



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## TEACHING NURSE: QUALITY OF LIFE AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

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### ABSTRACT

The objective was to identify the elements that determine the quality of life of teaching nurse, as well as the ones associated with their occupational stress. It is an integrative review made in the database LILACS, SCIELO, BDNF, through the following descriptors "occupational stress", "quality of life", "teaching nurse", "worker's health", made in Portuguese, published from March to April of 2017. 13 articles were selected. The data lead to the following thematic categories: Occupational risk factors for the stress and defining elements for the quality of life in the professional context. It was highlighted that the main elements that diminish the quality of life and contribute to the occurrence of stress are the double work shift and instability at the job inside private universities. Therefore, measures of prevention and reduction/elimination of occupational diseases must be implemented in the work environments, to promote the physical and mental health of the teachers effectively.

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## INTRODUCTION

The occupational stress can be defined as the one stemming from the activities developed in the work environment, unleashing a series of organic changes, compromising the individual's daily development, in both, personal and professional scope. This way, it is perceived how something unfavorable, being associated with situations or experiences that generate feelings of tension, anxiety, fear or threat generated internally or externally (CRUZ et al., 2015). The professionals involved in the activities where there is direct contact with the public, such as education and health, are more exposed to occupational stress. Allied to this, is the fact that many of these professionals must go under hard and long work

shifts, in addition to most of them having more than one job (FERREIRA et al., 2009). Therefore, this phenomenon's comprehension is complex and dynamic (SOUZA et al., 2013). The nurse is prone to the development of stress, by the very nature and work's characteristics. The diversity of occupations generates an unequal situation concerning the problems faced by the category and certainly, among these, there are a few that can be considered as favorable to the stress (NEVES et al., 2010). In the case of the nursing university teacher that exerts an intellectual activity that demands a constant seek of innovations imposed by the scientific-technical advancement, by itself offers stressful situations, which contribute to the increase of stress among teachers. Associated with the nursing care practice that each one may develop, this situation may take even greater proportions, and

thus, intervening in other areas (CRUZ *et al.*, 2015). Based on the considerations above, the following questioning was made: What the literature has about the quality of life and occupational stress of the university teaching nurse? In these terms, the research justifies itself by the need for new studies that contribute to the understanding of occupational stressors and its influence on the quality of life of university teachers, to provide better conditions of work and teaching. Both work fields need abilities that goes beyond the knowledge accumulation. These abilities added to life activities and responsibilities overload the professionals on all sides. The study's relevance is found in the possibility of transmitting to the scientific community information about the aspects of quality of life and occupational stress of the teaching nurse, highlighting relevant aspects that can serve as the basis to build objective measures and with the possibility of change, considering that the individual's occupations directly influences their quality of life and, that the teaching nurse is responsible for the education and scientific formation of the ones that will be giving care to other human beings, it needs a good quality of life to effectively develop their activities.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is about an integrative review made in the database of the Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) and the Nursing Database (BDENF) in the period of March to April of 2017. Three stages were adopted for the review's development (GALVÃO *et al.*, 2004; MATHEUS, 2009; MENDES *et al.*, 2008): 1. Selection of the guiding question; 2. Definition of the studies' inclusion conditions; 3. Sample selection. The following guiding question was elaborated: What the literature has about the quality of life and occupational stress of the university teaching nurse? The articles selection was made using the following controlled descriptors: "occupational stress", "quality of life", "teaching nurse", "worker's health". The inclusion conditions for the publications' selections were: being under the theme; fully available electronically and free of charge; indexed in the aforesaid database with a time-lapse of ten years (2007-2017) and be in Portuguese. The exclusion conditions were: some kinds of studies/publications: thesis, essays, letter, critique, revision articles, books, book chapters, government documents, informative newsletter; articles whose abstract did not correspond to the guiding question's formulation; repeated articles. The search lifted 736 references in the referred database. After the reading of the titles and abstracts, only 13 articles attended the mentioned inclusion conditions, being fully analyzed. These were alphabetically organized and numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3...). The articles were carefully read and organized in an instrument with the following topics: author/publication year, title of the article, periodic, keywords and article's excerpt. The results of the found articles can be visualized in Chart 1.

