

# Mental Health of Nursing Professionals in Brazil: Integrative Review

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### Summary

Mental health is described as emotional balance and the ability to deal with life's challenges. However, in the workplace, the use of new technologies, competitiveness and ambitious goals can harm the mental health of nursing professionals. The present study aims to reflect on the consequences of weakened mental health among nursing professionals in Brazil. The methodology was based on an integrative literature research, of a qualitative nature, for this, a search was carried out in the Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences database, selecting only seven relevant articles on the consequences of impaired mental health to nursing professionals. The results highlighted the importance of addressing the mental health of nursing professionals, as they deal with situations of stress and suffering on a daily basis.

**Key words:** Professional burnout. Nursing Professionals. Mental health.

### Abstract

Mental health is described as emotional balance and the ability to deal with life's challenges. However, in the work environment, the use of new technologies, competitiveness and ambitious goals can harm the mental health of nursing professionals. This study aims to reflect on the consequences of a fragile mental health of nursing professionals in Brazil. The methodology was based on an integrative research of the literature, of a qualitative nature, for this, a search was carried out in the Latin American and Caribbean Literature database in Health Sciences, with only seven relevant articles being selected on the consequences of impaired mental health. to nursing professionals. The results highlighted the importance of addressing the mental health of nursing professionals, since they deal with situations of stress and suffering on a daily basis.

**Keyword:** Professional Exhaustion. Nursing Professionals. Mental health.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of health is broader than the absence of disease, mainly taking into account what can cause the emergence of diseases. The WHO (World Health Organization), in 1946, defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not just the absence of illness (BRASIL, 2020).

Furthermore, mental health is one of the dimensions of health, being synonymous with emotional quality of life, that is, the balance between emotions and feelings in the face of challenges, conflicts, changes and other life events. Being mentally healthy means being well with yourself and other individuals, being able to accept adverse situations and knowing how to deal with good and bad emotions, always recognizing your limits and seeking help if necessary (BRASIL, 2021).

In public health, mental health is also addressed and can be defined as a stigma, a sign of shame, unhappiness or disapproval, which results in an individual rejected by society, becoming an object of discrimination and excluded from participation in several different areas of the community, making it difficult even the search for professional help (WHO, 2002).

According to the Superior Labor Court (2021), work is a key element for well-being and quality mental health, as it provides financial security, personal and social identity and the opportunity to contribute to the community.

On the other hand, the work environment in recent decades has involved new technologies, intense competitiveness, global competition and demanding increasingly ambitious goals, which can harm workers' mental health (TRIBUNAL SUPERIOR DO BALALHO, 2021).

The Syndrome of *Burnout*<sup>1</sup>, known as professional burnout, can affect individuals who work in different areas. This disorder is characterized by emotional tension and stress caused by precarious and exhausting working conditions. In addition to tiredness, this stress reaction is usually long-term and is also characterized by the absence of a feeling of professional fulfillment (HEMOS, 2021).

Health care providers, such as nursing professionals, can develop significant short- and long-term psychiatric disorders after experiencing stressful professional events. Nursing faces challenges including service overload, shortage of human and material resources, and concerns about managing their own health and that of their families and patients (TOESCHER *et al*, 2020).

Therefore, the reflective content of this study on the psychological disorders that affect nursing professionals in Brazil becomes significant. Given this, the present study aims to reflect on the consequences of weakened mental health among nursing professionals in Brazil.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology was based on an integrative literature research, of a qualitative nature. The integrative review involves reviewing research on scientifically significant content to assist in decisions and contribute to the improvement of clinical practice, allowing the association of known content that needs to be included in future studies (MENDES, 2008).

