

PERCEPTION OF NURSING PROFESSIONALS REGARDING TEAMWORK

PERCEPÇÃO DOS PROFISSIONAIS DE ENFERMAGEM QUANTO AO TRABALHO EM EQUIPE

LA PERCEPCIÓN DE LOS PROFESIONALES DE LA ENFERMERÍA SOBRE EL TRABAJO EN EQUIPO

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Objective: to know the perception of nursing professionals regarding teamwork. **Method:** transversal, exploratory study, carried out in a large, private, general hospital in the city of São Paulo. **Results:** sample composed by 63% of nursing technicians and 37% of nurses. As for teamwork, 95% agreed to have good relationships among peers, receive help when busy and give it back; 94.6% answered the bell, even though it was not theirs. As for the benefits of teamwork, 99.1% agreed that collaboration among co-workers facilitated assistance; 94.6% reduced response time to calls; 96.4% that the result of teamwork was collective merit. **Conclusion:** the nursing professionals recognized factors favoring teamwork, such as good interpersonal relationship and clarity in the objectives of the institution, in addition to the benefits provided, such as the role of the nurse in the development and as a facilitator of this work dynamic.

Descriptors: Nursing Team. Interpersonal Relations. Cooperative Behavior. Perception. Work.

Objetivo: conhecer a percepção dos profissionais de enfermagem quanto ao trabalho em equipe. Método: estudo transversal, exploratório, realizado em um hospital geral de grande porte, privado, na cidade de São Paulo. Resultados: amostra composta por 63% de técnicos de enfermagem e 37% de enfermeiros. Quanto ao trabalho em equipe, 95% concordaram ter bom relacionamento entre pares, receberem ajuda quando atarefados e retribuí-la; 94,6% atendiam a campainha, mesmo não sendo sua. Quanto aos benefícios do trabalho em equipe, 99,1% concordaram que a colaboração entre colegas de trabalho facilitava a assistência; 94,6%, que diminuía o tempo de resposta às chamadas; 96,4%, que o resultado do trabalho em equipe era mérito coletivo. Conclusão: os profissionais de enfermagem reconheceram fatores favorecedores do trabalho em equipe, como bom relacionamento interpessoal e clareza nos objetivos da instituição, além dos benefícios propiciados, como o papel do enfermeiro no desenvolvimento e como facilitador dessa dinâmica de trabalho.

Descritores: Equipe de Enfermagem. Relações Interpessoais. Comportamento Cooperativo. Percepção. Trabalho.

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Objetivo: conocer la percepción de los profesionales de la enfermería sobre el trabajo en equipo. Método: estudio transversal y exploratorio, realizado en un gran hospital general privado de la ciudad de São Paulo. Resultados: muestra compuesta por el 63% de técnicos de enfermería y el 37% de enfermeras. En cuanto al trabajo en equipo, el 95% aceptó tener buenas relaciones entre pares, recibir ayuda cuando estaba ocupado y devolverla; el 94,6% respondió al timbre, aunque no era suyo. En cuanto a los beneficios del trabajo en equipo, el 99,1% estuvo de acuerdo en que la colaboración entre los compañeros de trabajo facilitaba la asistencia; el 94,6% redujo el tiempo de respuesta a las llamadas; el 96,4% consideró que el resultado del trabajo en equipo era un mérito colectivo. Conclusión: los profesionales de la enfermería reconocieron factores que favorecen el trabajo en equipo, como la buena relación interpersonal y la claridad en los objetivos de la institución, además de los beneficios proporcionados, como el papel de la enfermera en el desarrollo y como facilitadora de esta dinámica de trabajo.

Descriptores: Equipo de Enfermería. Relaciones Interpersonales. Comportamiento Cooperativo. Percepción. Trabajo.

Introduction

A team is defined when people with different personalities, but with common responsibilities and objectives, who, even in difficult moments, try to solve situations and conflicts with maturity and intelligence, without the pretense of obtaining individual merit⁽¹⁾. The teamwork, in the health area, interprofessional, began in the 1960's, with the objective of promoting the interaction between professionals, assisting the patient integrally, with all its complexity, and favoring the formation of health professionals in practice⁽²⁾. The success of teamwork depends on factors such as trust, good communication, acceptance of differences, valorization of individual skills, knowledge of the expected goals and mutual cooperation^(1,3-5).

