breaking with the solely curative logic, constituting new conceptions of the concept of death and life, health and illness, considering the need to review concepts that allow a greater perception of reality, in order to avoid mental illness.⁷

In the current context, there is a need for psychosocial interventions aimed at caring for the mental health of health professionals, in order to minimize the impacts caused in the work environment in the context of the pandemic.⁶⁻⁸

In Brazil, psychological services provided for in resolution nº 4, of March 26, 2020, were implemented, not exclusively aimed at health teams, the service allows care through technology, but few studies are observed that address strategic models for the mental health of health professionals, most of the available studies were carried out in China, but these findings

In Brazil, according to the Ministry of Health, the first case of the disease was confirmed at the end of January 2020,¹ generating social, economic and health impacts on the population and more intensely on health professionals

cannot be generalized to other countries, as there are individual characteristics that need to be taken into account to provide a relevant impact. 6-8

This article aims to analyze, from selected articles, the process of illness and mental health in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic scenario, in order to point out the impacts that have been occurring and that are expected, in view of the constant concern about exposure to contagion and the social isolation experienced by nursing professionals.

METHOD

This is an integrative literature review, a technique that gathers and synthesizes the knowledge produced through the analysis of results evidenced in primary studies by specialized authors. According to Souza; Silva; Carvalho, the integrative review reveals itself as a methodology that enables the summary of knowledge and the integration of the usefulness of results and relevant studies in practice. 9

This methodology was developed in six stages used to carry out the work, they are: 1) identification of the theme and elaboration of the guiding question, 2) literature search and selection of studies, 3) analysis of the included studies, 4) critical analysis of the included studies, 5) discussion of results and 6) presentation of the integrative review. 9

In this review, articles indexed in the electronic database SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) published in Portuguese were searched. The search among the articles covered the period from January 2020 to February 2021. This study aims to answer the following question: what is the relationship between the pandemic and mental illness, and how can it establish the impact on illness and on the mental health of nursing healthcare professionals?

The inclusion criteria adopted in the study were: Brazilian articles published in Portuguese; available in full, contained in the thematic area of health sciences and nursing. The search was constituted using

Figure 1: Flowchart related to the selection process of documents on mental health of nursing professionals in the context of the pandemic published in the VHL Bibliotexa Virtual database of the Ministry of Health and SciELO, Scientific Electronic Library Online (2020-2021)



the following descriptors: illness; mental health; nursing professionals.

Initially, 97 Brazilian publications were found in Portuguese. After applying the determined inclusion criteria, including search descriptors, 15 articles were selected to be part of the study corpus (Figure 1).

The articles identified by the search strategy were evaluated and the material was read in full.

For analysis and discussion of the results, they were grouped and characterized as seen in table 1, being organized with the following information: title, authors, year of publication, objective, results.

The analysis of the articles was carried out from the analysis of thematic content, which according to Bardin, is a set of communication analysis techniques, aiming to obtain, by objective and systematic procedures of description of the content of the messages, indicators (quantitative or not) that allow the inference of knowledge regarding the conditions of production/reception of these messages. 10

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Studies have indicated that the fear of being infected by a potentially fatal virus,

with serious sequelae, of rapid dissemination, in which the origin, nature and course, mainly the fear of contracting and transmitting the disease to their family members, as well as the uncertainty about the duration of the pandemic and the suffering of being away from their homes. 5

Nursing professionals correspond to the largest category of health professionals and are continuously at the side of the patient, without considering their responsibility for welcoming, attentive listening and comfort of the assisted patients, generating high demand and emotional exhaustion. 11

Studies by Duarte et al., point to the growth in the number of cases and the need for health care for severe cases, which go beyond exposure to pathogens and include long working hours, psychological suffering, fatigue, professional burnout, stigma and physical and psychological violence. The changes that the pandemic has caused in nursing professionals are expressive, physical and mental exhaustion added to precarious working conditions, low wages and the fear of dying, accentuating stress and consequently the loss of satisfaction in life. 12