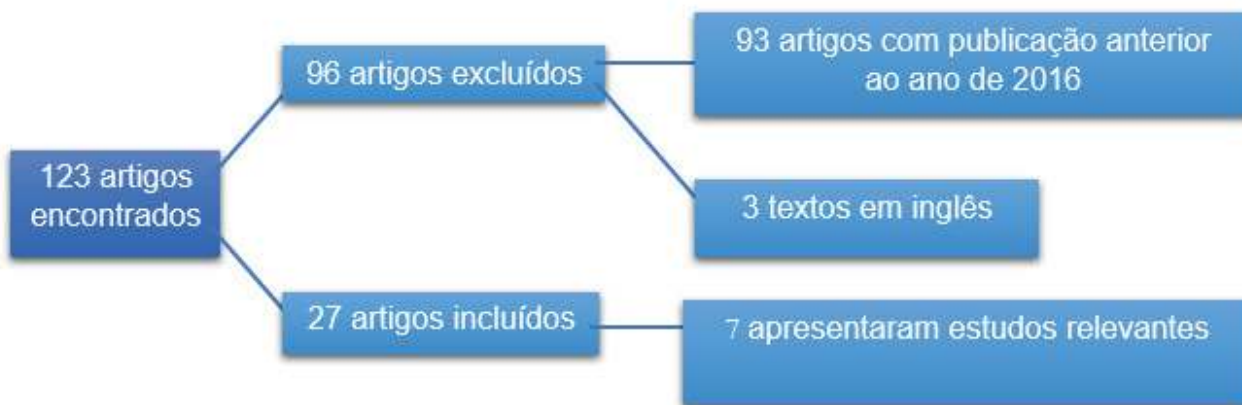
The present study was carried out in accordance with the 6 stages of the integrative literature review, which are: identification of the theme and selection of the hypothesis or research question for the preparation of the integrative review; establishment of criteria for inclusion and exclusion of studies/sampling or literature search; definition of information to be extracted from selected studies/categorization of studies; evaluation of studies included in the integrative review; interpretation of results; presentation of the review/synthesis of knowledge (MENDES, 2008).

A search was carried out in the Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS) database.

Where the search and selection criteria for publications include: articles with full texts accessible, available in Portuguese and Spanish, published in the last 5 years, and containing the selected descriptors Professional Burnout, Nursing Professionals and Mental Health.

As an exclusion, articles that did not cover the topic were removed. Thus, only articles that answered the research question and eligibility criteria were selected. In total, 123 articles were selected, of which 96 were excluded for not meeting the inclusion requirements (publication from the year 2016, texts in Portuguese or Spanish), 27 of which were included in the construction of the systematic review and only 7 presented relevant studies on the theme (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Flowchart with the number of articles found and application of the exclusion criteria.



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Source: Own Authorship, 2021.

<sup>1</sup>Exhaustion (This term appears other times throughout the article).

### 3. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

From reading the articles on the consequences of impaired mental health among nursing professionals in Brazil, Table 1 was created, constructed with the topics: Author; Year; Magazine; Title and; Consequences of impaired health among nursing professionals.

The results of the search for articles in the selected databases were 123 articles, of which only 7 met the criteria for consequences of impaired mental health among nursing professionals. Below, Table 1 is shown, referring to the findings.

Table 1: Results of articles found. Rio de Janeiro, 2021.

Author / Year / Magazine	Title	Consequences of impaired mental health among healthcare professionals nursing
LUZ, DCRP <i>et al.</i> (2021) Magazine <i>Nursing</i> <sup>two</sup>	<i>Burnout</i> and mental health in times of the COVID-19 pandemic: systematic review with meta-analysis	Fatigue, discomfort and helplessness.
OLIVEIRA, AFC <i>et al.</i> (2020) <i>Online Brazilian Journal of Nursing</i> <sup>3</sup>	Psychic suffering and psychodynamics in the nurse's work environment: integrative review	Stress, depression, Syndrome <i>Burnout</i> , suicide.
ROCHA, L.J. <i>et al.</i> (2019) <i>Brazilian Journal of Occupational Medicine</i>	Professional burnout and job satisfaction among emergency and intensive care sector workers in a public hospital	Depression, high blood pressure, headache, insomnia, irritability, sadness, lack of interest, apathy and manifestations of anxiety.
KOBAYASI, D.Y. <i>et al.</i> (2019) <i>Advances in Nursing</i> <sup>4</sup>	Burden, social support network and emotional stress of elderly caregivers.	Depression, anxiety, insomnia, mental fatigue, low concentration, memory failure, apathy, emotional indifference.
CRUZ, SPD <i>et al.</i> (2019) <i>Latin American Nursing Journal</i>	Factors related to the likelihood of experiencing mental health problems in emergency professionals	Anxiety, social dysfunction and depression.

<sup>two</sup>Nursing.

<sup>3</sup>Brazilian Online Nursing Magazine. 4

Advances in nursing.

RAMOS, CEB <i>et al.</i> (2019) Brazilian Journal of Health Sciences	Impacts of the syndrome <i>Burnout</i> on the quality of life of nursing professionals in primary health care	Headache, mental fatigue, sleeping difficulties, fatigue, irritability, difficulty with memory and concentration.
FABRI, JMG <i>et al.</i> (2018) Bahia Nursing Magazine	Occupational stress in pediatric nurses: physical and psychological manifestations	Stress, memory problems, physical exhaustion, tiredness, anguish, anxiety.

