



Mental health of nursing students during their training: A Review

Bibliographic

Mental health of nursing students during their training: A Bibliographic Review

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Summary

INTRODUCTION: The university context imposes conditions of vulnerability, contributing to the detriment of students' mental health. Additionally, the environment in which nursing students are immersed causes them to feel under constant pressure, considering that they need to deal with stressful situations related to clinical practice. **OBJECTIVE:** To conduct a survey of how the mental health of nursing students presents itself during their undergraduate studies, based on current literature.

METHODOLOGY: This is a literature review conducted in 2022 using the descriptors "Mental Health," "Nursing Student," and "Brazil," restricting the search to articles from the last 10 years. **RESULTS:** 32 publications were found; however, after eliminating duplicates and applying the inclusion criteria (studies with undergraduate nursing students in Brazil) and exclusion criteria (studies with undergraduates from other courses or with postgraduate students and studies including students from other countries), 11 scientific articles remained. **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:** It was identified that the mental health of nursing students undergoes significant changes during their training, with stress being the main factor responsible for psychic manifestations and the development of mental disorders in students.

Furthermore, the risk of suicide has proven to be a relevant problem to be considered, given the worrying rates evidenced in the literature reviewed.

Keywords: Systematic Review, Mental Health, Nursing Students.

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: The university context conditions of vulnerability, confident for the benefit of students' mental health. Adjunct, the scenario in which the nursing student is inserted makes him feel under pressure at all times, considering that he needs to deal with stressful situations related to the practice-assistance. **OBJECTIVE:** To carry out a survey of how the mental health of students during undergraduate nursing is presented, based on current bibliographies.

Method: 11 scientific articles remained: identified- It is known that the mental health of nursing students presents significant changes during their training, with stress being the main factor responsible for psychic manifestations and the development of mental disorders in students. Furthermore, the risk of suicide proved to be a relevant problem to be addressed considered, in view of the worrying rates evidenced in the literature addressed.

Keywords: Systematic review. Mental health. Nursing Students.

1. Introduction

The article should be formatted with the page setup set to A4 paper size, with margins of 3.0, 2.0, 3.0, and 2.0 cm (as in this text), in a single column. The articles Complete manuscripts must be submitted in two formats: .PDF and WORD (.docx). It should have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 25 pages. Note: if it's a thesis or dissertation, it should have a maximum of 50 pages. publication in a journal, according to the format specifications, taking into account the presentations, Images, graphs, tables, notes, and references.

Although the university environment brings, in addition to the undergraduate course, experiences that They are reflected in individual and professional growth, as well as promoting autonomy. independence and a sense of responsibility (SENA et al., 2021), this same environment It can also bring adversities that contribute to the student's illness. According to Ariño and Bardagi (2018) found that undergraduate students are more vulnerable to psychological distress. when compared to other adults who do not experience the student routine.

According to Sena et al. (2021), nursing students deal with situations exhausting factors, such as theoretical and practical activities, an exhausting class schedule, and an accumulation of... academic activities, extracurricular activities, among other factors that contribute to high levels of stress. Additionally, the aforementioned author also states that the conditions of The vulnerability to which the academic is exposed can result in depressive symptoms and Anxiety, if left untreated, can worsen, resulting in a risk to the person's life. student.

A cross-sectional study conducted by Moraes et al. (2020) with 150 students in 2019, The study highlighted in its results that 53.3% of nursing students were at risk of suicide, with 22.7% of those reporting a history of suicide attempts. Adjunto, Moraes et al. (2020) also state that students in the health field exhibit a They have a higher risk of suicide than the general population, given that they work alongside those suffering. human, witnessing the process of health, disease, and life-death (SENA et al., 2021).

It is worth highlighting that, due to their physical and psychological effects, the mental health of This becomes a cause for concern not only for the student themselves, but also for the... patients who are under their care, considering that academics with the state Individuals in an altered mental state may engage in unsafe practices, potentially causing harm to the patient. (COSTA; POLAK, 2009). Together, Santos et al. (2016) emphasize that many students They are also workers, thus losing the time that would be dedicated to rest and/or

Leisure, a factor that contributes not only to personal illness, but also to the risk of causing harm to the patient.

