

Health and Wellness Professionals During COVID-19 in the Itajaí Valley/SC

Profissionais de Saúde e Bem-estar Durante a COVID-19 no Vale do Itajaí/SC
Profesionales de la Salud y el Bienestar Durante la COVID-19 em el Valle de Itajaí/SC

RESUMO

Essa pesquisa busca avaliar o bem estar geral de profissionais de saúde durante a pandemia de COVID-19 baseado no questionário da Copenhagen Burnout Inventory – CBI traduzido para o português, em um hospital localizado no Vale do Itajaí/SC. Trata-se de um estudo quali-quantitativo acerca do bem estar geral de profissionais de saúde que trabalharam durante a pandemia de COVID-19 no hospital localizado no Vale do Itajaí/SC baseado no questionário (Anexo 1) da Copenhagen Burnout Inventory – CBI traduzido para o português. Com o presente estudo, pode-se observar que há uma significativa prevalência do comprometimento do bem estar geral de profissionais de saúde durante a pandemia de COVID-19 no hospital localizado no Vale do Itajaí/SC baseado no questionário da Copenhagen Burnout Inventory traduzido para o português. Tal constatação favorece o surgimento de inúmeros problemas vinculado a esses trabalhadores, como a síndrome de burnout.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Burnout, COVID-19, pandemia de coronavírus, bem-estar, síndrome de burnout.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to assess the general well-being of healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory – CBI questionnaire translated into Portuguese, in a hospital located in Vale do Itajaí/SC. This is a qualitative and quantitative study on the general well-being of healthcare professionals who worked during the COVID-19 pandemic at a hospital located in Vale do Itajaí/SC based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory – CBI questionnaire (Appendix 1) translated into Portuguese. With this study, it can be observed that there is a significant prevalence of impairment of the general well-being of healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic at a hospital located in Vale do Itajaí/SC based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory questionnaire translated into Portuguese. This finding favors the emergence of numerous problems linked to these workers, such as burnout syndrome.

DESCRIPTORS: Burnout, COVID-19, coronavirus pandemic, well-being, burnout syndrome.

RESUMEN

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo evaluar el bienestar general de los profesionales de la salud durante la pandemia de COVID-19 con base en el cuestionario Copenhagen Burnout Inventory – CBI traducido al portugués, en un hospital ubicado en Vale do Itajaí/SC. Se trata de un estudio cualitativo y cuantitativo sobre el bienestar general de los profesionales de la salud que trabajaron durante la pandemia de COVID-19 en un hospital ubicado en Vale do Itajaí/SC basado en el cuestionario Copenhagen Burnout Inventory – CBI (Apéndice 1) traducido al portugués. Con este estudio, se puede observar que existe una prevalencia significativa de deterioro del bienestar general de los profesionales de la salud durante la pandemia de COVID-19 en un hospital ubicado en Vale do Itajaí/SC con base en el cuestionario Copenhagen Burnout Inventory traducido al portugués. Este hallazgo favorece la aparición de numerosos problemas ligados a estos trabajadores, como el síndrome de burnout.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Burnout, COVID-19, pandemia de coronavirus, bienestar, síndrome de burnout.

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INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the coronavirus pandemic that the world has faced has brought with it unprecedented challenges and demonstrated major problems in dealing with epidemics in different countries⁽¹⁾. It is known that while a large part of the world's population has been called to work from home, health professionals have continued to work in hospitals, with huge work schedules, in order to fight the virus and help people⁽²⁾. This reality has led to increased responsibility and stress for these professionals, and many have found themselves overwhelmed and exhausted by their work⁽³⁾. This situation, combined with the uncertainties linked to the coronavirus pandemic, has led to an increase in burnout among health professionals, especially among doctors, as studies have shown⁽⁴⁾.

In 2021, around 14.5% of health professionals in Barcelona had symptoms of acute stress and concluded that COVID-19 is a risk factor for increased stress, anxiety and depression among these professionals⁽⁵⁾. Such a situation favors these professionals feeling emotionally overworked, stressed, with no vision of career progression and small salaries. This situation is a reflection of the accumulated stress associated with work and the general exhaustion of the individual. It should be noted that we need to pay attention to this whole situation, given that according to the World Health Organization: "Health is the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease"⁽⁶⁾. In addition, it is of the utmost importance to seek

solutions to combat COVID-19 on an emergency basis throughout the world⁽⁷⁾.

It is known that severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is probably associated with contamination from an animal that passed it on to humans in Wuhan, China. This virus has shown high rates of interpersonal transmission, whether to people with severe symptoms or those who are asymptomatic, and has given rise to the present reality⁽⁸⁾.

It is worth mentioning that occupational risks, national response versus local scale, process inefficiency and financial instability are the 4 main factors for occupational fatigue and burnout linked to the COVID-19 pandemic⁽⁸⁾.

