

Esgotamento profissional na equipe de enfermagem em unidades de pronto atendimento

Burnout professional in the nursing team in emergency care units

Burnout profesional en el equipo de enfermería en las unidades de urgencias

Eduardo Henrique Silva^{1*}, Thiago Quinellato Louro², Lidiane da Fonseca Moura Louro³, Ana Cláudia Mateus Barreto⁴, Rayssa Goulart Valente⁵, Keylla Aparecida da Silva Faria⁶

RESUMO

Objetivo: mapear as evidências científicas sobre o esgotamento profissional na equipe de enfermagem em Unidades de Pronto Atendimento. **Método:** trata-se de uma revisão de escopo, com adoção da estratégia PPC nos recursos informacionais PUBMED, LILACS e SCIELO. Adotou-se como elegíveis artigos originais disponibilizados na íntegra e gratuitamente, nos idiomas português e inglês e publicados nos últimos 5 anos. **Resultados:** foram encontrados 362 artigos e após análise e aplicação dos critérios de inclusão e exclusão, selecionou-se 08 artigos para compor a amostra do estudo. **Conclusão:** os fatores associados ao estresse no âmbito profissional devem ser identificados, uma vez que seu conhecimento pode auxiliar na busca efetiva de ações que reduzam o risco de desenvolvimento da Síndrome de *Burnout*. Os achados deste estudo apontam para a necessidade de publicações acerca do esgotamento profissional da equipe de enfermagem no âmbito das Unidades de Pronto Atendimento.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Profissionais de enfermagem; Esgotamento profissional; Serviços de saúde de emergência.

ABSTRACT

Objective: to map the scientific evidence on professional burnout among the nursing staff in Emergency Care Units. **Method:** this is a scoping review, adopting the PPC strategy in the informational resources PUBMED, LILACS, and SCIELO. Articles that were original, fully available for free, in Portuguese and English, and published in the last 5 years were considered eligible. **Results:** a total of 362 articles were found, and after analysis and application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, 08 articles were selected to compose the study sample. **Conclusion:** the factors associated with stress in the professional

¹ Universidade Federal Fluminense - UFF. Rio das Ostras - RJ. * eduardohs@id.uff.br

^{2,3,4} Universidade Federal Fluminense - UFF. Rio das Ostras- RJ.

⁵ Prefeitura Municipal de Rio das Ostras. Rio das Ostras - RJ.

⁶ Prefeitura Municipal de Cabo Frio. Cabo Frio - RJ.

environment must be identified, as their knowledge can assist in the effective search for actions that reduce the risk of developing Burnout Syndrome. The findings of this study point to the need for publications on professional burnout among the nursing staff in the context of Emergency Care Units.

DESCRIPTORS: Nursing professionals; Professional burnout; Emergency health services.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: mapear las evidencias científicas sobre el agotamiento profesional en el equipo de enfermería en Unidades de Atención Inmediata. **Método:** se trata de una revisión de alcance, con la adopción de la estrategia PCC en los recursos informativos PUBMED, LILACS y SCIELO. Se eligieron como artículos elegibles aquellos originales disponibles en su totalidad y de forma gratuita, en los idiomas portugués e inglés y publicados en los últimos 5 años. **Resultados:** se encontraron 362 artículos y, después del análisis y la aplicación de los criterios de inclusión y exclusión, se seleccionaron 08 artículos para componer la muestra del estudio. **Conclusión:** los factores asociados al estrés en el ámbito profesional deben ser identificados, ya que su conocimiento puede ayudar en la búsqueda efectiva de acciones que reduzcan el riesgo de desarrollar el Síndrome de Burnout. Los hallazgos de este estudio señalan la necesidad de publicaciones sobre el agotamiento profesional del equipo de enfermería en el ámbito de las Unidades de Atención Inmediata.

DESCRITORES: Profesionales de enfermería; Agotamiento profesional; Servicios de salud de emergencia.

