



## HEALTH PROFILE OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN BRAZIL: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

Elen Villegas Campos, \*Alexandra Maria Almeida Carvalho Pinto,  
Albert Schiaveto de Souza and Maria Lúcia Ivo

Graduate Program in Health and Development in the West Central Region, Federal University of  
Mato Grosso do Sul, Campo Grande-MS-Brazil

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2018  
Received in revised form  
07<sup>th</sup> May, 2018  
Accepted 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2018  
Published online 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2018

#### Key Words:

Faculty,  
Mental Disorder,  
Stress,  
Occupational Burnout.

### ABSTRACT

The health of professors interferes in the education process as a factor in social change.

**Objective:** To synthesize and analyze the scientific knowledge already produced about the health of higher education professors of public institutions in Brazil.

**Method:** Integrative review of scientific articles that answered the guiding question "How is the health of the university professor of public institutions in Brazil?". Eight databases with significance for the subject were selected for the search: PubMed - U.S. National Library of Medicine; LILACS - Latin-American and Caribbean health literature index, SciELO - Electronic Library Online, DOAJ - Directory of Open Access Journals; Academic OneFile, Scopus (Elsevier), Web of Science e Dialnet. The review included articles written in Portuguese, English, and Spanish, published between January 2007 and March 2018.

**Results:** The 10 articles that composed the analyzed sample showed that Brazilian university professors are being affected by mental illnesses, with stress being the most cited, which is the main cause of Burnout Syndrome. Studies have reported work overload as a professional risk for stress.

Copyright © 2018, Elen Villegas Campos et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Elen Villegas Campos, Alexandra Maria Almeida Carvalho Pinto, Albert Schiaveto de Souza and Maria Lúcia Ivo, 2018. "Health profile of university professors of public institutions in Brazil: an integrative review", *International Journal of Development Research*, 8, (07), 21871-21876.

### INTRODUCTION

The work of teachers is an activity that provides suffering and pleasure. They experience suffering because of the demands of the profession, and the pleasure derived from compensations for the subjectivity, provided by the exchange of ideas, expansion of knowledge and oxygenation of the thinking. The teaching work includes the administration of classes, grading of tests and works, conduction of researches, writing of articles, participation in university events, the orientation of students in the production of scientific papers, participation in extension projects, and the update of new knowledge (Vilela, 2010). The work of the university professor is difficult and of great responsibility to train new professionals for the job market. In addition, the teaching work is difficult because many students who enter the universities do so with a lack of

capacity for reflection and abstraction, in the domain of Portuguese and foreign languages, in the socio-cultural background and habits of study; respect for others, commitment and discipline (Oliveira and Freitas, 2008). The sickness of teachers goes unnoticed at the universities due to the specificity of the teaching work that allows the underreporting of absences due to health problems. The teacher falls ill, moves away from the workplace for short periods, often without a medical certificate for health treatment. As soon as possible, he or she returns, reorganizes the class schedule, and teaches the missing content. Often, even sick, the teacher continues to work in his residence due to the use of technologies. The computer, the telephone, and the internet allow the link with the work to be maintained. In the end, everything happens as if nothing had happened within the federal public education institution. Studies on the working conditions and health of teachers are scarce compared to other areas. However, the teacher became a worker subject to the same conditions as factory workers, because the school acquired the function of creating workers. The student is seen

\*Corresponding author: Alexandra Maria Almeida Carvalho Pinto,  
Graduate Program in Health and Development in the West Central Region,  
Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, Campo Grande-MS-Brazil.