Nursing is a profession essentially focused on teamwork, and it is impossible to provide an integral assistance to the client without everyone's collaboration. It is a profession that demands continuity of care and interdependence of functions, that is, each professional who fulfills a function, needs the other to promote a complete assistance. This set of actions composes the nursing team, which is composed by nurses, auxiliaries and nursing technicians. However, the nurse is the professional responsible for managing and supervising the activities, exercising his role of leader^(2,3,5).

The manner in which the leader coordinates his leaders can influence the expected outcome. The leader must know how to listen, be impartial in their decisions, have maturity when facing

difficulties, maintain clear communication, respect the diversity of knowledge of team members and use it as a strategy to obtain a complete team⁽³⁻⁵⁾.

Some barriers can hinder teamwork, such as: lack of recognition of the work by colleagues⁽⁶⁾; lack of collaboration of colleagues, which generates dissatisfaction and distance from team members⁽⁷⁾; conflicts generated in day-to-day life⁽⁵⁾; lack of clarity of objectives; and divergence between personal and team objectives⁽⁸⁾.

This study has as objective to know the perception of the nursing professionals regarding the teamwork.

Method

This is a cross-sectional, exploratory and field study conducted in a large, private general hospital located in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. The research subjects were the nurses and nursing technicians who worked in the Medical Clinic units and accepted to participate in the study.

The data were collected through a questionnaire containing 16 questions related to teamwork in nursing, with answer options in the form of a Likert type scale. The researcher personally delivered the questionnaire to the participant along with the Term of Free and Informed Consent (TFIC), explained the objective of the survey and how the participation in the study would occur, which would be voluntary and of a confidential nature. After signing the

TFIC and filling out the questionnaire, both were collected by the clerk of each sector within a maximum of five days.

The clerk received the forms, checked if the term was signed and the questionnaire completed, shuffled them to maintain confidentiality, kept them in a sealed folder, to return to the researcher in the proper time. After the collection, the data was typed and stored in a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet.

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Irmandade da Santa Casa de Misericórdia de São Paulo, according to the Certificate of Presentation of Ethical Appreciation (CAAE) no 46282415.2.0000.5479, as well as by the Research Ethics Committee of the co-participating institution, by CAAE no 46282415.2.3001.0062.

Results

Participated in the survey 111 nursing professionals. The nursing technicians totaled 70 (63%) and the nurses 41 (37%). The age of the participating nurses varied from 23 to 51 years old, with an average of 33.9 years old (SD 6.9 years) while the average age of the nursing technicians was 36.1 years old (variation from 21 to 55 years old; SD 7.6). Regarding sex, 36 (88%) participants of the sample composed of nurses were women and 5 (12%) men.

The average time of professional training of nurses was 8.2 years (range 0.8 to 30 years; SD 5.6) and the time they worked in the institution was 4.7 years (range 0.3 to 21 years; SD 5.1). Regarding nursing technicians, the average time they had concluded their technical training was 11.6 years, with a variation of 2 to 26 years (SD 6). These professionals informed that they had been working in the institution for 6.6 years on average (variation of 0.3 to 30 years; SD 6.8).

It was observed that 77 (70%) participants were from the medical clinic sector, followed by 33 (30%) from the surgical clinic. Regarding the work shift, 38 (35%) worked in the morning, followed by 32 (29%) in the afternoon. The other professionals worked during the night.

As for the questions that referred to what could facilitate teamwork, 95% of the participants agreed that having a good relationship between coworkers, offering help to the busy colleague and returning the help received, in addition to knowing the objectives of the institution and their superiors. Among the participants, 96 professionals (87.3%) always said to ask for help from their colleagues when they were overloaded and 10 (9.1%) did not; 105 (94.6%) agreed that they had the responsibility of answering the client's bell that was not on their work scale (Table 1).

