

Self-care of workers from a UTI COVID-19

RESUMO | O processo de autocuidado valoriza o ser humano em sua integralidade e subjetividade. Objetivo: Investigar quais práticas de autocuidado são feitas pelos trabalhadores de uma Unidade de Terapia Intensiva que atende pacientes com COVID-19. Método: Trata-se de uma pesquisa observacional, de recorte transversal e abordagem quantitativa. A coleta de dados aconteceu no segundo semestre do ano de 2021, através de um formulário do Google Forms, e a análise dos dados deu-se através da estatística descritiva. Aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética e Pesquisa sob parecer número 4.958.622. Resultados: Participaram da pesquisa 28 profissionais, em sua maioria mulheres. Entre as modificações elencadas para o período pandêmico, apresentaram insônia, utilização de medicações e o aumento significativo dos alimentos, entre outros. Conclusão: Houve crescente busca por cuidado e autocuidado durante o período pandêmico pelo grupo pesquisado, assim como é crescente a adesão por diferentes modalidades terapêuticas, dentre elas as práticas integrativas e complementares.

Descritores: Terapias Complementares; Saúde do trabalhador; Unidade de Terapia Intensiva; Autocuidado; COVID-19

ABSTRACT | The self-care process values the human being in its integrality and subjectivity. Objective: To investigate which self-care practices are made by workers from an intensive care unit that serves patients with Covid-19. Method: This is an observational survey, transversal clipping, and quantitative approach. The data collection took place in the second half of the year 2021, through a Google Forms form, and the analysis of the data was through descriptive statistics. Approved by the Ethics and Research Committee under opinion number 4,958,622. Results: 28 professionals participated in the research, mostly women. Among the modifications listed for the pandemic period, they presented insomnia, use of medications and the significant increase in food, among others. Conclusion: There was increasing search for care and self-care during the pandemic period by the researched group, as is increasing adherence to different therapeutic modalities, among them integrative and complementary practices.

Keywords: Complementary Therapies; Worker's health; Intensive care unit; Self-care; COVID-19.

RESUMEN | El proceso de autocuidado valora el ser humano en su integralidad y subjetividad. Objetivo: Investigar qué prácticas de autocuidado son realizadas por trabajadores de una unidad de cuidados intensivos que sirve a los pacientes con COVID-19. Método: esta es una encuesta de observación, recorte transversal y enfoque cuantitativo. La recopilación de datos tuvo lugar en la segunda mitad del año 2021, a través de un formulario de formas de Google, y el análisis de los datos fue a través de estadísticas descriptivas. Aprobado por el Comité de Ética e Investigación bajo el número de opinión 4.958.622. Resultados: 28 profesionales participaron en la investigación, en su mayoría mujeres. Entre las modificaciones enumeradas para el período pandémico, presentaron insomnio, uso de medicamentos y el aumento significativo en los alimentos, entre otros. Conclusión: Hubo una creciente búsqueda de atención y autocuidado durante el período pandémico por el grupo investigado, al igual que el aumento de la adherencia a diferentes modalidades terapéuticas, entre ellos prácticas integrativas y complementarias.

Palabras claves: Terapias complementarias; Salud del trabajador; Unidad de terapia intensiva; Autocuidado; COVID-19.

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INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of technologies and the control of numerous pathologies,

they made it possible for part of the world population to feed the belief in the thought that disaster scenarios would be extinct, however, the reality of experiencing a new pandemic landscape re-emerged at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. ¹

Experiencing the pandemic has been an impactful process for the world's population, since social isolation has directly interfered with people's daily practices, generating social and economic consequences. These consequences had a direct impact on a broad social, physical and mental aspect. ²

In addition to going through social isolation, some people also provide

services acting as health professionals, and many of these, in direct contact with people contaminated by the virus, in scenarios where there is a high risk of contamination. These professionals are part of the risk group, as they are exposed to high viral loads, daily work pressure, stress, physical and mental exhaustion.³

In view of the pandemic context experienced, offering attention to the mental and physical health of these servers is undeniable. Based on this, the Federal Nursing Council (COFEN), contacted the National Commission on Nursing in Mental Health, to develop and implement care strategies with trained professionals, for those on the front line of the pandemic and who want help.⁴

The work process is not just a necessary element for material survival, it is a tool for the construction of identity, which enables the socialization and expression of the subject's subjectivity.⁵ It is worth mentioning that the way work is experienced can be considered a strong aspect that generates suffering, harming the worker's interpersonal and individual relationships.⁶

The intensive care unit (ICU) is an environment where patients in critical condition remain, and the action of human resources is constantly essential with effective performance of procedures and use of highly complex equipment, in this way this sector becomes a place with too much stressing pressure.⁷

Changes over time and the work process reflect in a broader context, where sensations and behaviors felt during the current pandemic may persist for future times. The same author recognizes that human behavior in the face of a pandemic has changed: fear, insecurity and a feeling of helplessness have become part of everyday life.⁸

