Professional health, occupational stress and occupational nursing performance
Saúde profissional, estresse ocupacional e atuação da enfermagem do trabalho
La salud laboral, el estrés laboral y el desempeño de la enfermería del trabajo

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Abstract
Objective: To examine scientific productions that address discussions on professional health, occupational stress, and occupational nursing, highlighting ways to improve professional health so that work practice is carried out more efficiently. Methods: This is an integrative literature review built from the search in the databases: Database in Nursing - Brazilian Bibliography (BDENF), Online System for Search and Analysis of Medical Literature (MEDLINE/PUBMED), Web of Science Cochrane Library (SCOPUS) and Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS). Descriptors were used according to the list of Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS): Occupational nursing, Occupational Health, and Professional Practice. The following were included: studies with free access, available online, complete, in English/Portuguese/Spanish, and published between the years 2017 to 2022. Results: There is a correlation between occupational stress and workers’ health, where job satisfaction directly interferes with their well-being. Final considerations: Occupational nursing is very important for professional health, as it has an educator and care provider role.

Keywords: Occupational stress; Worker's health; Nursing work.

Resumo
Objetivo: Examinar as produções científicas que abordem discussões sobre saúde profissional, estresse ocupacional e enfermagem do trabalho destacando formas de melhorar a saúde profissional para que a prática laboral seja realizada com maior eficiência. Métodos: Trata-se de uma revisão integrativa da literatura, construída a partir da busca nas

**Palavras-chave:** Estresse ocupacional; Saúde do trabalhador; Enfermagem do trabalho.

**Resumen**

**Objetivo:** Examinar las producciones científicas que abordan las discusiones actuales sobre la salud laboral, el estrés laboral y la enfermería del trabajo buscando destacar las formas de mejorar la salud laboral y apoyar a los profesionales para que puedan desarrollar su práctica de manera más eficiente. **Métodos:** Se trató de una revisión bibliográfica integradora, construida a partir de una búsqueda en las siguientes bases de datos: Base de Datos Bibliográfica Brasileña de Enfermería (BDENF), Sistema de Búsqueda y Análisis de Literatura Médica en Línea (MEDLINE/PUBMED), Web of Science y Biblioteca Cochrane (SCOPUS) y Literatura Latinoamericana y del Caribe en Ciencias de la Salud (LILACS). Se utilizaron descriptores según la lista de Descriptores en Ciencias de la Salud (DeCS): Enfermería del Trabajo, Salud del Trabajador, Práctica Profesional. Se incluyeron: estudios con acceso libre, disponibles en línea, completos, en inglés/portugués/español, publicados entre los años 2017 y 2022. **Resultados:** Se pudo comprobar que existe una correlación entre el estrés laboral y la salud de los trabajadores, ya que el nivel de satisfacción con el trabajo interfiere directamente con el bienestar del mismo. **Consideraciones finales:** La enfermería del trabajo es muy importante para la salud profesional, ya que tiene un papel educador y prestador de asistencia, aunque también es necesario revisar algunos puntos cuando se produce una sobrecarga de actividades del propio enfermero del trabajo.

**Palabras clave:** Estrés laboral; Salud laboral; Enfermería laboral.

### 1. Introduction

With so many existing diseases, the art and science of caring are critical. These activities are performed by the nursing professional, so the existence of the nurse is essential for any society. Nevertheless, over time, activities and knowledge were added differently from what is familiar to nurses. Such activities range from administration to health care (De Souza, 2020; Oliveira, et al., 2022).

Achieving quality of life is the valid will of the human being who seeks everything that can provide greater well-being, physical, psychological and social balance, or a rule to obtain a more satisfying life (Lopes, et al., 2019).

The level of motivation, individually and collectively, leads to the organizational climate. When there is motivation, the motivational climate rises and translates into relationships of satisfaction, animation, collaboration, and interest. However, when there is low motivation due to frustrations or barriers to meeting needs, the organizational climate tends to drop, resulting in states of depression, disinterest, apathy, and lack of motivation to work (Da Silva, et al., 2019; Pimenta, et al. al, 2020).

Taking into account the vulnerability to risks inherent to the work performed; workloads; insufficient number of workers for a large number of hospitalized patients; insufficient remuneration; exhausting shifts, among others, aroused interest in verifying the interferences in the health of occupational nurses (Flouris, et al, 2018; Tamers, et al. 2019).

Occupational health has as its scope the multidisciplinary and intersectoral approach of actions in the perspective of totality, intending to overcome the understanding and stagnant and fragmented interventions; enables the participation of workers, in terms of their lives and health, able to contribute with their knowledge to advance the understanding of the impact of work on the health-disease process and to intervene politically and promote worker health (Frazão, et al., 2022).

Work can also be a source of problems that affect health. When performed in dangerous conditions, exposed to toxic chemicals and noise, with long and strenuous working hours, at a fast pace, in inappropriate environments, and subjected to pressure for productivity, among other adverse conditions, work can become the source of accidents and diseases (Ribeiro, et al., 2020).
al., 2020).