According to the phenomenological study conducted by Sena et al. (2021), many students identify the university context as a source of illness, holding the institution responsible for it. They identify the university context as a source of illness, holding the institution responsible for it. psychological changes experienced throughout the graduation process. In addition, the imminent risk of causing harm to the patient's health forces the student to mature quickly, making which means that the nursing training process is overloaded with anxiety-inducing and stressful situations (ESPERIDIÃO et al., 2013).

Therefore, the question arises as to how the mental health of students has been portrayed during their training, in bibliographies available on the internet, published in last 10 years. Therefore, the overall objective of this study was to conduct a survey of how This presents the mental health of students during their undergraduate nursing studies, based on... Current bibliographies aim to demonstrate that higher education can impact mental well-being of these individuals.

For this study to be implemented, the following steps were followed (objectives specific): A) to carry out a diagnosis of the mental health status of the students in the course of A) Graduation in nursing, through available bibliographies; B) Present the results found, reflecting on factors that contribute to mental illness during the nursing training process. Therefore, it is expected that the results found... evidence suggests that the academic training process can, in fact, contribute to illness. psychological state of undergraduate nursing students.

Considering the risk that the academic training process can bring, not only to the The choice of this topic is justified not only for the student's personal health, but also for the patient's health. Additionally, it's worth highlighting that the Ministry of Health points out that stressful events and Anxiogenic substances, when used chronically, have the potential to trigger depressive episodes. motivating the development of scientific studies focused on the mental health of students undergraduate.

2. Theoretical Framework / Results

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2.1 History of Nursing

According to Padilha and Borenstein (2006), understanding the historical context is fundamental to elucidate the current context; in this way, the historical knowledge of nursing. It provides meaning to the culture of the profession. Therefore, it is worth highlighting the emergence of...

Nursing based on Florence Nightingale's environmental theory, developed in the mid-19th century. of the 19th century in England. Florence, considered the Lady with the Lamp during the war of Crimea contributed to the improvement and development of health through the interconnection between research, theory and practice (method used for the creation of his environmental theory) (DIAS; DIAS, 2019).

Through her studies, Florence identified external conditions and influences that affect the development of an organism, using this information to suppress and to prevent diseases (DIAS; DIAS, 2019). In this way, Florence reduced mortality from The hospital where she worked saw its occupancy rate drop from 40% to 2% in just 6 months, and was recognized by the government. English (PEREIRA et al., [n.d.]). With techniques that are maintained to this day, Nightingale It became a source of inspiration throughout the world. It is noteworthy that, at the end of the war, Florence He carried out health campaigns and promoted the launch of several books and letters from his... Among his works is "Notes on Nursing: What it is and what it is not," a famous read among... future nursing professionals (DIAS; DIAS, 2019).

In this way, the Lady with the Lamp influenced many other women to become nurses, leading Ethel Bedford Fenwick to regulate the nursing profession. in England and created international nursing organizations, a factor that contributed to the Nursing training in other countries. In this way, nursing became professionalized. worldwide; in Brazil, the first nursing school emerged after the sanitary reform and It was run by nurses (DIAS; DIAS, 2019).

It is worth highlighting that, according to Dias and Dias (2019), the ideals of nursing, constructed and grounded in history, has been sidelined, causing the quality of teaching and assistance is significantly affected. The aforementioned author points out that the rush of daily life- In daily life, the lack of time for professionals and students, among other factors, contribute to this situation. with the current scenario.

2.2 History of Mental Health

Although always present in society, people with mental disorders did not have the right to be treated according to their psychological suffering, being kept in asylums, homes of Mercy or asylums, so that they would be removed from social interaction (FREITAS, [sd]). It is worth noting that, in these environments, individuals were subjected to administration excessive use of medication, application of electrical stimulation, and surgical procedures. with the aim of correcting the cause of what was called an abnormality (FREITAS, [n.d.]).