Simple mechanisms such as breathing exercises and mindfulness can reduce anxiety and stress factors related to fatigue and burnout as a whole⁽⁸⁾.

It is known that working in direct contact in hospitals with patients suspected of having COVID-19 and/or confirmed with this pathology can be a major stress factor for these people. The presence of burnout in around 50% of healthcare workers is alarming and similar to other studies, such as one carried out at a regional hospital in Taiwan. The COVID-19 pandemic and the exhaustive use of personal protective equipment, as well as social isolation, exacerbate this⁽⁹⁾. Reduced time and socializing with family and friends has become a common occurrence. To cope with this situation, with the recommended social distancing, social connections can be made through digital media. These methods are in line with the World Health

Organization's recommendations on mental health for people and health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic⁽⁹⁾. It is important to note that specific interventions in this period of social isolation during the pandemic can be used to improve general well-being and reduce stressors. Regular burnout assessments are recommended to address this problem among health professionals working directly with COVID-19⁽⁹⁾.

It has to be said that some studies show that when subordinate workers are supported by their bosses, the stressful effects of the work environment and the onset of burnout are reduced. A good relationship between professionals suggests that it is an important social support and helps employees in their daily work and in reducing the stress factors associated and linked to the onset of illness⁽³⁾.

Similarly, the aim of this study is to evaluate their general well-being in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic by asking direct questions to health professionals working in a hospital located in the Itajaí Valley/SC.

This questionnaire has already been validated and shown to be reliable by academics at the Sapienza University of Rome Medical School⁽¹⁰⁾.

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative-quantitative study on the general well-being of health professionals who worked during the COVID-19 pandemic at a hospital located in the Itajaí Valley/SC, based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) questionnaire (Appendix 1) translated into Portu-

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guese.

Participants who want access to the final results of the research can request it by contacting the principal investigator.

Research Ethics Committee (CEP) approval number: 5.820.627.

CAAE: 59956822.8.0000.5636.

RESULTS

Using the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) questionnaire (Appendix 1) translated into Portuguese for 50 participants, the following results were obtained:

First phase: personal exhaustion.

1. How often do you feel tired?

4	Always
34	Often
12	Rarely
0	Never

2. How often are you physically exhausted?

3	Always
25	Often
22	Rarely

3. How often are you emotionally exhausted?

7	Always
23	Often
18	Rarely
2	Never

5. How often do you think: "I can't take it anymore"?

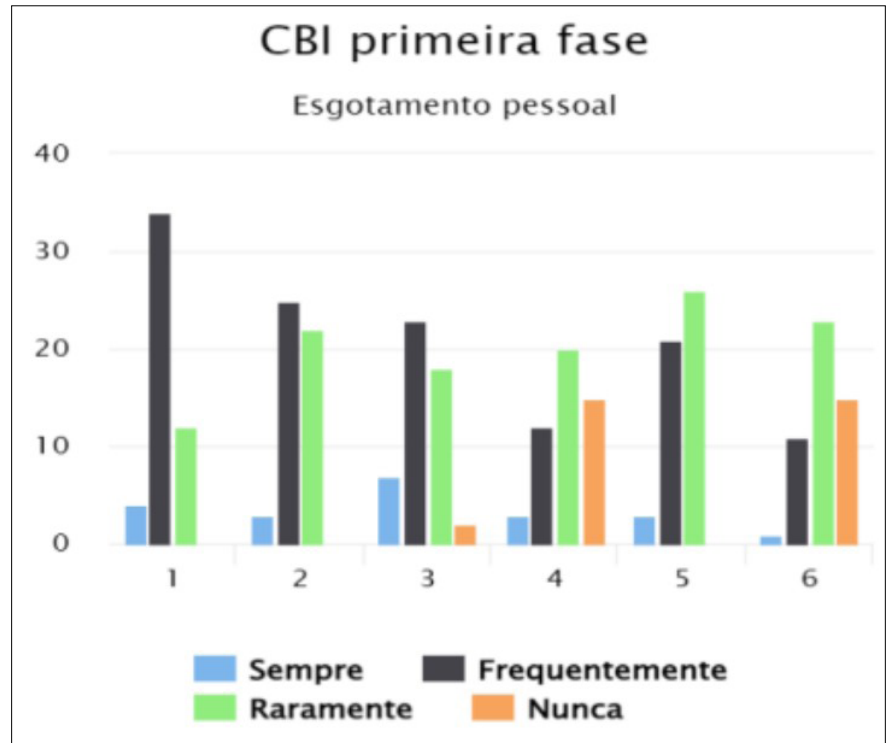
3	Always
12	Often
20	Rarely
15	Never

5. How often do you feel exhausted?

3	Always
12	Often
20	Rarely
15	Never

6. How often do you feel weak and susceptible to illness?

1	Always
11	Often
23	Rarely
15	Never



Second phase: Work-related burnout.