INTRODUCTION

Professional burnout, or Burnout Syndrome (BS), is a condition that has been widely studied and discussed in the health context, especially affecting nursing professionals. In Emergency Care Units (UPAs), this problem can be even more accentuated due to the critical care environment, where professionals are constantly exposed to situations of stress and imminent risk of death. In this sense, it is essential to understand the local reality of professional burnout among nursing staff in UPAs, so that scientific studies can help develop interventions and even public policies aimed at promoting the health and well-being of these professionals.¹

In this sense, it is important to carry out studies on burnout among nursing staff to help understand the work dynamics and environments to which these professionals are exposed, as well as the triggering factors that are leading to burnout. Studies like these can contribute to the implementation of policies and processes in health units that can minimize stressful factors and promote the mental health and well-being of professionals working in the field. In addition, studies like this can contribute to the development of effective training programs and protocols for the care and assessment of professionals, which can help prevent and minimize professional burnout.²

The study of professional burnout in nursing staff plays a fundamental role in the health field, as it provides an in-depth understanding of the factors that affect the health and well-being of these professionals. Professional burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment, and is associated with negative consequences for nursing professionals and the quality of care provided. Therefore, understanding the factors that cause burnout is essential for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.³

In addition to the personal impacts, professional burnout among nursing staff has repercussions for the management of health services, since burnout is associated with high rates of absenteeism, turnover and a reduction in the quality of patient care. These negative effects not only affect the financial health of healthcare institutions, but also compromise the safety and effectiveness of the care provided.⁴ It is therefore crucial to investigate and address professional burnout among nursing staff as a priority issue.

In this directive, the importance of identifying the specific risk factors that motivate professional burnout in nursing staff is highlighted. These factors can include excessive workload, lack of adequate resources, lack of autonomy and insufficient organizational support. Understanding these factors is essential in order to implement targeted interventions and preventative measures aimed at reducing burnout and promoting a healthy working environment for nursing professionals.⁵

Finally, an evidence-based approach is essential to tackle the problem of burnout among nursing staff. Therefore, it is important to develop experimental interventions based on solid scientific research in order to promote the mental health and well-being of nursing professionals. Investing in research into burnout in nursing staff offers the opportunity to gain new perspectives and up-to-date knowledge to inform clinical practice and health policies.⁶

In view of this, there is a need to gather and synthesize findings on professional burnout among nursing staff in Emergency Care Units. Therefore, the aim of this study is to map the scientific evidence on professional burnout among nursing staff in Emergency Care Units.

METHODOLOGY

This is a scoping review of the main findings on professional burnout among nursing staff in Emergency Care Units. A scoping review is a type of study used to elucidate topics on the rise, which need to be studied in greater depth, in order to find productions that deal with the researched topic.⁷

The review was constructed in five stages based on the recommendations of Arksey and O'Malley⁸: identification of the research question; identification of relevant studies; selection of studies; data mapping; grouping, summarizing and reporting the results.

The research question was developed using the PCC strategy, whose fundamental elements are the mnemonic: P - Population; C - Concept and C - Context. The elements were defined: P (nursing professionals); C (professional burnout) and C (emergency care units). Thus, the research question was: What has been published in the scientific literature about professional burnout among nursing staff in emergency care units?

In the second stage, identifying relevant studies, we searched for evidence in three information resources, namely: National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health (PUBMED), Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS) and Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO). The descriptors were identified using the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) for terms in English, and the Descriptors in Health

Sciences (DeCS) for terms in Portuguese and used according to the particularity of each search. Thus, the descriptors were "Nursing Professionals", "Professional Burnout" and "Emergency Health Services". And their combinations to build the searches in the LILACS and SCIELO information resources were: "Nursing Professionals" AND "Professional Burnout"; "Nursing Professionals" AND "Emergency Health Services"; and "Professional Burnout" AND "Emergency Health Services". In PUBMED, English descriptors were used: "Nurse practitioners", "Burnout, Professional" and "Services, Emergency Health". The combinations were: "Nurse practitioners" AND "Burnout, Professional"; "Nurse practitioners" AND "Services, Emergency Health"; and "Burnout, Professional" AND "Services, Emergency Health". The data search was carried out in November 2023.