as a product and the school as an institution that produces the workforce (Lima and Lima, 2009). José Manuel Esteve (1987) cited stress and Burnout Syndrome as main problems among teachers already at that time, causing absenteeism due to illness and abandonment of the profession. Some stressors were cited by Lourenço (2009) and Martínez (2002): chalk dust, inadequate lighting, furniture, noise, temperature, ventilation, and humidity. Other stressor stimuli are work overload; lack of support, incentives, and perspectives; constant changes determined by the organization, by the introduction of new technologies and changes in the field of professional performance, as well as negligence in the care of the ergonomic conditions (Cruz and Lemos, 2005). The teacher is one of the main agents of social change, whether of the quality of teaching or the democratization of Brazilian society, so it is relevant to understand the process of illness of these professionals. There are few studies on the health of university professors, and when it comes to federal public institutions, they become almost absent. Knowing this, this integrative review has the objective of synthesizing and analyze the scientific knowledge already produced about the health of higher education professors of public institutions in Brazil.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This integrative review was carried out in five stages (Whittemore and Knafl, 2005):

**Stage 1– Problem identification:** the problem and the variables of the research were defined, characterized by the guiding question “How is the health of the university professor of public institutions in Brazil?”.

**Stage 2– Literature search:** Medical Subjects Headings (MeSH) was used to select the controlled descriptors "Health", "Faculty", "University Professors", "Universities", "Brazil". To search in Portuguese, the trilingual and structured vocabulary DeCS - Health Sciences Descriptors was used, and the headings were selected: “Saúde”, “Docentes”, “Universidades”, “Brasil” and the synonymous “Professor Universitário”.

In order to carry out the search for the studies, combinations were made between the descriptors using the Boolean operators AND and OR. Eight databases with significance for the subject were selected: PubMed- U.S. National Library of Medicine; LILACS- Latin-American and Caribbean health literature index, SciELO- Electronic Library Online, DOAJ- Directory of Open Access Journals; Academic One File, Scopus (Elsevier), Web of Science e Dialnet. The review included articles written in Portuguese, English, and Spanish, published between January 2007 and March 2018. We excluded studies published before January 2007 and after March 2018, those written in languages other than those stipulated, and studies that did not respond to the guiding question. Title, abstract and keywords were analyzed for pre-selection of studies. The pre-selected articles were read in full, of these, those who responded to the guiding question composed the final sample of this study.

**Stage 3 –Data evaluation:** The articles were evaluated using a data collection instrument containing the following variables: database, authors, title, journal, year of publication, type of study, objectives and main results.

**Stage 4–Data analysis:** Each study of the sample was carefully analyzed. The following categorizations were obtained: risk factors for illness; productivity versus illness; mental impairment; Burnout Syndrome and physical impairment.

**Stage 5 –Presentation:** Elaboration of this article, which presents in a clear and concrete way the integrative review, with all its stages, results and conclusions.

## RESULTS

### Characterization of the sample

The initial search in the databases used in this study resulted in 301 articles. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 184 studies were selected. In these, title, abstract and keywords were read, which resulted in 25 articles that were read in full. In the end, the sample consisted of 10 articles. Figure 1 illustrates this process. According to the databases, 301 articles were obtained: LILACS (16), PubMed (61), Scielo (34), DOAJ (34), Dialnet (45), Academic OneFile (13), Scopus (59) and Web Of Science (39). Concerning to answer the guiding question “How is the health of the university professor of public institutions in Brazil?”: Dialnet(03), Scopus (02), LILACS (01), PubMed (01), Scielo (01), DOAJ (01), Academic OneFile (01), and none in Web Of Science. In this integrative review, articles published from January 2007 to March 2018 were searched. After the selection of the papers, it was verified that the final sample consisted of papers published as of 2010, characterizing a current sample of data. The years 2011, 2017 and 2018 had two articles and in the remaining years only one per year.

### Evaluation of articles

The 10 articles were evaluated according to variables related to the publication (databases, author, title, journal and year), type of study, objectives and main results. The results of this step are shown in Table 1.

