



Well-Being Literacy in the Ambulatory Surgery Unit and Central Operating Room [†]

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Abstract: Background: The promotion of professional well-being improves health literacy. Objective: To identify the well-being perceived by health professionals, associated factors, and change strategies. Methodology: Qualitative, exploratory-descriptive study, applying a form with open questions. Content analysis was performed. Results: 32 professionals working in the operating room were mostly satisfied with their well-being at work. Positive factors: good environment, compatible schedules. Negative factors: management of human, material, and team resources. Strategies for change: Management of material, organizational resources, and mental health promotion strategies. Conclusions: Health professionals are generally satisfied with their level of well-being; however, some aspects can be improved.

Keywords: health personnel; welfare; work; operating room; health literacy

1. Introduction

According to World Health Organization (2013), as cited by Arriaga et al. [1], health literacy involves the knowledge, motivation, and skills of professionals to access, understand, evaluate, and apply health information in order to make day-to-day decisions on health promotion and disease prevention and develop skills and abilities to maintain or improve their quality of life throughout life. The promotion of health literacy is mainly related to the development of personal competencies, aiming at the control that each person has over his/her health, as well as increasing his/her capacity to search for information and assume responsibility for his/her health. This undoubtedly contributes to an increase in their well-being and quality of life [2].

In recent decades, several studies investigating well-being at work have been conducted, mainly focusing on a person-centered perspective (positive psychology), human resource management, and organizational behavior [3]. Constant changes in the nature and context of work underline the need for increased focus on well-being at work, which is an increasingly important area of public health [3]. The promotion of well-being at work leads to greater interpersonal balance, appreciation, and knowledge of the other, contributes to the worker's commitment and involvement at work, and helps to create a strong bond with the organization to which they belong [3]. Not considering the well-being of professionals is to promote factors such as demotivation, decreased opportunities to make decisions, worse attitudes, decreased performance, and a poorer sense of well-being at work [3]. Programs to promote well-being at work can include activities such as labor gymnastics, an environment to relax, music therapy, self-massage, and celebration of birthdays, among others [4].

There is a lack of consensus about the definition of well-being at work [3]. According to Couto and Paschoal [4], well-being consists of the predominance of positive emotions



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and the person's perception that he/she is developing potential and heading towards the achievement of his/her life goals at his/her workplace. According to Siqueira's theoretical model [5] using the concept of well-being at work explained by Polizzi Filho and Claro [6], this model encompasses the positive mental state experienced by the worker in a work context, their job satisfaction and involvement, positive feelings towards the organization to which he/she belongs, identifying with the institutional values and ethics, and effective organizational commitment.

The promotion of health literacy is a determining factor for well-being at work, thus positively influencing the physical and mental health of both individuals and multidisciplinary teams.

The intense pace and constant changes inherent to working in healthcare place high demands on physical, emotional, and psychological resources, and a safe and healthy work environment is a fundamental right of all professionals. Thus, changes in work contexts should be accompanied by measures to promote and protect the health of professionals in their workplaces.

The Project

The study is part of an intervention project in partnership with Occupational Health, called: Promotion of Well-Being in an Ambulatory Surgery Unit and Central Operating Room. The project was developed in a hospital in the northern region of Portugal. It aims to identify well-being at work and the factors and strategies for change perceived by health professionals, with a view to increasing their health literacy.

In the first phase, a situational diagnosis was conducted to identify the professionals' level of satisfaction and the associated factors. Based on this diagnosis, interventions were planned with different activities, techniques, and resources, including physical exercise sessions (stretching); progressive muscle relaxation; optimization of positive emotions and sharing of experiences; training; group dynamics and exercises. The provided resources included mattresses, data show, computer, music, and scents, among others.

2. Materials and Methods

Qualitative exploratory-descriptive study. A form with open-ended questions was designed and applied to explore levels of satisfaction with well-being at work, factors that contribute positively and negatively to well-being, and suggested strategies to be implemented to change the negative factors. The form was provided during the month of March 2022 to health professionals of the Outpatient Surgery Unit and Central Operating Room, in adherence with the inherent ethical procedures. The information was generally processed through content analysis [7] by selecting units of analysis, coding, and assigning frequencies to the codes and subsequent categorization.