Table 1 – Affirmatives of teamwork, according to degree of agreement. São Paulo, SP, Brazil – 2015 (continued)

Affirmatives	Totally agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree		Totally disagree		Total
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	
Having a good relationship among co-workers facilitates teamwork.	85	(77)	23	(21)	2	(2)	1	(1)	-	-	111
When I realize that my colleague is busy, I offer support.	59	(54)	48	(44)	3	(3)	-	-	-	-	110
During my working hours, if my colleague offers me help, I think it is fair to offer him also.	55	(50)	53	(48)	2	(2)	1	(1)	-	-	111
Knowing the objectives of the institution and of my superiors facilitates my participation in the team of which I am part.	69	(62)	38	(34)	3	(3)	1	(1)	-	-	111

Table 1 – Affirmatives of teamwork, according to degree of agreement. São Paulo, SP, Brazil – 2015

Affirmatives	Totally agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree		Totally disagree		Total
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	
	I always ask my colleague for help when I am overwhelmed.	65	(59)	31	(28)	4	(4)	10	(9)	-	
I have the responsibility to answer the customer's bell that is not on my work scale.	63	(57)	42	(38)	3	(3)	2	(2)	1	(1)	111
Leadership directly facilitates the progress of the team.	54	(49)	46	(41)	7	(6)	2	(2)	2	(2)	111
The recognition and valorization for my work influence my participation in the group.	48	(43)	46	(41)	13	(12)	4	(4)	-	-	111
Collaboration between co-workers facilitates customer assistance.	75	(68)	35	(32)	1	(1)	0	(0)	-	-	111
Teamwork reduces response time to customer calls.	59	(53)	46	(41)	2	(2)	3	(3)	1	(1)	111
Teamwork is essential in my profession.	61	(55)	40	(36)	3	(3)	6	(5)	1	(1)	111
My motivation directly affects the progress of the team.	59	(53)	37	(33)	6	(5)	7	(6)	2	(2)	111
In teamwork, the final result is the merit of all the members and not only mine.	66	(59)	41	(37)	2	(2)	0	(0)	2	(2)	111
Most of the nursing professionals in my sector can do a "teamwork" well.	59	(53)	31	(28)	13	(12)	8	(7)	-	-	111
In my sector, teamwork happens in a satisfactory and efficient way.	54	(49)	34	(31)	18	(16)	5	(5)	-	-	111
The nurse is the main responsible for teamwork being the way it is currently in my sector.	55	(50)	21	(19)	18	(16)	12	(11)	4	(4)	110

Source: Create by the authors.

Note: Conventional signal used:

- Numerical data equal to zero not resulting from rounding up.

In relation to the influence of leadership in teamwork and work valorization, 16% of the professionals considered that there was no interference or even considered it indifferent, while 43% of the collaborators stated that the recognition and valorization for their work influenced their participation in the group.

As for the benefits that teamwork can bring to patient care, 110 (99.1%) participants agreed that collaboration among co-workers facilitated customer care and 105 (94.6%) agreed that teamwork decreased response time to customer

calls. Even so, 9% of the professionals realized that it was not important or indifferent to the profession.

However, the motivation, in the opinion of the professionals, directly affected the team's progress, as indicated by 15 (13.5%) professionals in the sample and 107 (96.4%) agreed that, in the teamwork, the result was merit of all the members.

Regarding the reality in the work environment, 21 (18.9%) nursing team members were indifferent or did not agree that most nursing professionals

in their sector could do “teamwork” well and 23 (20.7%) did not agree or were indifferent regarding the affirmative that teamwork was happening in a satisfactory and efficient manner.

When asked if they agreed that the nurse was the professional responsible for teamwork, currently, in their sector, 34 (30.9%) did not agree or were indifferent.

Discussion

Teamwork has been increasingly valued, not only because of the demand for activities in the field of work, but mainly for providing agility in the execution of the task, quality of service provided and effective communication between professionals and the institution, which consequently facilitates the achievement of institutional goals. This union is essential in any branch of activity and/or profession, but, in nursing, it is essential⁽⁹⁻¹⁰⁾.

The harmony, interaction, professionalism and commitment of all team members determine the efficiency of the care provided. The nursing team is led by the nurse, who is able to influence the direction of their team for the collective work, in search of the best results^(5,10-11).

The interaction among nursing professionals may not result in agreements, which triggers numerous conflicts. However, this situation may have ambiguous meanings, depending on the conduct of the problem. Thus, it is highlighted the importance of the role of the nurse in conducting teamwork to minimize conflict situations and impact the results of care⁽⁷⁾.

A study conducted with professionals from the Family Health Strategy (FHS) points to the occurrence of teamwork with the need for collaboration among members, with knowledge exchange and complementarity of work activities, assuming collaborative and communicative relationships, contributing to the development of work sustained in a dialogued and horizontal relationship⁽¹²⁾. Although the study was conducted at FHS, it can be inferred that the principle of teamwork becomes unique and essential for better results.

