



Within the urgent and emergency settings: the suicidal ideation of nurses

Francisco Arnaldo Nunes de Miranda¹, Felismina Rosa Parreira Mendes²

It is an invitation to reflect about the evidence, the effectiveness of interventions and expectations surrounding health professionals within the hospital context, mainly nurses, regarding the urgent and emergency settings.

The text does not specifically deal with a single theme, but a complex, subliminal and undocumented issue that is not said in the everyday work of nursing professionals. It draws attention to the topic of mental health, particularly the suicidal ideation, which is taken as the most significant risk factor resulting from depression and work environment.

The routines of nursing professionals are marked by the fragmentation of the actions, multiplicity and complexity of stipulated and required demands, associated with the poor conditions of public health services, disputes for inter and extra professional spaces, contentions among the members of the team, low wages, constant presence of people with imminent risk of death and non-observance of the ethical precepts that contribute to the emotional and physical derangement existing in these anxiogenic spaces. These elements point out two lines of care: those directed to the patient and those focused on the professionals who care for, i.e., nurses.

The association between professional satisfaction and depressive state seriously contributes to the manifestation of suicidal ideation and hopelessness, which systematically exacerbates the possibility of committing suicide, insofar as it escapes from the imaginary sphere and becomes a real element in the subject. Therefore, it constitutes a serious public health problem with great global impact, in addition to being a complex phenomenon that involves several philosophical, cultural, social, economic, biological and psychological aspects.

Nurses deal with suffering, pain and anguish, which makes them more prone to depression, suicidal ideation and suicide, mainly those working in hospital and emergency settings, since the urgent and emergency sector is assessed as a triggering factor for physical and emotional wear, stress, fatigue and dissatisfaction, even if it understands the joint action of the multidisciplinary team, engaged with the demands of the burdensome work process.

Literature shows little production of studies on this question, but the everyday life in urgent and emergency settings highlights the need for interventions. The responsibility of promoting a managerial, educational, and effective approach to workers and users with suicidal behavior is also a requirement for nursing professionals. Accordingly, we have raised the question: Are nurses able to assess risks and appropriately intervene to mitigate the suicide threat, as well as to provide the care required for the patient and for themselves?

¹Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, University of Évora. Évora, Portugal.

²University of Évora. Évora, Portugal.