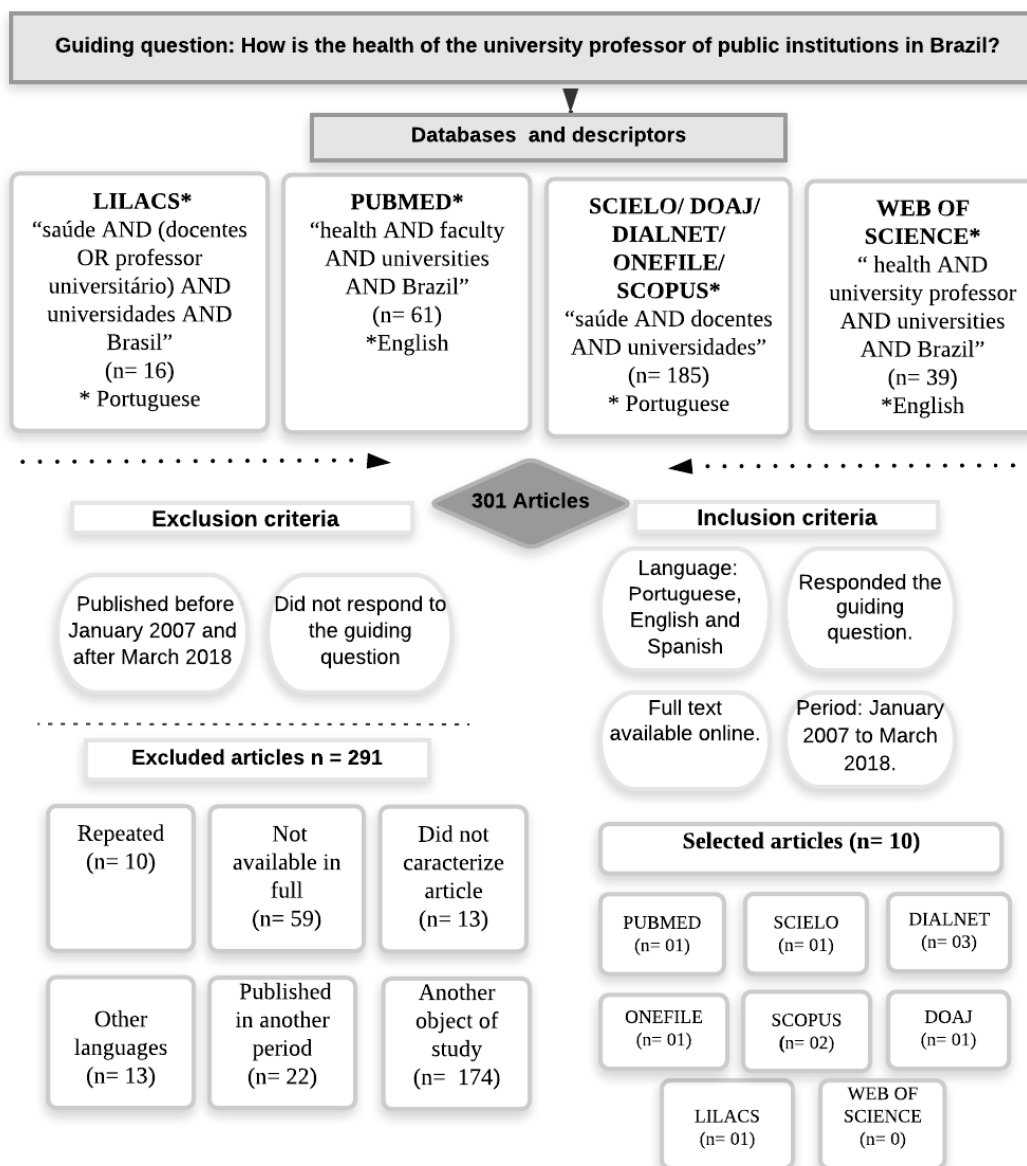
## DISCUSSION

### Stage 4 - Data analysis

The careful reading of the 10 articles made it possible to present them in the categories: risk factors for illness, productivity versus illness, mental illness, Burnout Syndrome and physical impairment.

### Risk factors for illness

Of the studies, 90% (9) mentioned the work overload as the main risk factor for the teachers' illnesses, followed by 30% (3) who reported low remuneration, as well as interpersonal relations in 30% (3), also was cited the lack of professional recognition in one article. All these factors can generate teacher dissatisfaction and stress. Gradella Júnior (2010) reports that mental illnesses are related to the form of work organization of the teacher, which includes the division of tasks and people, as well as the human relations involved in the execution of the work. While physical diseases are related to environmental conditions of work according to Fontana and Pinheiro (2010).