## RESULTS

13 articles were selected, being: five in LILACS, five in BDENF, and three in SCIELO. Considering the proportion of published articles per year, the highest number of articles selected was published in 2012. The included articles were published in the years of 2007 (one), 2009 (one), 2010 (one), 2011 (one), 2012 (four), 2013 (two), 2014 (one) and 2015 (one). It was pointed out that the research with the themes that

involve "quality of life and occupational stress" brings several contributions to the university teaching nurses. The chart below refers to the distribution of analyzed articles, disposed in alphabetic order by author and their major findings. This category refers to the data found in the articles that cover the occupational risks to which the teaching nurse is predisposed to exposition in his work environment. The highest risk found in the literature regarding occupational stress was the long work hours and lack of time. The chart below shows the majors occupational risks to which the teachers are exposed.

**Chart 1. Selection of the articles found in the database of LILACS, SCIELO e BDENF under the established inclusion conditions. Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil, 2019**

CROSSING	LILACS	BDENF	SciELO	TOTAL
Articles found	429	138	169	736
Articles available	35	28	14	77
Articles complete	12	10	06	28
Articles repeated	01	05	03	09
Selection after the reading	05	05	03	13

Source: Research data, 2019

## DISCUSSION

The risks are there and the scenario exposes not only the teacher but also all the institution and other professionals, although the vulnerabilities are higher among the teachers, who absorbs all the drudgery of work, being able to develop some kind of psychological or mental disorder, depending on their emotional capacities. Regarding the work hours, most of the teaching nurse do twelve hours shifts in the teaching profession, working in regime of exclusive dedication in the university or possess from two to three employment bonds at Higher level institutions, in other words, they also teach disciplines that are out of their field of work (FERREIRA *et al.*, 2009). They also possess employment bonds in hospitals, thus, surpassing the adequate workload (SOARES; ZEITOUNE, 2012a, b; SOARES *et al.*, 2012). Work hours and employment bonds change the quality of life. This justifies the reason why many teaching nurse report that they do not have quality of life, and this report gets worse as the formation level increases, for example, the title of Ph.D. reflects in more intense activities and excess of work for the teacher inside a university. On the other hand, the competition in the market increases, demanding titles from the newcomer teachers in academic life and, consequently, decreasing their free time for leisure and self-care. In addition to this, Higher-Level Institutions increasingly charge for qualified teachers (CRUZ *et al.*, 2015). Data observed shows that the predominance of female teachers is superior than male ones, and most of them have a doctorate. Regarding their marital status, 74.6% are married, 50% have from one to two children, 50.5% have a family income of up to six minimum wages, and 73.8% have up to three dependents. Still, in the aforesaid study, it was manifested by the teaching nurse some clinical manifestations that are related to stress, such as nervousness, tension or worries, sleeplessness, easily getting tired, frequent headaches and, also, they find difficulty at doing their daily activities with satisfaction. The prevalence of minor psychic disorders among teaching nurses was 20.1%, in other words, at each five active teachers in the higher level of education, one shows the suspicion of having a mental disorder. Among the notified diseases, mental disorders are the second cause of sick leave (9.3%), which is only surpassed by musculoskeletal disorders related to work (55.1%) (TAVARES *et al.*, 2014; OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2013).

**Chart 2. Distribution of the analyzed articles accordingly with author/publication year; title and findings. Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil, 2019**