Source: Own Authorship, 2021.

Twenty-two consequences of impaired mental health among nursing professionals were found in the seven articles highlighted.

These being: Anxiety, in 4 articles (ROCHA, L *et al.* 2019; KOBAYASI, D.Y. *et al.* 2019; CROSS, SPDL *et al.* 2019; FABRI, JMG *et al.* 2018); Depression, in 4 articles (OLIVEIRA, AFC *et al.* 2020; ROCHA, L.J. *et al.* 2019; KOBAYASI, D.Y. *et al.* 2019; CRUZ, SPDL *et al.* 2019); Memory difficulties, in 3 articles (KOBAYASI, DY *et al.* 2019; RAMOS, CEB *et al.* 2019; FABRI, JMG *et al.* 2018); Fatigue, in 3 articles (KOBAYASI, DY *et al.* 2019; RAMOS, CEB *et al.* 2019; FABRI, JMG *et al.* 2018).

Also, fatigue in 2 articles (LUZ, DCRP *et al.* 2021; RAMOS, CEB *et al.* 2019); Insomnia, in 2 articles (ROCHA, L *et al.* 2019; KOBAYASI, D.Y. *et al.* 2019); Stress, in 2 articles (OLIVEIRA, AFC *et al.* 2020; FABRI, JMG *et al.* 2018); Apathy, in 2 articles (ROCHA, L *et al.* 2019; KOBAYASI, D. Y. *et al.* 2019); Headache, in 2 articles (ROCHA, L *et al.* 2019; RAMOS, CEB *et al.* 2019); Irritability, in 2 articles (ROCHA, L *et al.* 2019; RAMOS, CEB *et al.* 2019); Low concentration, in 2 articles (KOBAYASI, DY *et al.* 2019; RAMOS, CEB *et al.* 2019).

In only 1 article were found: Discomfort; Helplessness (LIGHT, DCRP *et al.* 2021); Syndrome of *Burnout*; Suicide (OLIVEIRA, AFC *et al.* 2020); Arterial hypertension; Sadness; Disinterest (ROCHA, L *et al.* 2019); Emotional indifference (KOBAYASI, DY *et al.* 2019); Social dysfunction (CRUZ, SPDL *et al.* 2019); Sleep difficulties (RAMOS, CEB *et al.* 2019); Physical wear and tear; Anguish (FABRI, JMG *et al.* 2018).

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

According to Gomes and Oliveira (2013), nursing professionals are the professionals who are most prone to mental health problems, since they are the ones who interact for the longest time with individuals who need their care, and pressure at work contributes to undermine your mental health.

Sousa *et al.* (2019), points out that studies present mental and behavioral disorders as a cause of disability retirement among health workers, responsible for nursing workers' absences, which require more time to recover, generating more expenses, associated with reduced work capacity .

Anxiety and depression, together, form the evil duo of the century, seriously affecting nursing professionals, and they are not uncommon. Nursing deals with patients in situations of pain, suffering and death, and this affects the emotions of these professionals (COREN-ES, 2019).

According to Jodas and Haddad (2009), one of the consequences generated for the psychic apparatus of professionals results in the syndrome of *burnout*, which is a gradual process of deterioration in mood and demotivation accompanied by physical and psychological symptoms, and which corresponds to the emotional response to situations of chronic stress due to intense work relationships.

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Understanding depression and the risks of suicide, as well as the factors involved, is extremely important for studies related to worker health. It is worth noting that the prevalence of depressive symptoms and suicide, which corresponds to the process and causes of death caused by the victim himself, is high among health professionals. It should also be noted that the prevalence is influenced by the stress of the environment and work process, which significantly interferes with the working lives of these professionals, impacting their quality of life. (SILVA *et al.*, 2015).



The accumulation of burden on nursing professionals, who are already suffering from emotional exhaustion, Ultimately, it can lead to a suicide situation. Because it is silent and often creates shame for those who suffer, depression can lead to suicide, which is almost always unexpected (NEVES, 2019).

## 5. CONCLUSION

Studies on the mental health of nursing professionals are extremely important. A subject that should be discussed and not masked. Therefore, nursing professionals may be ashamed of their impaired mental state, a state in which society may interfere negatively due to lack of knowledge, and not seek specialized care.

There are many factors in the field of nursing that can cause psychological disorders in professionals. Increasing the possibility of the professional acquiring an illness and professional burnout.

The search for a professional specialized in mental illnesses is vital for professionals experiencing a disorder. Treatment, combined with help and understanding from people close to you, can prevent even irreversible consequences, such as suicide.

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