At the end of the 19th century, scientific psychiatry began to be implemented; together, At the end of World War II, several movements emerged that advocated different perspectives. Humanistic approaches to mental health care: factors that have led to mental health gaining a new perspective. It is worth noting that the Brazilian Congress only approved a proposal in 2001. a law that regulates the rights of individuals with mental disorders, called the Law of Psychiatric Reform (FREITAS, [n.d.]).

Although much progress has been made, mental health is still undervalued today, causing people with mental disorders/psychological impairments to deal with prejudice, even in the present day (FREITAS, [n.d.]). Thus, Cândido et al. (2012) point out that Promoting discussions about mental health in various social groups is one method to reduce This prejudice, considering that it offers an opportunity to transform the conservative conception of health. mental, stemming from its historical context, in a new paradigm.

2.3 Mental health of nursing students

Ariño and Bardagi (2018) point out that university students are vulnerable to development of mental disorders, considering the correlation between experiences academics experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression. According to Costa and Polak (year), Stress is becoming increasingly evident among nursing students, according to the study. According to Santos et al. (2022), the further a student progresses in the course, the higher the level of stress. The results of the study by Santos et al. (2022) show that

Fear of making mistakes during patient care (57.4%) and feeling that they had acquired little knowledge to take practical exams (52.1%) stood out as inherent to the practical activities experienced with a very high level of stress by the students. (SANTOS ET AL., 2022, p. 5)

It is worth highlighting that, due to the high level of stress and the exhausting workload, Due to insecurity regarding their professional future, students in higher education courses... They have a high risk of suicide (MORAES et al., 2020). Additionally, the aforementioned author points out that... There is a small number of studies focused on the academic population, specifically on those... nursing students, with regard to mental health and the risk of suicide.

Therefore, considering the high levels of stress that theoretical activities... The practices of the nursing course impose [certain practices], which can result in physical and psychological effects. Regarding student health, the topic deserves attention (SANTOS et al., 2022). According to Esperidião et al. (2013), publications covering the subject highlight its importance, enabling the

implementation of measures aimed at the mental health of academics, on the part of training institutions.

3. Materials and Methods

This is a literature review, conducted between August 2022 and November 2023. 2022, which aims to answer the guiding question: "How is the mental health of..." "What are nursing students doing during their training?" These are stages of the Review. Bibliographic: a) identify the research topic or question for the review; b) establish the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of scientific articles; c) define information to be extracted from the selected studies (categorization of articles); d) Evaluation of articles/results found; e) Presentation of the literature review.