COVID-19 has generated changes in perceptions of time, space, health and disease, revealing the real fragili-

ty and global awareness of humanity, accentuating the need to make sustainable and applicable the juxtaposition of ancestral knowledge and practices, since these care practices go through time being low cost, non-invasive in addition to promoting health.⁹

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time being low cost, non-invasive in addition to promoting health.¹⁰

Taking into account all the context experienced in the current pandemic, the self-care process is extremely important, since it values the human being in its integrality and subjectivity. It also emphasizes self-care measures and care practices, seeking to understand the context of limitations such as age, health conditions, among others.¹¹

Faced with the performance experienced and experienced by health professionals and the researcher himself, in a pandemic scenario, the research question arises: What strategies are used by workers in a COVID-19 ICU to reduce self-perceived discomforts and/or mental health losses during the pandemic?

It aims to investigate which self-care practices are carried out by workers in an Intensive Care Unit that assists patients with COVID-19.

METHOD

This is a cross-sectional, descriptive research with a quantitative approach.¹²

Of the 40 guests who accepted and were able to participate in the research, 28 professionals from different areas of expertise, working in a COVID-19 ICU. As inclusion criteria, it was adopted to be a professional working in the ICU of both sexes. Those who were on leave from work, vacation or medical certificate during the data collection period were excluded.

Data collection took place in September 2021 in a medium-sized cooperative private hospital providing health services. The health unit defined for the research, called the ICU, has seven beds, all adapted, following the guidelines of isolation protocols for the care of COVID-19. The hospital is located in the northwest region of the State of Rio Grande do Sul.

The instrument used for data collection was an online Google Forms form, structured, with open and closed questions. To contact the participants, authorization was requested through the sector coordinator and the institution's Human Resources. This contact was made personally by the researcher, since he is a member of the institution's group of collaborators and works in the sector where the research took place. After acceptance, some form of online contact (WhatsApp, or e-mail) was requested for the researchers to send the form via Google Forms.

After the end of data collection, they were analyzed by descriptive statistics of the data, based on the contents obtained in the forms completed by the participants.

This research complied with the ethics of Resolution 466 of December 12th, 2012 and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Universidade Regional Integrada do Alto Uruguai e das Missões through opinion no. 4.958,622 of September 8th, 2021.

RESULTS

Data was collected during the month of September 2021. Of the 40 guests, 70% (n=28) of the professionals agreed to participate in the research.

The predominant group is female 72.4% (n=20). Regarding the occupation at the research site, the largest group is represented by nursing, with 60.7% (n=17) nursing technicians and 21.4% (n=6) being nurses, followed by 14.3% (n=4) of physical therapists and 3.6% (n=1) of hospital workers, as shown in graph 1:

With regard to education level, the largest group was represented by mid-level professionals 43% (n=18), followed by higher education professionals 29% (n=11). Another interesting data showed us that 18% (n=5) declared themselves to have incomplete higher education, demonstrating the

search for training and specialization of professionals, as shown in graph 2:

Regarding marital status and formation of a family nucleus, 39% (n=11) of the participants declared themselves to be married, followed by 32% (n=9) in a stable relationship and 29% (n=8) single. It can be seen that 36% (n=10) in a family arrangement of up to three people and 32% (n=9) with more than three people in their arrangement. Of these, 64% (n=18) have children.

It was found that 60% (n=17) have more than one employment relationship.

Regarding care and self-care practices, most professionals who answered the questionnaire 93% (n=26) consider

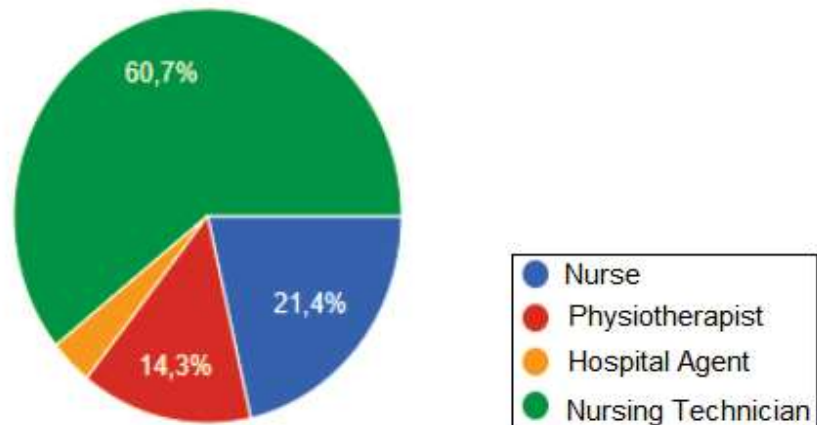
that they often practice these actions.

Among professionals, 32% (n=19) say that during the pandemic period they need to start with some medication or increase the dosage. Associated with this fact, 54% (n=15) reported that they usually seek mental and physical support in biomedical practices, and 43% (n=11) are assisted by a general practitioner, followed by 36% (n=9) by a professional psychologist.