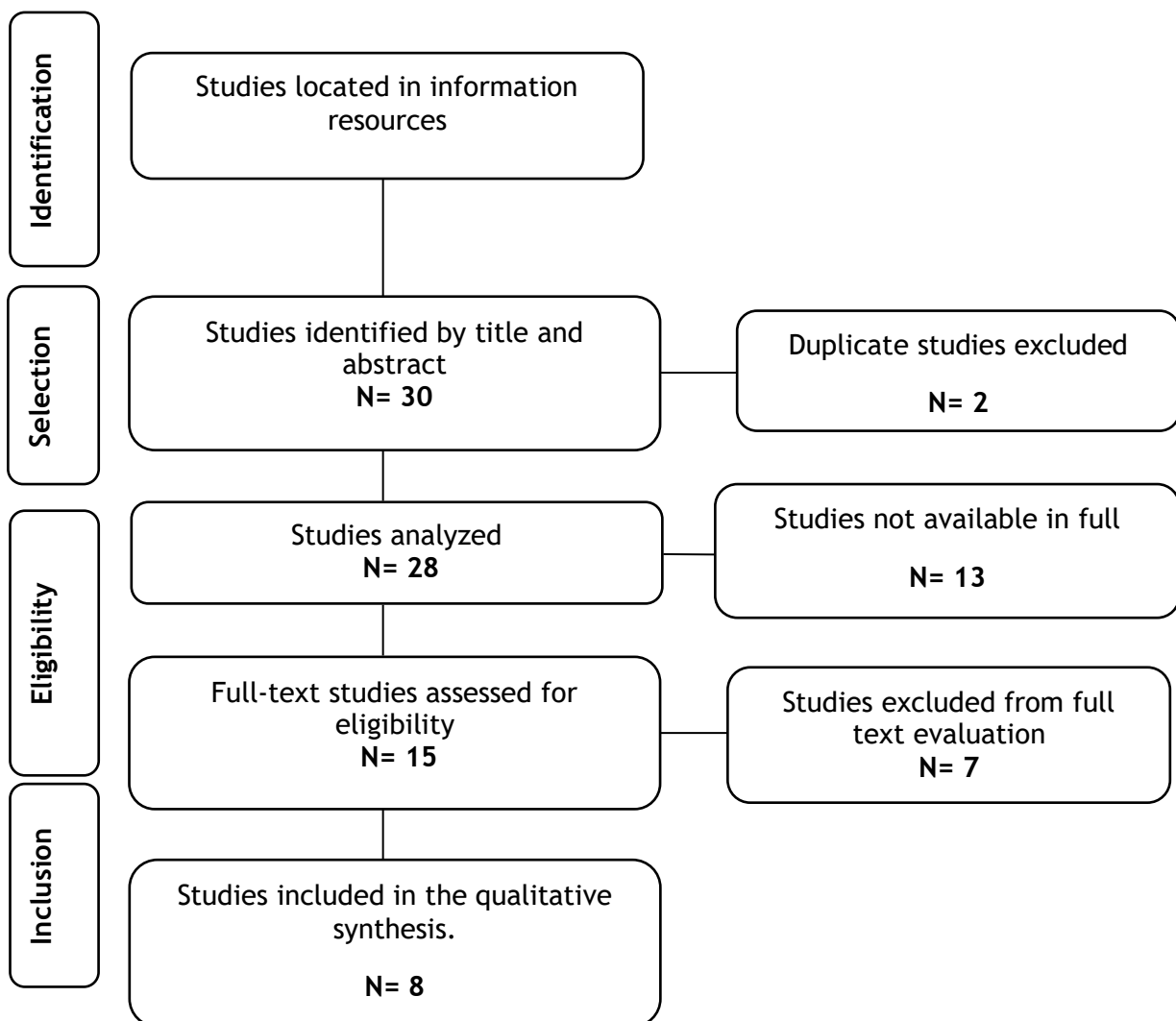
The selection of studies consisted of reading the titles and abstracts of the texts found. The publications were also screened using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Thus, the inclusion criteria were: original articles made available in full and free of charge; productions made available in Portuguese and English and published in the last 5 years. The exclusion criteria were: repeated publications (identification), theses, dissertations, reports of experiences, reflection articles, literature reviews, letters, editorials, monographs (selection), or articles which, after reading the abstract, did not fit the study's objective (eligibility).

An instrument was created using the Excel® database program in order to characterize each selected production, including title, year, objective, method, location and journal.

RESULTS

A total of 362 publications were found. After reading the titles and abstracts, 332 were excluded, leaving 30 publications to read in full. Of the 30 articles, two were duplicates, 13 were excluded because they were not available in full and seven articles did not answer the research question. Finally, eight articles were included in the final sample. The description of the searches and the selection of publications were based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA-SCR)⁹ (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Flow diagram for the process of selecting studies for the Scoping Review, adapted from PRISMA-ScR. Rio das Ostras, RJ, Brazil, 2023



Source: Prepared by the authors, 2023.