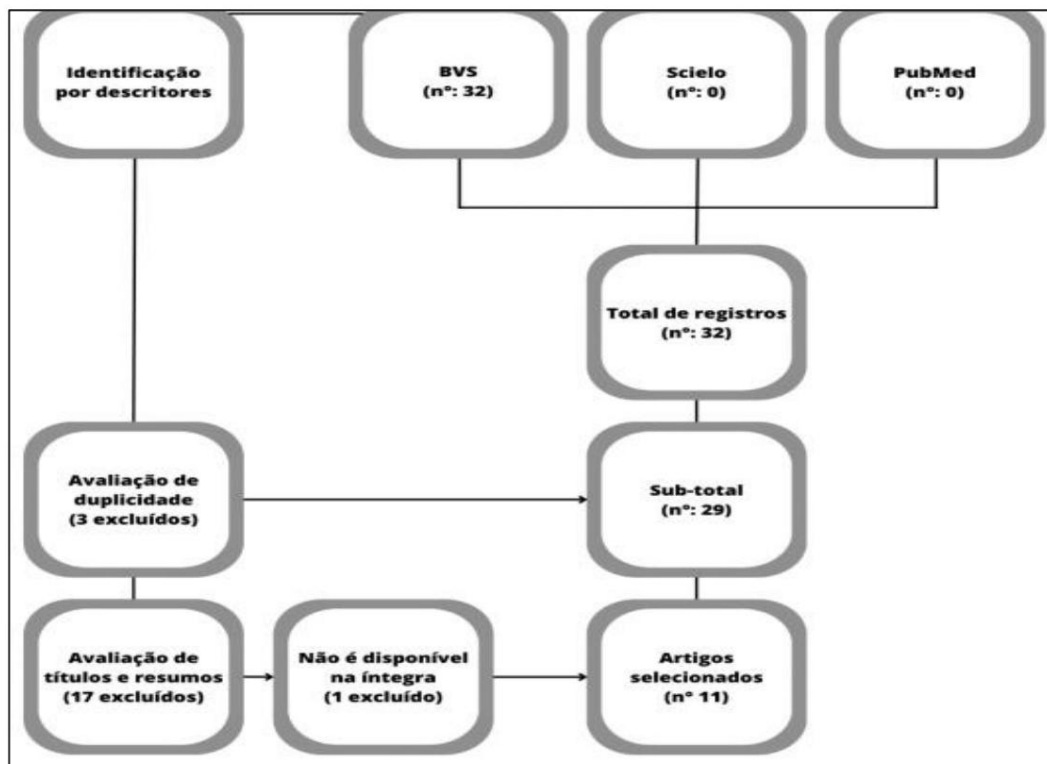
A search for articles was conducted in the Scielo, PubMed, and BVS databases. The descriptors used were "Mental Health", "Nursing Student", and "Brazil" in the language... Portuguese, using the "AND" operator between them. During the search, filters were used to "publication date", aiming to restrict the search to recent articles (from the last 10 years), ensuring that the topic addressed is in line with current events.

Regarding the inclusion criteria, the following points were adopted: a) sample including undergraduate nursing students in Brazil. The exclusion criteria were: a) students of other undergraduate courses, other than nursing; b) postgraduate students; c) samples including students from other countries. The search process involved analyzing academic degrees and... Summaries of the collected articles, excluding those that did not fit the theme addressed. in this study.

3. Results and Discussion

Through searches in selected databases, a total of 32 were found. scientific articles, with 32 in BVS, 0 in Scielo and 0 in PubMed. After the elimination of Due to duplicates, 29 references remained, to which the inclusion and selection criteria were applied. Exclusion through reading titles and abstracts. As a consequence of this process, the following was excluded. 17 articles, leaving a sample of 12. It is worth noting that the hyperlink for one of the articles could not be accessed. to be opened, due to an error on the official page (where the article was); additionally, it was not. found on the other platforms used in this research, thus preventing reading. complete article. Thus, the final number is 11 scientific articles (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Flowchart of the selection process for the reviewed articles, ES – 2026.



Source: Author's own work (2026)

Regarding the analysis of the results, a spreadsheet was created (Table 1) listing the Selected articles and their data, in order to assist in the synthesis process, including title, Authors, year of publication, study objective, and main focus of the study. It is worth noting that, During the classification/selection of articles, all studies that addressed [the topic] were selected. with themes related to mental health. Therefore, it is highlighted that, as defined According to Selye (1956) apud Santos and Cardoso (2010), a stressful event is capable of breaking the homeostasis of an individual, which can lead to physical and psychological exhaustion if the individual does not know how to manage it. Therefore, for this study, stress was considered as a factor that It affects the mental health of students.

Table 1 - Characterization of the studies that comprised the sample, ES – 2026.

Title No.	Authors (year)	Objective	Focus
1	SANTOS et al	To verify the stress factors commonly experienced by nursing students when performing theoretical and practical activities in their training. academic	Works on stress factors.