The COVID-19 pandemic impacts the mental health of nursing professionals, with

Table 1: Survey of articles

AUTHOR, YEAR	TITLE	OBJECTIVE	RESULTS
MINERVINO, Alfredo José et al. 2020	Challenges in mental health during the pandemic: experience report.	To report the experience of the mental health service of a university hospital and the medical residency	The study shows the suitability of the service during the pandemic period, such as teleservice and face-to-face consultations according to severity, and the project Reception in Mental Health in times of a pandemic was created to assist hospital professionals.
TEIXEIRA, Carmen Fontes de Souza et al. 2020	The health of health professionals in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Systematize scientific evidence in international articles	The article reports the problems that health professionals face in the pandemic, such as contamination, mental health problems, among others. In addition, how health management in Brazil faces these acute problems and others that are chronic in the country's scenario.
SCHMIDT, Beatriz et al. 2020	Mental health and psychological interventions in the face of the new coronavirus pandemic	Systematize knowledge about implications for mental health and psychological interventions	Results are presented on the impacts of the pandemic on mental health, identification of priority groups and guidelines on psychological interventions and the potential and challenges for the practice of psychologists in the Brazilian context during the pandemic.
ORNELL, Felipe et al. 2020	The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of healthcare professionals.	Report the mental disorders suffered by health professionals in the coronavirus pandemic.	Loneliness, impotence, stress, irritability, physical and mental fatigue, despair and Burnout syndrome are some of the mental disorders addressed by the study. In addition, it outlines some support measures such as psychological intervention.
SANTOS, Gabriela de Brito Martins et al, 2020	Self-care: health workers in times of a COVID-19 pandemic.	To problematize care practices during the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on the right to protection of women health professionals, according to Michel Foucault's conceptions	The study advances the inquiry about the crisis of care and makes self-care visible among health workers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a possible way to reverse practices of domination through the creation of practices of freedom, thus, affirming the production of care as a creator of value and respect for the lives of all.
SILVA, Luiz Sérgio et al, 2020	Working conditions and lack of information on the impact of COVID-19 among health workers	Discuss the health and safety conditions of workers caring for COVID-19 patients.	The initial study describing the characteristics of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the health work process; initiatives by organizations representing workers to fight COVID-19; discussing that the exposure of these workers can lead to other health events, requiring adequate measures in relation to the number of professionals, improvement in organization and working conditions.

DUARTE, SILVA, BAGATINI, 2021	Nursing and mental health: a reflection in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic	Reflecting on the mental health of nursing professionals in the context of the coronavirus pandemic	The analyzed studies, added to the care practice, have shown that nursing professionals are susceptible to the exacerbation of symptoms such as depression, anxiety, insomnia, anguish, stress, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, in view of the exhausting work shifts, the death of patients, risk of self-contamination and that of their families and social isolation.
RAMOS-TOES-CHER, Aline Marcelino et al, 2020	Mental health of nursing professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic: support resources	Reflect on the implications of the coronavirus pandemic on the mental health of nursing professionals	In response to the pandemic, a mental health crisis may be occurring among nursing professionals. As they are directly linked to the care of cases of the new coronavirus, they experience stressful situations, in addition to those already experienced in health services, including concerns, fear and insecurity with the health of themselves and the population.
Saidel M, Lima M, Campos C, Loyola C, Esperidião E, Rodrigues J.	Mental health interventions for health professionals in face of the Coronavirus pandemic	Reflect on mental health care interventions/actions aimed at health professionals who provide care to patients suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19.	The COVID-19 pandemic poses a challenge for healthcare professionals in dealing with their own mental health and that of patients. It is essential to know and reflect on initiatives that countries present to deal with the maintenance of the mental health of health professionals in times of a pandemic and that contribute to rethinking the planning, execution and evaluation of strategies to be used in Brazil.
Pai D, Lautert L, Krug J	Psychodynamics and mental health of the nursing worker: accelerated pace and intensification of doing*	The present study discusses the psychodynamics of urgent and emergency nursing work and its impact on workers' mental health.	The results point to the presence of an intensified work rhythm characterized by unpredictability, generating consequences in the daily life and mental health of the worker.
Fernandes M, Soares L, Silva J.	Work-related mental disorders among nursing professionals: a Brazilian integrative review	The aim of the present study was to survey studies conducted in Brazil to investigate the causal relationship between mental disorders and nursing professionals' work.	Mental suffering impairs the family, social, personal and professional life of nursing professionals, their studies, self-comprehension and understanding of others, self-criticism ability, acceptance of problems and possibility to take pleasure in life as a whole.
Souza NVDO, Carvalho EC, Soares SSS, Varella TCMML, Pereira SRM, Andrade KBS.	Nursing work in the COVID-19 pandemic and repercussions for workers' mental health	Reflect on the work context of nursing professionals in the COVID-19 pandemic and the repercussions for these professionals' mental health	The COVID-19 pandemic made explicit the consequences of precariousness in the health sector. For example, the psychic suffering of nursing workers was evidenced due to the scarcity of personal protective equipment, the fragility in the description of protocols and flows for the effective control of infections, prolonged working hours, inadequate professional training for the crisis scenario and uncertainties in relation to therapeutic measures.