The articles selected were published in 2019 (n=3), 2020, (n=1), 2021 (n=2) and 2022 (n=2). Most of the studies were carried out in Brazil (n=5), followed by Israel (n=1),

Spain (n=1) and the United States of America (n=1). The language used was predominantly Portuguese.

The following information was taken from the selected articles: title, year, basis, objective, method, place and journal of the published study. The data was organized in a table as shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 - Presentation of the selected studies. Rio das Ostras, RJ, Brazil, 2023

Nº	TITLE/YEAR	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LOCAL	PERIODICAL
E1	Influence of burnout syndrome on the quality of life of nursing professionals: a quantitative study ¹⁰ (2021)	To estimate the prevalence and factors associated with burnout syndrome and quality of life among nursing	Cross-sectional, analytical study of 83 professionals	Brazil	Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem - REBEN
E2	Factors related to the likelihood of suffering mental health problems in emergency professionals ¹ (2019)	Evaluate the influence of Burnout and the coping strategies used by healthcare personnel of the hospital emergency service on the state of mental health status and to determine the sociodemographic and characteristics.	Descriptive cross-sectional study with 235 nursing and medical professionals	Spain	Revista Latino Americana de Enfermagem - RLAE
E3	<i>Violence in hospitals and burnout among nursing staff</i> ¹² (2022)	To examine the differences in the level of burnout between nursing staff working in emergency departments and nursing staff working in other	Cross-sectional study	Israel	International Emergency Nursing

		inpatient departments, and its relationship to violence in various hospitals in Israel.			
E4	Mental health of professionals from a mobile emergency care service (SAMU) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic ¹³ (2022)	To assess the prevalence and factors associated with Common Mental Disorders (CMD) in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in the work environment of a pre-hospital care team.	Descriptive and quantitative study with 80 pre-hospital care workers	Brazil	CuidArte Enfermagem
E5	Burnout syndrome in emergency room nursing professionals ¹⁴ (2020)	Check the score for classifying Burnout Syndrome.	Quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study with 36 participants	Brazil	Revista de Enfermagem UFPE on line - REUOL
E6	Quality of life at work and demographic-work profile of nurses in an emergency care unit ¹⁵ (2019)	To describe the demographic and work profile and assess the quality of life at work of the nursing team working in the Emergency Care Unit.	A cross-sectional study of 109 workers.	Brazil	Enfermería Global
E7	Occupational Stress: Exposure of Nursing Staff in an Emergency Unit ¹⁶ (2019)	To describe the stress factors for nursing staff in the emergency department of a public hospital.	Qualitative study with nurses and nursing technicians.	Brazil	Revista Cuidado é Fundamental Online
E8	<i>The impact of burnout syndrome on practitioners</i>	To evaluate the incidence, associated factors,	Cross-sectional study with health professionals.	United States of America	American Journal of Emergency Medicine

	<i>working within rural healthcare systems</i> ¹⁷ (2021)	knowledge of the importance of Burnout Syndrome and available infrastructure for Burnout Syndrome intervention in various types of rural health professionals in West Virginia.			
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In order to meet the objective of the scoping review, other information was considered pertinent for critical analysis, such as: the prevalence and factors associated with professional burnout. The findings have been organized in the table below.

Chart 2 - Articles selected in the scoping review with the main findings on professional burnout. Rio das Ostras, RJ, Brazil, 2023

TITLE/YEAR	PREVALENCE	ASSOCIATED FACTORS
Influence of burnout syndrome on the quality of life of nursing professionals: a quantitative study (2021)	The syndrome was more prevalent among older individuals (15%; n = 6), women (15.1%; n = 11), nurses (17.1%; n = 7), those without a relationship (19.5%; n = 8), those with children (23.1%; n = 6) and those earning more than one salary (14.3%; n = 8). The syndrome was identified in 14.5% of the 83 professionals in the sample. In addition, the rates of exhaustion and depersonalization were higher among nurses compared to technicians.	Occupational stress is linked to chronic stress in the workplace. The practice of nursing in environments geared towards the care of critically ill patients can be a significant source of occupational stress, since professionals face challenging situations, whether due to extensive working hours, unfavorable working conditions, lack of adequate staffing and the provision of highly complex care. Furthermore, the lower the quality of life of the participants, the higher the BS score.
Factors related to the likelihood of suffering mental health problems in emergency professionals (2019)	235 professionals took part in the study. Of these, 55.7% manifested a medium level of emotional exhaustion and showed increases in both	Being female increases the risk of suffering from burnout, which is explained by the overload faced by women in simultaneously