In the teamwork developed by the Nursing team, the nurse, by their formation, becomes an essential leader. Therefore, they must develop their leadership potential, so that they can perform the work using important tools, such as communication and improvement process in leading their team, through participatory management⁽¹³⁾.

The good relationship among the nursing team members is an extremely important factor for quality assistance and safety to the patient, because it facilitates communication, promotes an environment of mutual help and multiprofessional interaction⁽¹⁴⁾. Thus, it corroborates the findings of this study, a research⁽¹⁴⁾ that points out the recognition of good interpersonal relationships as a relevant factor for teamwork, even though some collaborators have admitted that they did not request help from colleagues when they needed it. This posture demonstrates the possibility of lack of integration among team members and highlights the individualization in tasks, postures that result in distance between the collaborators, work overload and inadequate staff, becoming a problem in Nursing management.

For teamwork to occur spontaneously, some factors, when present, facilitate, such as: mutual help in patient care, regardless of the dimensioning; good bond between team members; recognition for work; collaboration; trust; effective communication; and mutual respect⁽⁵⁾.

The leadership, according to the participants of this study, directly influenced the direction of the team, which meets another study that reports the need for a healthy leadership to promote a promising and productive work environment⁽¹⁵⁾.

The stimulation of teamwork is an important tool of human resources management, for the achievement of excellence in care⁽¹⁶⁾. In accordance with this statement, the findings of this study have shown that collaboration among co-workers facilitates care, while bringing benefits to the patient.

Although most participants in this research agreed with the need and benefits of teamwork, some stated that most nursing professionals in

their sector could not do “teamwork” well. The difficulty of working in a team can be influenced by several factors, such as the lack of harmony and productivity of the team, cultural differences, differences of ideas and personality and conflicts in relationships between people⁽¹²⁾.

The disagreement found among the collaborators of this study, about the nurse being the main responsible for teamwork, may point to a team where there are leadership failures, which may discourage teamwork. Studies conducted with the nursing team highlights that the majority of nursing technicians have the vision of the importance of the nurse as the team leader, emphasizing its role in the way to encourage collective activities in search of stipulated results and participation in the professional growth of all⁽¹⁷⁻¹⁹⁾.

A study conducted in a hospital unit highlighted the nurse manager as a judicious leader, who promotes teamwork, a safe environment, values their people under their leadership and encourages collaborators to participate in decision making⁽¹⁰⁾. In this way, the importance of teamwork is highlighted as a means of standardizing care, aligning perceptions among the collaborators of the nursing team and the interdisciplinary team, in search of best practices added to the best assistance results. In this process, the leadership of the nurse stands out as an example of ability to control, growth and training of the members of their team.

It is important to emphasize that the way the nursing team members understand teamwork and its importance can directly impact the quality of care. Thus, it is emphasized the importance of the paradigm change of being a leading nurse, manager and be linked to the care directly, in search of collective improvements and not more individualized.

It stands out as a limitation of the study the collection of data having occurred with a sample in a single health service. It is suggested that the study be continued in other services with a different service profile than that presented by this sample, which will allow the identification of team perceptions and promote interventions to improve teamwork results.

Conclusion

The opinion of the nursing collaborators who participated in this study converged to the importance of teamwork, recognizing factors that could favor this work, such as good interpersonal relationships, collaboration and respect among peers, associated with the understanding of the objectives and institutional mission. However, although there was no uniform agreement on the benefits provided by teamwork, they understood that it ensured better results in relation to care, optimization of time and greater satisfaction for team and patient. It was also highlighted the role of the leading nurse as essential in the development and facilitation of teamwork, in search of better performances and attitudes.

The nursing team’s perception of teamwork is a result of the way the nurse conducts their team. The reflection of the needs of the group is indispensable for a process of collective improvement.

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1 – conception, project, analysis and interpretation of data: Lusinete Ventura Valentim and Reginaldo Adalberto de Luz;

2 – writing of the article and relevant critical review of the intellectual content: Reginaldo Adalberto de Luz, Luciana Soares Costa Santos and Cell Regina da Silva Noca;

3 – final approval of the version to be published: Reginaldo Adalberto de Luz, Luciana Soares Costa Santos and Cell Regina da Silva Noca.

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