1. Is your work emotionally draining?

8	To a very high degree
26	High degree
15	Low grade
1	To a very low degree

2. Do you feel exhausted by your work?

1	To a very high degree
21	High degree
23	Low grade
5	To a very low degree

3. Does your work frustrate you?

0	To a very high degree
6	High degree
17	Low grade

4. Do you feel tired at the end of the working day?

3	To a very high degree
29	High degree
17	Low grade
1	To a very low degree

5. Are you exhausted in the morning thinking about another day at work?

3	To a very high degree
29	High degree
17	Low grade
1	To a very low degree

6. Do you find every hour of work tiring?

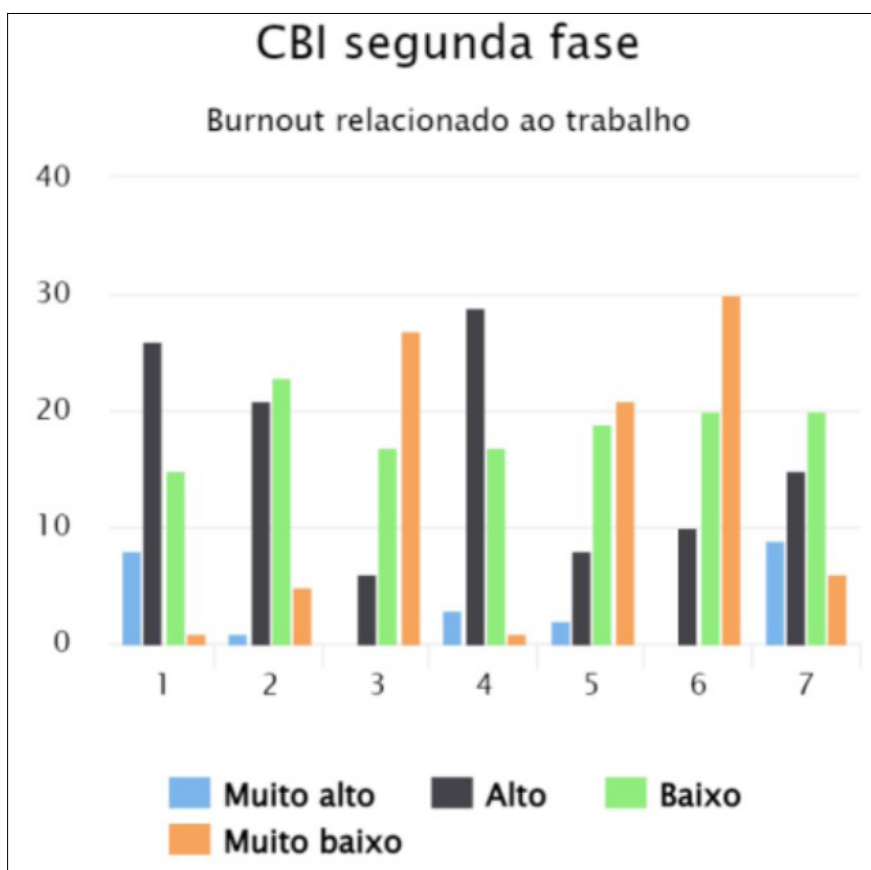
0	To a very high degree
10	High degree
20	Low grade
20	To a very low degree

7. Do you have enough energy for family and friends during your leisure time?

9	To a very high degree
15	High degree
20	Low grade
6	To a very low degree

4. Do you feel that you give more than you receive when you work with patients?

4	To a very high degree
21	High degree
13	Low grade
12	To a very low degree



5. Are you tired of working with patients?

0	To a very high degree
3	High degree
15	Low grade
32	To a very low degree

6. Do you sometimes wonder how long you'll be able to continue working with patients?

2	To a very high degree
7	High degree
18	Low grade
23	To a very low degree

Third phase: Burnout related to the client/patient.