2	Suicide risk among nursing students	MORAES et al (2020)	Identifying the risk and degree of risk of suicide in students. Working with suicide risk in students. nursing at an institution public interior of Pernambuco, Brazil.	
3	Perceived stress level in nursing students at a public university in Brazil.	RAULINO et al (2021)	To identify the levels of perceived stress in undergraduate nursing students at a public university. in southern Brazil.	Works at a level of stress
4	Victim and villain: experience ambiguous students of (2021) Nursing in the university context	PEIXOTO et al	Understanding how undergraduate nursing students make sense of the context. university	It explores experiences within the university context, even those that cause suffering.
5	Psychological distress experienced by nursing students in the context of academic life.	LIMA et al (2021)	Analyzing psychological suffering among mental health nursing students. in the context of life academic	Works on the suffering
6	Suicide prevention: experiences of university students	FERNANDES et al (2021)	To discuss the experiences of university students who are part of a project of valuing life and prevention to suicide	Works with experiences focusing in suicide prevention
7	Educational action research on Facebook®: combining leisure and learning.	LABEGALINI et al.	Analyzing the trajectory of education (2017) A dialogue about leisure and health. mental development in virtual media	Works on leisure and mental health in virtual media.
8	The male being in psychological distress in the nursing course	MAURICIO; MARCOLAN (2016)	To verify the presence of psychological distress in male undergraduate nursing students related to gender and to analyze determining factors and coping attitudes. psychological suffering.	It addresses psychological distress related to gender.
9	Stressful situations and factors in students of nursing in clinical practice	RODRIGUES et al (2015)	Assessing risk factors for stress in Nursing undergraduates in clinical practice. At a university public sector in the Northeast region from Brazil.	Works under stress.
10	Symptoms of minor mental disorders in nursing students	SANTOS et al (2016)	Describe the frequency and symptoms to suggest that Minor Mental Disorders (DPM) in nursing students	It treats symptoms of mental disorders.

11 Mental health of nursing student: integrative literature review	ESPERIDIÃO et al (2013)	To analyze the occurrence of scientific research on the mental health of undergraduate nursing students in Brazil.	Works on scientific research into the mental health of nursing students.
		last 21 years	

Source: Author's own work (2026).

Based on the articles used to prepare this study (highlighted in Table 1), It is possible to state that, at some point during their nursing degree, the student presents some impairment in their mental health. Among the psychic manifestations mentioned in the The articles highlight themes such as fear, insecurity, impatience, worry, overload, and anguish. others that lead to a continuous state of stress, which can lead to the development of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.

Among the causes that are reflected in the aforementioned symptoms, the following stood out: A) mandatory and overloaded academic and extracurricular work, adjunct of A) A new pace of study, B) insecurity regarding the start of clinical practice, C) pressure from teachers and excessive demands for better performance academic, D) preparation of the final course project and E) exceptionally in a article, prejudice for being a man in a nursing degree program.

In order to highlight the results found in each cited article. In Table 1, a summary of each piece of literature was chosen, to be highlighted below (Table 1). 2):

Table 2 - Summary of studies that comprised the sample, ES – 2026.

Reference:	Summary
SANTOS, ILC dos. et al. <i>Stress factors in nursing students during theoretical-practical activities of academic background. Cienc Cuid Saúde</i> , [si], v. 21, [si], p. 1-9, Apr 2022.	It was identified that stress increased as the student progressed through the semesters; conversely, it was shown that stress decreased from the 8th to the 10th semester. It is assumed that students develop mechanisms to cope with stress throughout the process.
MORAES, SMAB et al. <i>Suicide risk among nursing students. Rev Bras Enferm</i> , [si], v. 74, n. 6, p. 1-7, nov 2020.	It was observed that 53.3% of nursing students at the institution studied presented a risk of suicide; of these, 20.7% were identified as high risk. The study also confirmed that having a partner is a protective and health-promoting factor for mental health, which reduces the risk of suicide.
RAULINO, MEFG et al. <i>Perceived stress level in nursing students at a public university in Brazil. Rev Min Enferm</i> , [si], v. 25, [si], p. 1-8, Mar 2021.	The study indicated that students, in general, achieved an average level of Perceived stress. Students in the second, fourth, and sixth phases. Students in the ninth grade achieved higher levels of stress compared to the overall average, while students in the ninth grade had the lowest average stress level.