Author/year	Article's title	Major findings
01 Cruz et al, 2015	Perception of the teaching nurse about their quality of life	It was considered that they do not/or partially have quality of life because of exhaustive workload and a few problems in the work environment.
02 Tavares et al, 2014	Prevalence of minor psychic disorders in teaching nurses	20.1% of the population of 130 teachers have the prevalence of developing MPD (Minor Psychic Disorders).
03 Oliveira et al, 2013	Risks and occupational diseases of the university teaching nurse: implications in the worker's health	It identified strong evidence of causing absenteeism, the occupational risks and work conditions were analyzed.
04 Terra et al., 2013.	Evaluation of the teaching nurse's self-esteem from public and private universities	The teachers of private universities showed lower scores of self-esteem when compared with the teachers of public universities.
05 Conceição et al, 2012	Nurse's quality of life during teaching work: study with <i>Whoqol-Bref</i>	It was highlighted that the teachers of private universities considered themselves less satisfied with their QOL, meanwhile, the ones from federal and state universities evaluated themselves with a good QOL.
06 Lemos; Passos, 2012	Satisfaction and frustration in the development of the work as a teaching nurse	The teacher felt satisfied when instructing, living the resilience and development, the students' progress. Regarding the stress, one highlights the enormous work demands, leading the teacher to devote himself to the job full-time.
07 Soares; Zeitoune, 2012	The promotion of health in the perception of the teaching nurse: perspectives for the worker's health	Promotion of health in the worker's health view, regarding the job and work hours.
08 Soares; Zeitoune, 2012	The care and its dimensions: subsidies to self-care of teaching nurse	The care is directly related to someone, rarely to themselves.
09 Soares et al, 2011	Facilitators and impeditive factors in the self-care of teaching nurse	The impeditive factors are related to the lack of access to health services and remuneration, on the other hand, the facilitators are contained in the self-knowledge.
10 Ferreira et al, 2011	Pleasure and suffering in the work process of the teaching nurse	The suffering is marked by the student's lack of interest or disengagement, on the other hand, the satisfaction is in the student-teacher interaction, the commitment to the didactic/pedagogical activities and the commitment with the professional formation.
11 Corral-mulato et al., 2010	Nursing teaching profession: dissatisfactions and unfavorable indicators	Constant updating, emergency meeting, excessive workload of classes and disruptive orientations, preparation of evaluations, participations in examining boards are the major grievances of occupational stress.
12 Miranda et al., 2009	The stress of teaching nurses inside a public university	The relative risk of stress: work and/or qualification, work volume, excess of activities and work conditions.
13 Carbogim; Gonçalves, 2007	Teaching nurse: pleasure and suffering in their job	Most of the teachers talk about pleasure and satisfaction as a form of covering their emotional distress.

Source: Research data, 2019.

**Chart 3. Classification of occupational risks for the development of stress. Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil, 2019**

Characteristics of the occupational risks identified in the articles.	Quantity of articles
Double work shift (Work X Family) and the predominance of female in the teaching profession	06
Dissatisfaction with the student	02
Long work hours and lack of time	08
Relation private institution X public institution	04
Deficit risk regarding self-care	02
Risk of Psychic disorders and dissatisfaction	06

Source: Research data, 2019.

Another study also pointed out that women with up to 35 years old, higher education level, without companions, that used to earn between three to four minimum wage, had a higher prevalence of minor psychic disorders, in return, the younger teachers also showed minor psychic disorders and they had lower income since they had less experience (TERRA *et al.*, 2013). The activities that bring frustration to the teacher, are the ones with an overload of works in both, academic and administrative; the demand for scientific production, that usually leaves that teacher exhausted, tired, promoting irritability and low productivity. They also take over an enormous workload by occupying positions of leadership and representation inside the institution, given the academic activities, and sometimes there is a lack of human resources in the technical/administrative area, the physical structure is inadequate, the material resources are scarce and, in some situations, the need of equipment impairs the professional practice. This increase in the workload demands a higher and more intensified theoretical-methodological knowledge, this is evident and occurs due to the need of achieving goals and production to maintain their reputation in a higher level of esteem inside the university where they work. Because of this, the job quality is threatened by the production pressure (LEMONS; PASSOS, 2012). In the teaching work, several factors provide a psychic load that may lead to exhaustion, which represents one of the forms of psychic suffering.