**Figure 1. Flowchart of the literature search and selection of articles**

According to Jacinto and Tolfo (2017), psychosocial risk factors are aspects of the organization and social environment, such as excessive workload and rhythm at work, impoverished communications, lack of support, work in shifts, lack of participation in decisions, unpleasant tasks, conflicts in the interpersonal relations in the work, conflicts between the domestic requirements and those of the work. These factors can lead the individual to stress, which can result in health damage, physical, psychic and behavioral. Caran (2011) related the problems encountered by the professors in his study in a public university as: physical, mental and social exhaustion due to time requirement, go to sleep and wake up thinking about their tasks, difficulty in concentrating, competitiveness, disrespect, manipulation of information, mental pressure, requirements, responsibility, noncompliance with agendas, excessive meetings, complexity of tasks and simultaneous activities, poor planning of activities, devaluation, discouragement, among others. The factors related to time and work rhythm, as well as the levels of attention and concentration required to perform the tasks, combined with the level of pressure made by the work organization generate tension, fatigue and professional exhaustion that often result in Burnout syndrome, causing psychic suffering related to work (Brasil, 2001).

### Productivity versus illness

The teacher productivity was approached by 50% (5) of the articles. Borsoi (2013) aimed to show that professors of public universities get sick because of their way of working to fulfill the demands of the profession. He interviewed 98 teachers, and 80 reported having sought medical and/or psychological help in the past two years, more than 80% reported having health problems related to job requirements. This indicates that there is an effective relationship between aspects of the work and the process of illness among university professors. The same study showed that reducing the workload, and taking time to rest, to social and family life, were decisive factors for teachers to alleviate suffering, or even recover their health status. Bernardo (2014) interviewed four professors from a public university who had been teaching for more than 20 years. The work overload was widely described, exceeding 40 hours per week. They described the overload as undergraduate and graduate classes; master and doctorate orientations, scientific initiation and junior scientific initiation; extension activities and supervision of internships; participation in commissions of the university and bibliographical production, these realized even in the weekends. Teachers were asked why they felt so overloaded.

Table 1. Evaluation of the articles according to selected variables (n = 10)