<p>PEIXOTO, LCP <i>Victim and villain: ambiguous experience of nursing students in the university context. Rev. Gaúcha Enferm.</i>, [si], v.42, [si], pp. 1-11, Mar 2021.</p>	<p>The students participating in this study reported that, from the first semesters of the course, their health is affected holistically, involving physical, social, emotional, and cultural dimensions.</p>
<p>LIMA, DW da C. et al. <i>Psychological distress of nursing students in the context of life academic. Rev. Nursing. UFSM</i>, Santa Maria, v. 11, n. 23, p. 1-23, Mar 2021.</p>	<p>It was identified that the psychological distress of university students is related to adaptation at the beginning of the course, personal, emotional, and family conflicts that arose during their academic life, and expectations regarding graduation; stress and... The emergence of eating difficulties and depression were consequences that arose after this psychological suffering.</p>
<p>FERNANDES, MA et al. <i>Suicide prevention: experiences of University students. Rev Cuid. Mayo</i>, [si], v.11, n. 2, p. 1-February 12, 2020.</p>	<p>It was identified that academic and professional expectations cause excessive pressure, leading to discomfort and anxiety in the face of unfamiliar situations that students encounter during their undergraduate studies.</p>
<p>LABEGALINI, CMG et al. <i>Educational action research on Facebook: combining leisure and learning. Rev Gaúcha Enferm.</i>, [si], v. 37, [si], p. 1-9, Feb 2017.</p>	<p>It is noteworthy that leisure activities have the potential to reduce stress, making them essential for maintaining a balanced life. Thus, a weak understanding of leisure and mental health was identified among those involved in the research, also highlighting that pleasurable activities are not practiced in a way that... expanded in personal life and in the educational process.</p>
<p>MAURÍCIO, LFS; MARCOLAN, JF <i>The being Male experiencing psychological distress in nursing students. Rev Enferm</i>, online, v.10, n. 6, p. 4845-4853, Dec 2016.</p>	<p>It became evident that, in the academic environment, all participants in the study developed some type of psychological distress due to being men in nursing, both from society and from faculty.</p>
<p>RODRIGUES, EOL et al. <i>Stressful situations and factors in nursing students in clinical practice. Invest Educ Enferm</i>, [si], v. 34, no. 1, p. 211-220, Dec 2015.</p>	<p>Higher stress levels were identified among women who were married, lived with their families, and had permanent employment contracts. Academic workload overload, relationships with professors, and fear of being infected by a patient were all sources of stress.</p>
<p>SANTOS, RR dos et al. <i>Symptoms of minor mental disorders in nursing students. Revista Baiana de Enfermagem</i>, Salvador, v. 30, n. 3, p. 1-14, Sept 2016.</p>	<p>A high frequency of minor mental disorders was identified among nursing students, predominantly in the group of symptoms related to depressive-anxious mood and somatic symptoms, suggesting the possibility of compromised mental health.</p>
<p>ESPERIDIÃO, EE et al. <i>A Mental health of nursing students: an integrative literature review. Rev. Electronic Journal of Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs</i>, Goiânia, v. 9, n. 3, p. 144-153, Sept 2013.</p>	<p>Several critical moments in academic life were identified (the beginning of undergraduate studies, the start of practical training, and the end of the course), responsible for feelings that can trigger pathological disorders, such as fear, frustration, tension, anguish, and anxiety. Additionally, the limited or nonexistent opportunities for leisure interfere with the student's quality of life.</p>

Source: Author's own work (2026).

It is worth highlighting that, as observed by Raulino et al. (2021), the university is not the only one responsible for the stress experienced by the students, however, based on the findings This study highlights how stressful and exhausting the graduation process can be for... the students. Sena et al. (2021) highlight in their results that students identify the The university context is often portrayed as a source of illness, blaming the institution for the suffering; however, Some participants acknowledge that suffering is not generated solely by events. from academia, but also due to external factors such as, for example, family separation.