	<p>depersonalization (48.9%) and personal accomplishment (54.9%), indicating a medium level of Burnout. In addition, the highest Burnout rates were observed among professionals working in hospital emergency services, when compared to those in other specialties.</p>	<p>managing domestic and professional responsibilities, as well as by lower salaries or greater demands in the workplace. In addition, the constant flow of patient care in emergencies by nursing professionals is considered a factor associated with burnout in this group. High levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, coping strategies focused on avoidance, being a doctor and daily tobacco consumption are elements that increase the risk of developing a psychiatric condition.</p>
<p><i>Violence in hospitals and burnout among nursing staff (2022)</i></p>	<p>The feeling of exhaustion mentioned by nurses in the emergency area was considerably higher compared to the feeling of exhaustion reported by nurses in other hospitalization sectors.</p>	<p>The results show that as the years of professional experience increase, so does the level of burnout. In addition, physical and verbal violence from patients and their families is associated with increased feelings of burnout among nurses.</p>
<p>Mental health of mobile emergency care service (SAMU) professionals in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (2022)</p>	<p>Nurses, nursing technicians and ambulance drivers recorded higher scores for "feeling nervous, tense or worried", while doctors scored higher for "sleeping badly". The characteristic of "feeling nervous, tense or worried" was common to 94.12% of the professionals. In addition, a prevalence of anxiety was observed among nursing professionals and ambulance drivers, causing psychosocial and labor impacts in the medium and long term, associated with the psychological suffering</p>	<p>Exposure to stressful situations, especially the overload faced on the front line during the pandemic, leading to physical exhaustion and insomnia.</p>

	generated by the Covid-19 pandemic.	
Burnout syndrome in emergency room nursing professionals (2020)	90% of the nurses showed emotional exhaustion scores ranging from moderate to high, while the percentage for nursing technicians was 42.3%.	Professionals who deal with the suffering of others, especially in urgent and emergency sectors, tend to be at greater risk of developing burnout. This predisposition is aggravated by precarious working conditions, lack of professional recognition and inadequate remuneration, associated with the structural elements of the organization itself.
Quality of life at work and demographic-work profile of nurses in an emergency care unit (2019)	A comparison of the overall analysis of quality of life at work (QOL) revealed that nurses (55.3%) had a higher rate of dissatisfaction compared to nursing technicians and assistants (approximately 30% in both categories). The predominance of dissatisfaction among nurses in the 24-hour UPA can be explained by the fact that this category has broader responsibilities and competencies compared to other nursing professionals. With regard to nursing workers who were absent due to work-related illnesses, there was a higher prevalence of mental illnesses, such as occupational stress and depression.	QWL can be affected by various factors, such as salary, working conditions, safety, workload, opportunities for professional growth and the relationship with management. What's more, in the emergency room environment, the constant state of alert, the high number of patients, the complexity of the organization and the work process all contribute to burnout and illness among professionals.
Occupational Stress: Exposure of Nursing Staff in an Emergency Unit (2019)	As nurses represent the majority of professionals in hospitals, they are often the group most affected by unfavorable working conditions and unhealthy	Inadequate sizing of the nursing team, one of the consequences of which is an insufficient number of staff, causing work overload. Exposure to stress due to

	environments.	difficult relationships with patients and carers and inadequate working conditions, such as a lack of material resources, increasing physical, psychological and emotional burdens, resulting in signs and symptoms of burnout.
<i>The impact of burnout syndrome on practitioners working within rural healthcare systems (2021)</i>	The survey was answered by 127 professionals, and among all those interviewed, around 65% reported feeling "a lot" of work-related stress, while 31% reported feeling exhausted.	The factors associated with the development of BS in healthcare professionals can be grouped into four main subcategories: 1) organizational factors, such as increased workload; 2) personal characteristics, such as sleep deprivation and the use of drugs and alcohol; 3) exposure to end-of-life situations, with nurses being particularly at risk; and 4) the poor quality of working relationships. In addition, dysfunctional relationships with patients and their families are also frequently pointed out as significant sources of stress for professionals.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the articles shows that factors such as long working hours, working in an urgent and emergency sector, a constant flow of patients, inadequate sizing, poor working conditions, work overload, being female, inadequate pay, exposure to physical and verbal violence, lack of material resources, sleep deprivation and the use of drugs and alcohol, daily tobacco consumption, poor quality of working relationships, among others, are associated with increased chances of professional burnout among nursing staff.⁹⁻¹⁷