There is always the possibility of the emergence of health problems resulting from various inadequacies in the workplace, which determined the realization of this study to characterize the scientific production on the subject and identify the health problems of workers and nurses' practices concerning them (Ferreira & Aguiar, 2021).

Occupational nurses must know their workplaces well, the functions they will perform there, and the possible risks inherent to them so that actions are planned to preserve possible health risks, such as a search for this professional. Through subsidies to be oriented and thus guide their workers on the prevention needs (Vieira et al., 2018; Azambuja, et al., 2019).

This work aims to analyze scientific publications addressing current discussions on the subject seeking an improvement in professional health and supporting professionals to develop their practice with greater efficiency.

2. Methodology

This is an integrative literature review (Benefield, 2003), built from the search in the following databases: Database on Nursing - Brazilian Bibliography (BDENF), Online System for Search and Analysis of Medical Literature (MEDLINE/PUBMED), Web of Science, and Cochrane Library (SCOPUS) and Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS). Descriptors were used according to the list of Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS): Occupational nursing, Occupational Health, and Professional practice.

Using the Boolean operator "and" the descriptors were crossed. The selection of the articles used was carried out from August to September 2022. Seeking to answer the study's objective: to verify articles about improving professional health and how they can develop their practice more efficiently.

As inclusion/exclusion criteria, part of this work was: studies with free access, available online, complete, in English/Portuguese/Spanish, published between the years 2017 to 2022, those that did not fit the descriptions mentioned above were excluded, due to the reading the title, reading the abstract, repeated articles and, finally, after the complete reading.

Through a flowchart (Figure 1) the information from the selected articles was compiled, thus recording the characteristics and prominent information on how the quality of workers' health is found and how the occupational health nurse has performed their assistance.
3. Results

After reading the articles, the results were summarized in Table 1 with information regarding the title/author, objectives and results found.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Title/Author</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Factors associated with the risks of illness of the nursing team at work in a psychiatric institution (Sousa, et al, 2020).</td>
<td>Nursing work in a psychiatric hospital to identify the variables and the risks of illness.</td>
<td>As a result, the factors associated with the risks of illness listed in the article were: insomnia complaints, night work, and working hours.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Occupational nurses in preventing of occupational biological hazards: a literature review in the hospital environment (Ribeiro, et al, 2020).</td>
<td>Show the performance of the working nurse for the reduction within the hospital area about biological risk.</td>
<td>It demonstrates how the presence of the occupational health nurse reduced occupational risks, emphasizing that the primary main hospital infection is the Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C (HCV).</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>To characterize the role of the occupational health nurse in promoting health and preventing pesticide poisoning (Vieira, et al, 2018).</td>
<td>To describe the role of the occupational health nurse and the promotion of workers’ health in preventing the prevention of pesticide poisoning in rural areas.</td>
<td>Despite the small sample, the work revealed the inefficiency of occupational health professionals in the rural environment exposed to substances harmful to health.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Promotion of workers' health: skills and competencies competences of the occupational health nurse (Ferreira &amp; Aguiar, 2021).</td>
<td>To point out the practices of the Occupational Nurse toward promoting workers' health.</td>
<td>Six articles were analyzed to show that this nurse's performance has multifunctional, care, administrative, educational, integrative, and research practices.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Burnout syndrome in the nursing team: challenges and perspectives: a literature review (Simões, 2020).</td>
<td>To describe working conditions, correlate the Burnout Syndrome, and identify which interventions by the occupational health nurse can provide a less stressful environment.</td>
<td>The results show Burnout Syndrome is related to poor quality at work due to an overload of schedules and working hours of up to three shifts due to the wage gap.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Migrant Workers and Their Occupational Health and Safety (Moyce &amp; Schenker, 2018).</td>
<td>Show the main jobs of emigrants.</td>
<td>The results show that the jobs are more dangerous for their health and they work for lower wages, and longer hours in worse conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Workers' health and productivity under occupational heat strain: a systematic review and meta-analysis (Fouris, et al, 2018).</td>
<td>Effects of intense heat on workers' health and productivity outcomes.</td>
<td>The analysis revealed two cases in the workplace for most outcomes (mean core temperature and change in urine specific gravity).</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Burnout and nursing work environment in public health institutions (Nogueira, et al, 2018).</td>
<td>Identify associations between Burnout domains and work environment characteristics.</td>
<td>The results indicate a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion, the environment and its organization, reduction of personal fulfillment, and work autonomy.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Labor conditions and the meanings of nursing work in Barcelona (Granero, et al, 2018).</td>
<td>To describe the relationship between the quantitative assessment of working conditions and the qualitative perception of workers' experience in their functions.</td>
<td>The people who were interviewed described their working conditions with terms such as autonomy, achievement, and well-being. In contrast, another group described their working conditions as exhaustion, depersonalization, and adverse climate. However, there was no significant difference between the groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Occupational nursing in Portugal: context and perspectives (Machado, et al, 2022).</td>
<td>Check how occupational nurses see the areas of knowledge and intervention.</td>
<td>Seen as a transitory professional activity, Occupational Nursing was characterized as a secondary activity to the primary job, thus being a source of extra income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Systematization of nursing care: instrument in the work process in occupational health (Silva, et al, 2021).</td>
<td>Discuss the systematization of nursing care in occupational health.</td>
<td>Occupational nurses need technical and scientific knowledge to develop their work process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Quality of life at work and occupational stress of nursing in an emergency care unit (Teixeira, et al, 2019).</td>
<td>To correlate stress and quality of life-related to the work environment of the nursing team in emergency care.</td>
<td>The analysis showed that 14.7% of respondents consider their work a high strain, 8.3% consider their work too active and tiring, 40.4% consider their work passive, and 36.7% work with low strain. Regarding the quality of life at work, 39.5% were dissatisfied, and 60.5% were satisfied.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Factors of occupational stress in the nursing team: an integrative review (Ribeiro, et al, 2018).</td>
<td>Increase visibility on occupational stress, as extrinsic and intrinsic factors contribute to the onset of the disease.</td>
<td>The leading causes of stress are work overload, lack of recognition, and loss of a patient.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Professional practice environment and stress in nursing work in neonatal units (Lopes, et al, 2021)</td>
<td>To investigate how the nursing practice works in the neonatal environment and its relationship with occupational stress.</td>
<td>Two hundred sixty-nine professionals were interviewed, and the questionnaire was related to the practice environment, which was classified as favorable (63.6%) and unfavorable (36.4%).</td>
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</table>