Database	Authors and title	Journal and year	Type of study	Objectives	Main results
PUBMED	SOUZA et al. Notebooks on health and work: diaries of public university professor.	Cadernos de Saúde Pública, 2018.	Qualitative.	Analyze the instrument "Notebooks on health and work", to know the work of public university teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of work overload.</li> <li>- Precarious working conditions.</li> <li>- Mental exhaustion.</li> </ul>
LILACS	CARAN et al. Psychosocial occupational risks and their impact on the health of professors.	Revista de Enfermagem UERJ, 2011.	Cross-sectional, descriptive and quantitative.	To identify the existence of occupational psychosocial risks in the work environment of university professors and its repercussions on the health of these workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Predominant occupational risks were the intense mental load and the overload of work;</li> <li>- Health changes: Stress and anxiety associated with other emotional changes;</li> <li>- Risk of the occurrence of Burnout Syndrome.</li> </ul>
SCIELO	OLIVEIRA; PEREIRA; LIMA. Work, productivity and sickness of teachers in Brazilian public universities.	Psicologia Escolar e Educacional, 2017.	Qualitative.	To identify the symptoms and forms of illness of the university professor of Brazilian public institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Psychic and emotional exhaustion: stress, anxiety disorders and depression.</li> <li>- Physical depletion: vocal injury, headache, changes in pressure and tachycardia.</li> <li>- Risk of the occurrence of Burnout Syndrome.</li> </ul>
DOAJ	SOUZA et al. The new organization of labor at public universities: collective consequences of job instability on the health of teachers.	Revista Ciência & Saúde, 2017.	Qualitative, exploratory.	Analyze the new organization of the work of university professors, and establish a relationship with the health panorama of these workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of strong organizational pressures;</li> <li>- Work overload;</li> <li>- The precariousness of work;</li> <li>- Mental impairment;</li> <li>- Risk of the occurrence of Burnout Syndrome.</li> </ul>
ONEFIE	GONÇALVES et al. Prevalence of Burnout Syndrome in physicians professors of a Brazilian public university.	Revista Brasileira de Medicina do Trabalho, 2011.	Cross-sectional, qualitative, prospective.	To analyze the prevalence of Burnout Syndrome in medical professors from the 1st to 4th year of the medical course of the University of the State of Pará (Uepa) during the year of 2011.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Half of the medical professors presented Burnout Syndrome, the majority being female.</li> <li>- The dimension that showed the highest levels was depersonalization.</li> <li>- Single professors showed higher levels of professional achievement than married.</li> </ul>
DIALNET	SILVA; RIBEIRO; MACHADO. "We always find ourselves with the guillotine on our necks": precariousness and violence in the teaching work.	Acta Scientiarum. Education, 2018.	Qualitative.	To analyze the relationship between precariousness, violence, and suffering of substitute professors of a federal institution of higher education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Precariousness and intensification of work;</li> <li>- Psychological violence in the way of work organization and established relationships, generating suffering which can compromise the health of professors.</li> </ul>
	LEITE. Publish or perish: the puzzle of academic productivism.	Katálysis, 2017.	Qualitative.	Analyze the restructuring of the conditions and work processes of professors in higher education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The precariousness of work;</li> <li>- Physical and mental health (stress);</li> <li>- Work overload;</li> <li>- Reporting the use of anxiolytics and suicide of professors.</li> </ul>
	RAFAEL et al. Burnout syndrome: profile of stress in teachers working in higher education institutions of the Baixada Fluminense, RJ	Revista de Pesquisa: Cuidado é fundamental, 2011.	Cross-sectional.	Analyze work-related stress profile in teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of stress;</li> <li>- Presence of Burnout Syndrome related to work overload, higher among married women.</li> </ul>
SCOPUS	BERNARDO, M. H. Productivity and subjective precariousness in the public University: the professors' wear down	Psicologia & Sociedade, 2014.	Qualitative.	To discuss the characteristics of "academic productivism", on the assumption that it leads to a situation of subjective precariousness for teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work overload;</li> <li>- Stress;</li> <li>- The precariousness of work.</li> </ul>
	BORSOI, I. C. F.; PEREIRA, F. S. Professors of public higher level education: productivity, productivism and sickness.	Universitaspsychologic, 2013.	Qualitative.	Show how the agenda of activities in the academic world has led teachers of superior public education to illness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work overload;</li> <li>- Physical and psychological discomforts (stress).</li> </ul>

They reported that, because they are full-time professors, they need to report to the university through activity reports (publications and number of hours/class in graduate majors). If the report is not approved for failing to reach the goal, the teacher reported that he could be downgraded, with a consequent decrease in salary. This requirement for productivity revealed the mental and physical pressure experienced by teachers.

**Mental illness:** Of the selected studies, 80% (8 studies) cited mental illness as the main cause of the illness of university professors in public institutions in Brazil. Concerning mental disorders, 90% (9) of the studies cited stress as the major health problem found among university teachers, related as the cause of the Burnout syndrome. And 60% (6) of the studies also cited anxiety and depression affecting teachers. Regarding the emotional alterations found among teachers, 60% (6) of the studies cited the presence of distress and tiredness, insomnia was mentioned in 50% (5), followed by the discouragement in 40% (4), sadness along with nervousness and changes in concentration were cited by 30% (3), and memory changes by 20% (2) of the articles, characterizing a high mental impairment among teachers.