One of the factors with highest mental wear is the fact the workload is not limited only by the university, in other words, the teachers end up bringing work to their homes, thus, affecting moments of leisure, family bonds and this interferes in their quality of life (CARBOGIM; GONÇALVES, 2007). The study considers that there is a mental wear and conflicts developed by the work, because of the great number of tasks that they must take home, the teacher must waste their time correcting tests, preparing classes and have a constant need to update their knowledge. In addition to this, most of the teachers are women and it is well known that the home tasks are as disruptive as the ones in the university. The occupational risks grow as the teachers develops their daily routine tasks, and still conciliate it with family and/or marital responsibilities. Because the teacher's presence is needed in some stages of their relatives' life, such as, the childhood and adolescence of their children and their absence due to work will cause a feeling of guilty to them (TAVARES *et al.*, 2014). In face of these factors, the susceptibility of developing a higher psychic wear and showing symptoms such as irritability, lapses, stress and even depression increases. The long workload also contributes for the stress and reduction of leisure and rest hours and it may cause conflict in the work environment. Therefore, by the sum of professional, domestic and family tasks that the female teacher has, they a unique due to the standard profile of being able to do multiple functions

(CRUZ *et al.*, 2015). The literature highlights a few questions of dissatisfaction moments from the teaching nurse, such as: ethical issues (lack of companionship and collaboration, competition among professional colleagues, verbal disrespect from students as well as moral harassment, demands and injustices in the career path, among other), excess of work and lack of professional recognition (the urgency of matters, difficulty to fulfill the job planning, allied to the bureaucracy and stress) and the lack of recognition and wage (career plan and the consequent disrespect to labor laws) as dissatisfaction moments in the profession (CORRAL-MULATO *et al.*, 2010).

The study also adds that the negative aspects that generates suffering to the teachers, are revealed by the division of tasks, hierarchy, chain of command and the absence of autonomy. In addition to this, the students may also contribute for the teacher's exhaustion, for instance, the students that work and study at the same time may present difficulties in relation to the dedication and time to study, hampering the content's interpretation proposed by the teacher and thus resulting in questionings and doubts, that sometimes are obvious and may cause the content's delay (FERREIRA *et al.*, 2015). Regarding the teacher's self-esteem, it was shown in study that the teachers from private institutions were of 34.4% in comparison to public ones, that was 17.9%, the teachers from the private network showed emotional exhaustion, for executing a role that demands a higher dedication than a teacher from a public institution, it may be the reason of job instability, since a teacher from a public institution usually passed in a public contest, thus it is safe from dismissal, on the other hand, one from the private institution is not. This promotes the arising of occupational risks, that are more elevated in teachers from the private network and also the increase of occupational stress (TERRA *et al.*, 2013). The occupational diseases result in several distinct manifestation for its occurrences, not only minor psychic disorders, but also more serious symptoms in the teacher's work life. The fact that the students do not collaborate with the teacher when he needs silence, compels him to increase his tone, allowing a damage or the worsening of his vocal apparatus (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2013).

This prejudice may be aggravated with the presence of many students discussing in class, or even trying to argue with a student that does not agree with him or lacks respect for him in front of the class. These situations increase the teacher's level of stress, enabling a possible disorder that may reach an even higher level of stress: the burnout syndrome (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2013). The burnout syndrome is an exceptional type of occupational stress that characterizes itself by a deep feeling of frustration and exhaustion in relation to the developed job, a feeling that, little by little, can extend itself to all moments of a person's life, leading the individual to a number of symptoms, such as: thwart towards the job, indolence, psychic wear, guilt, among others, and thus developing difficulties in doing his job. This phenomenon was researched and studied regarding teachers in general, and to teaching situations above any other professional area, which maybe shows that the work of a teacher is seen as more psychologically stressful than other professions and it offers favorable conditions to the syndrome's development (MIRANDA *et al.*, 2009). All these risk factors are closely associated with the drudgery about occupational stress regarding the teaching nurse from universities. Following what has been exposed in this study, the quality of life a complex condition, that varies accordingly with each individual's culture and perspective of life. In