artigo

Oliveira, J. C., Rodrigues, J. P., Fonseca, K. N. G., Lima, R. O. S., Souza, T. C., Carvalho, R. C.
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Moreira A, De lucca S.	Psychosocial support and mental health of nursing professionals in the fight against COVID-19.	To describe and discuss the role of nursing professionals, their exposure to risk factors at work and the importance of psychosocial support in the COVID-19 pandemic.	Nursing professionals are on the front lines in the fight against COVID-19 and exposed to a greater risk of contamination due to the scarcity of resources, such as the lack of personal protective equipment. The removal of contaminated colleagues, the high demands, the scarcity of materials, the fear of being contaminated and the lack of psychosocial support overload these professionals and cause stress and can trigger physical and psychological exhaustion.
Lima, A.M.; Carvalho, C.M.S.M.; Angelo, L.M.; Oliveira, M.A.; Oliveira da Silva, P.C.P.; Santos, R.G.S.; Carvalho da Silva, R.O.;	Relationships between the COVID-19 pandemic and the mental health of nursing professionals.	To describe the Relationships between the COVID-19 pandemic and the mental health of nursing professionals.	The present study has as results the experiences of health professionals in relation to the fear of illness by COVID-19, fear of contaminating a family member, leading to stressful issues in relation to work dynamics, different ways of dealing with death.

the increase in cases of infections, more and more professionals with prolonged exposure to the virus imply the possibility of facing other vulnerabilities for contagion and illness evidenced by exhaustion, frustrations related to the quality of care, fatigue, stigma. 10,12,14

The associated morbidities demonstrate impacts on the mental health of these workers, such as burnout syndrome, depression and the fear about the intensification of suicide rates and disabling mental sequelae generated by this overload, caused by physical and mental exhaustion, also causing reduced personal fulfillment at work. 14

In the current health situation of professionals working in the pandemic scenario, it is necessary to question the care aimed at those who care, who, in the face of the potentialization of risks resulting from the strenuous workday, are being infected en masse, subjected to the need for leave due to worsening rates of mental suffering; deprivation of sleep quality or insomnia, increased use of psychoactive substances, denial, fear, resistance in dealing with the loss of co-workers, and difficulty in coping with decision-making. 15

However, health strategies to support and support the mental health of health professionals point to two articles that show in their results the creation of teams of cognitive behavioral therapies, meditation techniques, brief intervention focused on stress and resilience training, techniques with demonstrably positive effects on sleep, fatigue, depression and work engagement. 16-17

In the study by Duarte, Silva and Bagatini 10, informs a guide released by the WHO with care for mental health during the pandemic of guidelines that include reducing reading of news that can cause anxiety or stress, taking breaks at work, including when working from home; maintain a healthy diet, regular sleep and the practice of physical exercises or meditation; and, also, keep in touch with family members through the virtual environment, respecting physical distance.

Four of the studies report the need for psychological services performed by means of information and communication technology, which can occur on online platforms (Instagram and WhatsApp, virtual booklets, platforms with informative guides, software), or even using informative

materials from virtual booklets, videos, audios, video lessons, manuals, e-books. 5,6, 13-16

CONCLUSION

The study made it possible to reflect on the mental health of health professionals with an emphasis on nurses in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with emphasis on conditions that favor mental illness. The pandemic is an event that makes more evident the working conditions that were harmful in the daily life of mental health and the need for strategies in health services aimed at caring for the caregiver.

As a limiting factor for the analysis of the theoretical aspects of the research, it emphasizes the lack of studies that correlate psychic illness in the pandemic scenario.

Further studies and reflections are recommended that support means of support for these professionals, therapeutic support, with qualified listening and improvements in the work environment, with the provision of necessary inputs for safety and adequate staff dimensioning to avoid work overload.

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