**Burnout Syndrome:** Burnout Syndrome was widely discussed in the 10 articles analyzed, 70% (7) cited the risk of developing the disease due to the high level of stress among teachers, and 20% (2) articles identified Burnout among teachers. Gonçalves (2011) analyzed the prevalence of Burnout in 55 medical teachers, 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> year of the medical course of the State University of Pará, and detected a high prevalence of the disease (50%). Rafael (2011), in his study with 80 professors from two universities from Rio de Janeiro, revealed that the higher the weekly workload, the greater the frequency of alterations due to Burnout Syndrome, and the higher the weekly frequency of physical activities, the probability of presenting the phenomena is lower.

**Physical impairment:** Cardiovascular problems were reported in 20% of the studies, increased arterial pressure and tachycardia, associated with headaches and gastritis, but these alterations may be related to the mental illness of the teachers. Only one article cited musculoskeletal and respiratory problems among teachers. Souza et al. (2018), in their work with teachers who used health notebooks for daily reports, found the main complaints: back pain (55.9%), pain in the legs (38.8%), pain in the arms (32.2%), rhinitis (21.1%) and respiratory allergy (21.2%). Musculoskeletal pain is related to the fact that teachers spend long periods of time standing, carrying teaching materials, constantly moving from one building to another, and using inappropriate furniture. Respiratory and dermatological complaints may be related to the use of chalk (Lima and Lima, 2009). Educational locations are characterized as humid, with generalized noises that cause changes in vocal behavior (increased intensity) and psychic (increased stress) (Castro, 1999). However, this alteration was not discussed in the selected studies (Souza et al., 2016).

**Final Considerations:** This integrative review showed the mental illness of the university professors of public institutions in Brazil, being the stress the most cited affection. Work overload was the most commonly associated risk factor for mental illness. Teachers involved in graduate activities, with the production of scientific articles, reported being more overloaded, with complaints of having to take work home, thus

not having time for leisure and for the family. In view of this, it is important to expand studies that strengthen the results on the health of teachers in Brazilian public universities, as well as studies that aim to outline strategies for improving the health and quality of life of these professionals, since they are the social transformers.

## REFERENCES

- Bernardo, M. H. 2014. Produtivismo e precariedade subjetiva na universidade pública: o desgaste mental dos docentes. *Psicologia and Sociedade*, 26(n. spe.), 129-139.
- Borsoi, F. I. C., Silva, P. F. 2013. Professores do ensino público superior: produtividade, produtivismo e adoecimento. *Univ. Psychol.* v. 12, n. 4, p. 1213-1235.
- Borsoi, I. C. F. 2012. Trabalho e produtivismo: saúde e modo de vida de docentes de instituições públicas de Ensino Superior. *Cad. Psicol. Soc. Trab.*, v. 15, n. 1, p. 81-100.
- Botelho, L. L. R., Cunha, C. C. A., Macedo, M. 2010. Ométodo da revisão integrativa nos estudos organizacionais. *Gestão e Sociedade*. ISSN 1980-5756. v.5, n. 11, p. 121-136.
- Brasil, Ministério da Saúde. 2001. Doenças Relacionadas ao Trabalho. Manual de Procedimentos para os Serviços de Saúde. 35 p. Brasília, (DF), Brasil.
- Caran, V. C. S. 2011. Riscos ocupacionais psicossociais e sua repercussão na saúde de docentes universitários. *Rev. enferm.* 19(2): 255-61.
- Cruz, R. M., Lemos J. C. 2005. Atividade docente, condições de Trabalho e processos de saúde. *Motrivivência*. Ano XVII, Nº 24, P. 59-80.
- Esteve, J. M. 1987. O mal-estar docente: a sala de aula e a saúde dos professores. Tradução de Durley de Carvalho Cavicchia. Bauru, São Paulo: EDUSC, Brasil.
- Fontana, R.T; Pinheiro, D.A. 2010. Condições de saúde auto-referidas de professores de uma universidade regional. *Rev. Gaúcha Enferm.* v. 31, n. 2, p. 270-276.
- Gonçalves, T. B. 2011. Prevalência de síndrome de Burnout em professores médicos de uma universidade pública em Belém do Pará. *Rev. Bras. Med. Trab.*, Vol. 9, Nº 2, p. 1 - 85.
- Gradella J. 2010. O Sofrimento psíquico e trabalho intelectual. *Cadernos de Psicologia Social do Trabalho*. v. 13, n. 1, p. 133-148.
- Jacinto, A., Tolfo, S. R. 2017. Riscos psicossociais no trabalho: conceitos, variáveis e instrumentos de pesquisa. *Perpectivas Em Psicologia*. Volume 21, N. 1, p. 39 -55.
- Leite, J. L. 2017. Publicar ou perecer: a esfinge do produtivismo acadêmico. *Rev. Katálisis*. v. 20, n. 2, p. 207-215.
- Lourenço, N. C. F. 2009. Qualidade de vida no trabalho de docentes de uma faculdade privada do município de São Paulo. *Mestrado em Enfermagem*. Universidade Guarulhos, Guarulhos (SP). Brasil.
- Martinez, M.C. 2002. As relações entre a satisfação com aspectos psicossociais no trabalho e a saúde do trabalhador. *Dissertação de Mestrado*. Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo (SP). Brasil.
- Maslach, C. 1993. Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research, Chapter: Burnout: A multidimensional perspective, Publisher: Taylor & Francis, p.19-32.
- Maslach, C., Jackson, S. 1997. Evaluating Stress: A Book of Resources. *The Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*.