addition to this, it is closely connected to stress, since, if it was possible to measure them, they would be inversely proportional. Its research related stress to a lack of quality of life regarding the teaching nurse and highlights that the cause of illness is the work volume or the excess of activities as seen in the previous category (MIRANDA *et al.*, 2009). It also supports the study's thought when affirms that one of the excess activities from the teaching nurse is bureaucratic functions. The author reported that these extra activities not only increase the feeling of disrespect but also decrease the free time and do not allow the teacher to dedicate himself to other activities, such as leisure, family coexistence, social, mental and physical rest (CORRAL-MULATO *et al.*, 2010). Still in the issue of quality of life in the work, it exposes that the QoL is not only associated to teaching matters but also to the institution where the teacher works, considering that to promote a good quality of life, it is needed that the institution offers to the professional good work conditions, moderate workload and decent wages. Otherwise, the factors directly reflect in the teacher's quality of life and indirectly in the institution, where the prevalence of absenteeism will be high and it may lead to a vicious cycle with a difficult resolution (SOARES *et al.*, 2011). It is a fact that many aspects of the work's QoL are, obviously related, to the conditions that the organization offers to the professional and there are some measures to prevent occupational disease and improve the worker's QoL, such as the voice's adequate use and physical activities (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2013). The reflection about the question associating physical activity and self-esteem, where the feeling of positive or elevated self-esteem of the teaching professionals that practice any physical activity is highlighted, because it is a worldly knowledge that physically active people tend to have a better quality of life, showing positive attitudes in the job and better reaction to stress. Moreover, one highlights other important factors that influence the quality of life, such as: not making use of tobacco, alcohol or medications that may cause dependence (TERRA *et al.*, 2013).

The quality of life is related to the promotion of health, where the context "health" refers to more aspects than only physical ones and physical health depends on the psychic and spiritual health (SOARES; ZEITOUNE, 2012a, b). Some authors affirm that the QoL is closely connected to the psychological comfort, that involves the family, social and environmental perspectives, in the cultural, well-fare and belief fields (CONCEIÇÃO *et al.*, 2012). The QoL is related to teaching nurse's subjectivity along with his objectivity. The feelings promoted in the acquisition of income, material possessions, job, and housing are considered as objective elements because the professional's intention or a part of it is some of these objective elements. On the other hand, the subjective elements deal with feeling good about yourself and refer to safety, affection, privacy, and recognition (CRUZ *et al.*, 2015). Some authors associate the work's QoL to the pleasure brought to the professional when teaching because he feels valued with the professional recognition, in the influence that they exert in the student's learning (FERREIRA *et al.*, 2015). Reinforcing the exposed about the teaching nurse's pleasure, some authors reported that they felt satisfied in being able to teach and perceive the student's growth, even having to face several difficulties (CARBOGIM; GONÇALVES, 2007). However, to enjoy a good QoL at work, one needs to assign satisfaction to the job and identify itself with teaching, since it demands to be good with yourself, having a good relationship with other professionals and students and the skills to give knowledge.

The QoL at work is related to employee compensation and the institutions must be structured to offer proper conditions for growth, to accomplish their activities and must also be able to give an adequate labor process, valuing and giving proper wages to the teacher (LEMOS; PASSOS, 2012).

### Final Consideration

When analyzing the knowledge produced about occupational stress versus the QoL of university teachers, it was highlighted that these teachers feel satisfied in both, financial and professional ways. However, there are some aspects of the profession that bring dissatisfaction and displeasure, such as the devaluation by some universities, especially the private ones, or the accumulation of duties, such as coordination or bureaucratic services, lack of interest from students or for being ethically harassed, being considered as triggering factors of occupational stress. In addition to this, from the research, one notices that the studies regarding this theme are scarce although the subject is of extreme relevance, since the teaching nurse has an important role in the education and scientific formation of the ones that will be protagonists of the care to other human beings, thus they must be an example and support the students. For that, they need a proper quality of life to effectively develop their activities. It is expected that studies with this theme are more explored and awake the will of the responsible authorities to intervene, elaborate and develop prevention measures for the group under discussion.

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