With regard to the studies selected in the scientific search, it was clear that 5 of them used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) scale to assess Burnout Syndrome (BS).¹⁻

^{3,5,8} The BS assessment scale was developed and validated by Christina Maslach and is a scale that assesses how workers experience their work, according to feelings that express three pillars of the syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment.¹⁸ Emotional exhaustion refers to a lack of energy and a feeling of emotional exhaustion, while depersonalization involves a state of emotional insensitivity. With regard to low professional fulfillment, there is a tendency towards negative self-assessment of the work process, professional dissatisfaction and distancing from professional colleagues.¹⁰

A study carried out with professionals working in pre-hospital care (APH) during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that, during the pandemic period, the difficulty in maintaining a healthy sleep routine became even more pronounced given the increase in the number of health problems and the level of dissatisfaction with life, exacerbated by the various stressful situations experienced constantly, a factor that influenced the increase in professional burnout.¹³ The poorer quality of sleep significantly increases the chances of high emotional exhaustion, which is the first dimension of burnout syndrome to appear, according to a study in Paraná.¹⁹

Another important finding was a study carried out in Spain, which observed that the increase in the number of patients seen daily in the health service was linked to the manifestation of depressive symptoms by professionals. Similarly, in emergency units, the frequent turnover of patients seen by nursing professionals is pointed out as a factor associated with BS in this group.¹¹ This corroborates a study carried out in the Federal District which, among other factors, points to the high number of patients seen on a shift as a factor that leads to burnout.²⁰

It is reported that, in relation to the characteristics of nursing professionals, there is a prevalence among those with an average age of 37 years.¹⁴ However, one study showed that Burnout Syndrome predominantly affects older individuals. This is due to the fact that, with the ageing process, people are more likely to develop mental disorders as a result of difficulties in adapting to working conditions²⁰. Another publication shows that

advanced age and experience appear to be protective elements against Burnout Syndrome, since professionals with a longer career tend to develop greater resilience to the pressures and challenges of the work environment.²¹

In addition, two studies show that dysfunctional relationships with patients and their families, as well as cases of violence by these individuals against healthcare professionals, is considered a serious problem faced by healthcare workers. This is because violence can lead not only to reduced well-being and professional burnout, but also to a reduction in the quality of care provided, since aggression can cause emotional damage and thus affect effectiveness at work.^{12,17}

In addition to the factors associated with professional burnout already mentioned, a study carried out in Bahia found that the low level of resolution in primary care units continues to be a significant factor in leading the population to opt for hospital emergency departments as their first choice. As a result, the workload of the ER nursing team is overloaded and there is a potential for these professionals to develop occupational stress.¹⁶

Thus, considering the objective of mapping the scientific evidence on professional burnout among nursing staff in Emergency Care Units, we can see that the limiting factor for this review was the small number of publications aimed specifically at UPAs. This is in line with one of the publications found, which points out that there is still a need to understand the profile and quality of life at work of nursing professionals working in UPAs, given the scarcity of studies exploring this specific scenario, since few previous studies have investigated nursing workers working in the scenario in question¹⁵. This reinforces the need for new studies looking at these health services.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, the objective of this study was fully achieved. As far as the implications for the nursing field are concerned, this study is relevant because it deals with an issue that is recurring more and more every day and which directly affects nursing professionals,

since psychological changes such as Burnout Syndrome cause damage to the individual, as well as influencing the effectiveness of the care provided.

In this way, the factors associated with stress in the professional sphere should be identified, since knowing them can help in the effective search for actions that reduce the risk of developing Burnout Syndrome and, consequently, have a positive impact on the quality of work.

Thus, the findings of this study point to the need for publications on the professional burnout of nursing staff in Emergency Care Units, as well as the creation and implementation of actions to prevent and, consequently, reduce cases of professional burnout in this population.

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