1. Do you find it difficult to work with patients?

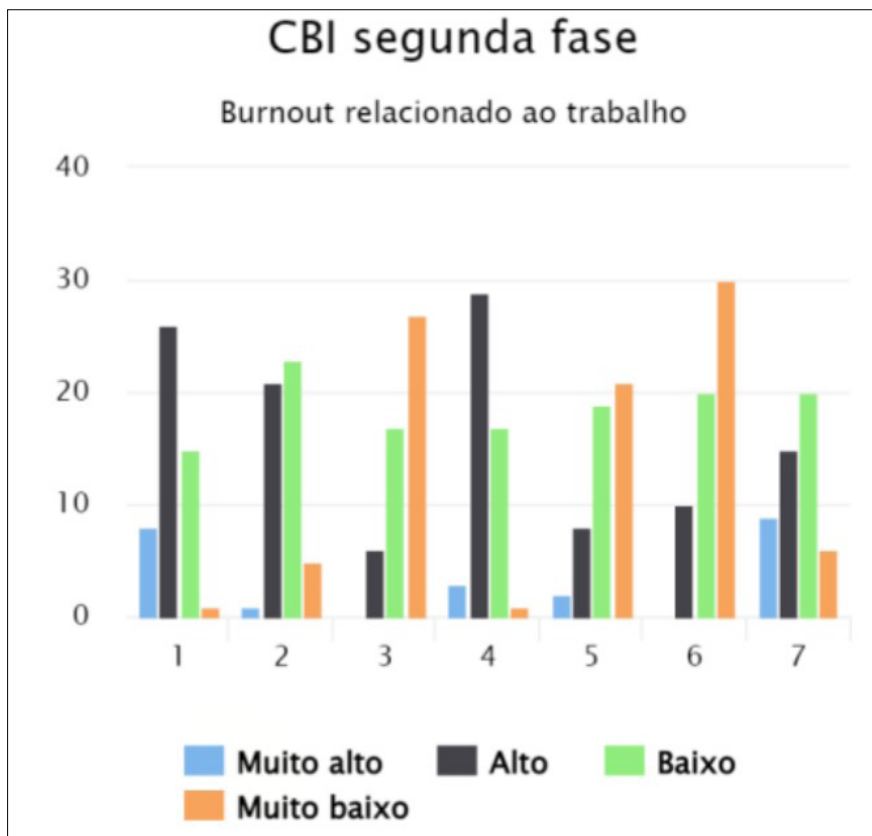
1	To a very high degree
13	High degree
18	Low grade
18	To a very low degree

2. Do you find working with patients frustrating?

1	To a very high degree
3	High degree
31	Low grade
15	To a very low degree

3. Does it drain your energy to work with patients?

1	To a very high degree
10	High degree
23	Low grade
16	To a very low degree



DISCUSSION

It can be said that burnout is a complex psychological syndrome associated with chronic stress. This syndrome has been seen in workers from various fields, and burnout symptoms have also been seen among health professionals. Symptoms vary and can include physical, emotional and behavioral symptoms. In addition to aggression and violence, depression and a greater tendency to abuse substances, such as alcohol, are observed in those with burnout syndrome and, in some cases, even problems in the family/home environment can arise⁽¹¹⁾.

On the professional side, the person may show behavioral exhaustion and impairment of their professional duties, leading to possible errors and a notable decrease in personal satisfaction⁽¹¹⁾.

The first sign of burnout is emo-

tional exhaustion, which correlates to a feeling of physical and emotional exhaustion due to the chronic stress faced by a person. Subsequent to this phase, a certain personal depersonalization can be observed, involving various areas of work, which favours the emergence of feelings of professional incompetence and personal unfulfilment⁽¹¹⁾.

For this reason, burnout syndrome is usually linked to a number of harmful effects on people's lives, such as absenteeism and many professional organizational difficulties as a whole. In the United States, there are several studies that assess people's behavioral health and which indicate significant problems in the workforce associated with behavioral health. It is therefore important to learn about this syndrome and try to minimize the prevalence of burnout among professionals in general⁽¹¹⁾.

According to a study published

in *Revista Brasileira de Psicoterapia*, direct care health professionals account for 50.8% of symptoms suggestive of burnout syndrome, while indirect care professionals account for a total of 23.5% of the aforementioned symptoms associated with the COVID-19 pandemic⁽⁵⁾.

In health professionals, burnout syndrome is also linked to various problems, such as psychological exhaustion, personal dissatisfaction, a significant decrease in productivity and feelings of insecurity and failure⁽⁵⁾.

It has been observed that the high work demands placed on health professionals and the fact that they routinely face deaths and patient suffering make this group more susceptible to developing burnout syndrome⁽⁵⁾.

Therefore, in view of the context presented, bringing to light the knowledge of these studies is of fundamental importance, in order to evaluate the association between the suffering of health professionals such as burnout syndrome, and the COVID-19 pandemic unfolding mainly between the years 2021 and 2022⁽⁵⁾.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that there is a significant prevalence of impairment of the general well-being of healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in a hospital located in the Itajaí Valley/SC, based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory questionnaire translated into Portuguese. This finding favors the emergence of numerous problems linked to these workers, such as burnout syndrome.

Given the above, the importance of seeking improvements in working conditions for health professionals on the part of the competent authorities associated with simple mechanisms such as breathing exercises and mindfulness for employees can reduce

anxiety and stress factors, related to fatigue and exhaustion as a whole⁽⁸⁾. Such practices can catalyze bet-

ter working conditions for all health professionals and therefore help to better combat major disasters such as

the COVID-19 pandemic, given that this group is fundamental in this situation.

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