Source: Autores (2022).

Worker stress and exhaustion have been increasingly related to work-related factors, resulting in illness and loss of work capacity. Thus, this issue has attracted attention and raised discussions and studies in several countries to recognize, prevent or control work stress and other aspects of workers' health (Souza, et al, 2020; Da Silva, et al, 2020).
Illness at work harms both the worker and the employer and even society. Therefore, the importance of promoting health, preventing accidents, and assisting in rehabilitation, leads to improving the quality of life of all involved. The forms of service production are essential for worker satisfaction, resulting in a better quality of life (Da Silva, et al, 2022).

There are many difficulties for workers affected by occupational diseases to return to work due to functional limitations resulting from illness and obstacles experienced by companies, the INSS, and health services. The world of work has undergone extreme changes in recent years with the introduction of new technologies, changes in the organization of production, the globalization process, and the new order established in the relations between capital and work, opening space for new and conflicting relationships of work, which in turn gave rise to new processes of illness and new difficulties for rehabilitation, return and, above all, permanence at work.

Issues related to workers' health have attracted constant attention as they seek the human side of work. It also reports that the 1st Conference on Workers' Health, held two decades ago, has transformed instead of improving the actions of progression to workers' health (Da Silva, et al, 2020).

Due to the lack of information, guidance, and preparation of workers, they leave their rights aside. It also noted that research in this area needs to be expanded so that sufficient knowledge is available that can support worker health actions with an emphasis on promotion, prevention, and rehabilitation for the well-being of workers (Da Cruz, et al, 2019; Dos Santos, et al, 2021).

Amid the set of technological and organizational innovations proposed by the productive restructuring in a capitalist society, the work agenda and, consequently, the health of the worker become indispensable elements for the maintenance of decent conditions in the work processes/environments and the enhancement of the subjects' lives (Moyce, et al, 2018).

Throughout the work, it was verified the existence of several occupational risk factors exists in numerous environments. These factors are physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, psychosocial, mechanical, and accidental. As de Sousa, et al, (2020) cites as a consequence, these types of risks predispose workers to occupational diseases, making it necessary in the work environment to identify the risks existing in the place for the prevention of these diseases.

Taking into account the vulnerability to risks inherent to the work performed; workloads; insufficient number of workers for a large number of hospitalized patients; insufficient remuneration; exhausting shifts, among others, interest was aroused in verifying the interferences in the health of the occupational nurse.

Action performed by the nurse to solve identified problems involving disease prevention and restoration. Care is the foundation, structure, concept, epistemological paradigm, and epistemic unit of meaning. This is the concept and, at the same time, its definition.

Care broadly means responsibility, diligence, zeal, attention, and good treatment. It is an attitude in which the individual turns to another with care and solicitude. The attitude towards care also imposes a feeling of concern and disquiet because the being or objective of care also involves people effectively.

4. Conclusion

The professional's health is essential for any institution's progress, especially the healthy ones. Nevertheless, what can be seen is that organizations require more services and do not offer good conditions for workers to carry out their functions without damaging their health. In the nursing profession, they face a lot of suffering and pain from the patient, which is combined with the professional's problems, problems in the service, long working hours, and a lack of recognition. Such discomforts cause significant imbalance emotional in the nurse.
Low remuneration is confronted with the tasks assigned to the nursing profession, many tasks, and significant overload. These characteristics hinder the worker's productivity. This profession requires care, commitment, and involvement with the patient to accelerate their recovery process.

The institutions must evaluate professional satisfaction, and the difficulties and causes of these interferences in the health of the professional must be sought in this way to try to minimize and even solve such problems. These changes will improve the quality of the company and the service provided to the customer. Furthermore, nurses need to look for ways to value themselves as a professional and improve their personal quality to minimize the wear and tear of professional life.

This article has not exhausted the state of the art, so more work is needed on the subject of occupational health and occupational nursing.

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References