- Publisher: The Scarecrow Press, Editors: C. P. Zalaquett, R. J. Wood, p.191-218.
- Mendes, K. D., Silveira, R. C. C. P., Galvao, C. M. 2008. Revisão integrativa: método de pesquisa para a incorporação de evidências na saúde e na enfermagem. *Texto contexto - enferm.*, v. 17, n. 4, p. 758-764.
- Oliveira, A. S. D., Pereira, M. S., Lima, L. M. 2017. Trabalho, produtivismo e adoecimento dos docentes nas universidades públicas brasileiras. *Psicol. Esc. Educ.* v. 21, n. 3, p. 609-619.
- Oliveira, M. A. M., Freitas, M. V. T. 2008. Políticas contemporâneas para o ensino superior: precarização do trabalho docente?. *Revista Extra- Classe.* n.1, v. 2.
- Pocinho, M., Perestrelo, C. X. 2011. Um ensaio sobre burnout, engagement e estratégias de coping na profissão docente. *Educ. Pesqui.* v. 37, n. 3, p. 513-528.
- Rafael, R. M. R., Bezerra, A. C. O., Silva, E. B., Boto, P. C., Januário, A., Santos, J. O. 2011. Síndrome de Burnout: perfil do estresse em professores atuantes em instituições de ensino superior da região da baixada fluminense. *R. pesq.: cuid. Fundam.* ISSN 2175-5361. 3(3): 2329-37, p. 1-11.
- Silva, S. L., Ribeiro, C. V. S., Machado, B. B. 2017. “A gente está sempre com a guilhotina no pescoço”: precariedade e violência no trabalho docente. *Acta Scientiarum.Education.* v. 40(1), P. 1 – 11.
- Souza, K. R., Fernandez, V. S., Teixeira, L. R., Larentis, A. L., Mendonça, A. L. O., Felix, E. G., Santos, M. B. M., Rodrigues, A. M.S., Moura, M., Barbosa, R. H. S., Barros, W. O., Almeida, M. G. 2018. Cadernetas de saúde e trabalho: diários de professores de universidade pública. *Cad. Saúde Pública*, v. 34, n. 3, p. 1- 11.
- Souza, K. R., Mendonça, A. L. O., Rodrigues, A. M. S., Felix, E. G., Teixeira, L. R., Santos, M. B. M., Moura, M. 2017. A nova organização do trabalho na universidade pública: consequências coletivas da precarização na saúde dos docentes. *Ciênc. saúde coletiva.* v. 22, n. 11, p. 3667-3676.
- Vilela, E. F. 2010. Vivências de prazer-sofrimento no trabalho docente: um estudo em uma IES pública de Belo Horizonte. Mestrado em Administração. Faculdade Novos Horizontes, Belo Horizonte (MG, Brasil).

\*\*\*\*\*