Despite the described manifestations of stress, the university is also presented as an environment for personal and professional growth, also contributing to intellectual development. In this way, communication and relationship skills. Interpersonal skills are worked on daily; in addition, the student gains freedom and autonomy. in addition to developing a sense of responsibility (SENA et al., 2021).

An important finding, highlighted by Ariño and Bardagi (2018), reinforces the importance It is necessary to discuss the mental health of students, where, according to the aforementioned author, university students They are more vulnerable to developing psychological distress compared to others. adults who do not experience the academic world. Together, Lima et al. (2021) also It indicates that approximately 41 to 43.5% of nursing graduates may manifest any symptoms of psychological distress throughout their development, including suicidal ideation. or attempted suicide.

A cross-sectional study conducted by Moraes et al. (2020), with 150 undergraduate students of nursing identified that more than half (53.3%) of the students presented a risk of suicide; additionally, 22.7% of students had a history of suicide attempts, making it This is an alarming fact. It is worth highlighting that, according to Fernandes et al. (2020), the social circle A person's ability to provide support has positive effects during times of crisis. social and emotional. Therefore, through qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory research, Fernandes et al. (2020) highlighted the need for a space within the institution for discussions about the mental health of the students themselves, especially those who are far from their family and friends (ESPERIDIÃO et al., 2013).

According to Lima et al. (2021) and Esperidião et al. (2013), the exacerbated pace of studies and the rigid schedules contribute to the emotional exhaustion of university students, since because of their routine, students are unable to have time for rest and/or leisure. their family members, friends and/or partners. In agreement, Labegalini et al. (2017) It highlighted the role of leisure in the academic life, considering its potential to reduce stress.

Stress, making it indispensable for a balanced life.

It is worth highlighting that, even with family support and leisure activities, students in the course of Nursing professionals still need to deal with the health-disease and life-death processes, considering which comprises a course in the health field (SENA et al., 2021). Furthermore, as evidenced According to Santos et al. (2016), academics involved in hospital practice experience situations similar to nursing professionals, sharing the same concerns, anxieties and stressful situations present in the work environment, which add to stressors of graduation.

Finally, according to Maurício and Marcolan (2016), another contributing factor to the The alteration in the mental health of students is more common among males, considering that... They also deal with situations such as rejection for being men. As reported by participants in the study by Maurício and Marcolan (2016), the fact that they were men in a The fact that the profession is predominantly female makes them feel out of place and Disoriented, exhibiting frustration, sadness, anger, demotivation, exhaustion, among other things, like the pressure of being a man and having to prove you're better.

Final Considerations

It can be argued that the university context imposes conditions of vulnerability, contributing to the deterioration of students' mental health, such as estrangement from family, the lack of available time to dedicate to leisure and the overload and self-imposed pressure in the workplace Academic. Furthermore, the setting in which the nursing student is placed causes the... even if he feels under pressure all the time, considering that he needs to deal with stressful situations related to clinical practice.

It is worth noting that, although graduation involves numerous stressful factors, the Individual and personal factors can contribute to this scenario. Therefore, institutions Educational institutions will now bear partial responsibility for the harm to the mental health of... students, ceasing to be solely responsible for the psychological changes developed during throughout graduation.

Therefore, answering the guiding question, the mental health of the students in the course Nursing students experience significant changes during their training. Stress was mentioned several times, becoming the main cause of the psychic manifestations. and the development of mental disorders in students. Furthermore, the risk of suicide. This has proven to be a significant problem to consider, given the worrying rates.

evidenced in the literature reviewed.

Therefore, the results of this study highlight the need for interventions.

aimed at supporting undergraduate nursing students.

Considering the degree of responsibility that the university environment bears in relation to the demonstrations.

Given the psychological well-being of students, it becomes essential to implement actions integrated into the academic environment, aimed at...

for mental health care and the promotion of self-care. Finally, it is suggested that...

new studies focused on the mental health of students, in order to identify the

Academic and personal variables that influence the psychological changes in undergraduate students.

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