3. Results

Thirty-two professionals responded, seven of whom were totally satisfied, twenty-two were satisfied, two were dissatisfied, and one was totally dissatisfied with their level of well-being. The positive factors contributing to well-being included (n = 93): institutional organization (n = 7) (professional appreciation and positive reinforcement, institutional organization, continuous training, and parking space in the car park); internal organization of the service (n = 52) (good atmosphere in the workplace, respect for meal breaks, rotation of assigned tasks, adequate equipment for carrying out the work, good remuneration with additional production, and schedules compatible with personal life); and team (n = 34) (motivation, teamwork, and liking for the profession).

The negative factors that interfered with well-being included (n = 71): management of human resources (n = 35) (lack of human resources, no professional appreciation by the supervisor, unfair professional assessment system, work overload, little weekly rest, difficulty in reconciling work and personal life, and disorganization); team (n = 28) (lack

of team spirit and punctuality); and management of material resources ($n = 8$) (lack of material, damaged material, and organization of poorly functional material).

Regarding strategies that could be used to change the factors that negatively contributed to their well-being at work, the respondents mentioned ($n = 74$): organizational management ($n = 41$) (better organization, professional valorization/positive reinforcement by the leadership, safe allocation, eliminate overtime, equity of all professionals, schedules compatible with family life, feasible operative plans, re-education/continuous training, and elaboration of protocols of action); management of material resources ($n = 14$) (better organization of procurement/pharmacy, better management of equipment between services, better equipment, and computer support); and strategies to promote mental health ($n = 19$) (calm work environment with relaxation breaks, promotion of activities that promote professional well-being, better communication, noise reduction, motivational meetings, change of organizational culture to promote well-being, consideration of individual characteristics in the distribution of functions, and mental health consultations).

4. Discussion

The professionals surveyed were generally satisfied with their level of well-being, although there were aspects that could be improved in order to promote mental and physical health. Well-being at work contributes to improving people's health and longevity, which motivates them to achieve success and stimulates the economy [3]. According to the study by Couto and Paschoal [4], greater participation of workers in activities such as gymnastics at work, moments of relaxation, room with music therapy, self-massage, and celebration of birthdays, resulted in lower levels of negative feelings in relation to work.

Several authors have referred to the importance of the work context in professionals' well-being. Work occupies a large part of people's lives, and it is almost impossible not to 'take work home' after a stressful day at work. A worker's lived experience in the work context is not a separate entity from his/her personal life, but it is important that each one recognizes this. Well-being can be easily and inexpensively promoted through prevention programs or interventions at individual and institutional levels in existing systems [3].

Among the aspects identified as negatively affecting well-being, the respondents suggested that greater support from the manager/organization perceived by the professional and fewer organizational constraints that interfere with their performance of work would improve their well-being. The support/environment within the work team was also mentioned as an important element of professional well-being. The pressures at work and in society provide an increasing threat to the well-being of workers, making it urgent to intervene in this area. Human resource managers have an important role to play in promoting practices to improve well-being at work [3], as well as mental health nurses and occupational health nurses. Concerted and effective interventions in the area of well-being at work is important [3]. Transformation will require an essential paradigm shift [2].

5. Conclusions

Investing in health literacy requires individual actions, such as continuous training, and the implementation of practices that promote teamwork and strengthen occupational health. However, the most significant impact can be seen through an increasing response of management systems to the particular and general needs of staff. A transformation of services focusing on people and an understanding of the wider context that ensures that needs are assessed in a personalized way are important. This will facilitate trust, satisfaction, and health gains that will contribute to staff quality of life and productivity.

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Informed Consent Statement: The study was developed within the scope of a project under development in the unit, approved by the nurse manager, and with the tacit consent of health professionals and voluntary participation.

Data Availability Statement: All data generated as part of this study are included in the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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