Regarding the sleep pattern, 32% (n=9) of the participants reported that there was a change in their rest routine, with 25% (n=7) recognizing that there was a reduction in sleep, followed by 18% (n=9) who reported insomnia.

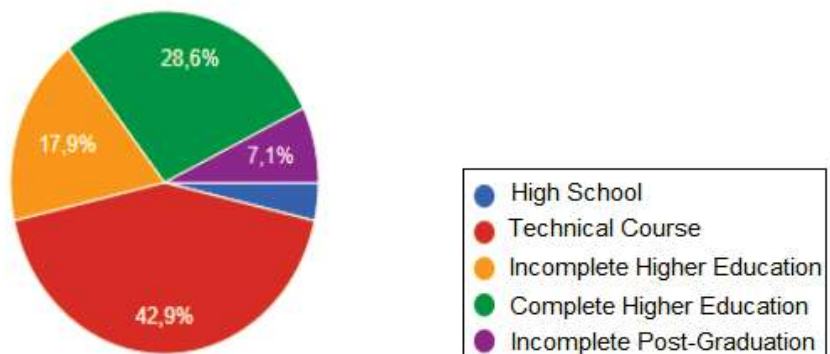
About practicing physical activity,

Graph 1 – Health team at the COVID-19 ICU. Santo Ângelo/RS



Source: The authors, 2021

Graph 2: Level of education of the participants. Santo Ângelo/RS.



Fonte: Os autores, 2021

most 60% (n=17) claim to regularly practice some activity. And on food, 68% (n=19) said that food consumption has increased significantly.

Although the majority 79% (n=22) report feeling constantly mental exhaustion, they report not feeling interference in their professional attention during activities that need focus, being able to perform activities without losing focus, and only 21% (n=6) get distracted and/or lose attention during reasoning.

Regarding the feelings experienced in the pandemic, insecurity in the face of the pandemic future was present in the speech of 82% (n=23). Even though all 100% (n=28) participants reported fear of transmitting the virus to their friends,

relatives and close people, 79% (n=22) feel anxious about the current scenario promoted by COVID-19 and 82% (n=23) feel happy even though they are daily working with patients without expectations of improvement or recovery.

Regarding integrative and complementary practices, all 100% (n=28) agree that PICS contribute to health promotion, however 36% (n=10) do not know any complementary integrative practices. The largest group 75% (n=21) did not use any PICS before the social isolation imposed by the world pandemic and 46% (n=13) started some complementary therapy during the period of social isolation.

A busca por terapias complementares se fez presente em 50% (n=14) dos participantes, sendo as mais utilizadas: massagem 29% (n=9), escalda pés 18% (n=5) e meditação 18% (n=5).

DISCUSSIONS

The female audience in nursing is even larger due to a historical construction of the profession, since since its beginnings, women have been facing the care management processes.¹³

Regarding nursing professionals, it is important to emphasize that they are the group that remains in attention and willingness to be with the patient for the longest time. Still, these professionals, because they have this privilege, accumulate too much information, becoming informants responsible for communication.¹⁴

Usually, health professionals accumulate numerous functions, in addition to often staying for six, eight or even 12 uninterrupted working hours. Low pay is one of the main elements that stimulate the search for a double working day. It is important to point out that the negative reflexes related to the sum of more than one employment relationship associated with numerous demands of the profession cause impacts from those related to physical exhaustion, mental and organic frailty, depression, suffering, dissatisfaction, weaknesses in skills and moral character.¹⁵

Self-care can be understood as a set of attitudes that the individual performs to maintain, recover and promote their health, yet it is composed of numerous initiatives, actions and techniques that seek to enhance the well-being of the being.¹⁶

The biomedical system as a capitalist hegemonic model, which has numerous weaknesses and artificialities that often generate health crises, since this system is intentional and is seen as a business that seeks to meet market needs. Its importance is not disregarded, but it is essential that the practices of other alternatives can be complementary and healthy with great resolution.¹⁷

Sleep is a physiological event, necessary and indispensable. In addition, it potentiates physical exhaustion, irritability, metabolic and mood changes.¹⁸

It is an indisputable fact that work accidents are problems that cause numerous concerns, in this sense the

theory of the counter-hegemonic view points out that these incidents in the work environment are due to the way in which the operation of the work system works. However, there are other aspects that point out that the origin of failures and errors are due to concerns, loss of focus and inattention that arise from the workers themselves.¹⁹

Considering the PICS that the researched group sought, massage was highlighted.

Massage is such a traditional practice that, every day, it is being perfected to have more satisfactory results for those who receive it, based on muscle relaxation, tissue nutrition and oxygenation, improves circulation and the flow of the natural drainage of the lymph nodes. It is an efficient therapeutic protocol in the precaution and cure of factors of internal or external origin responsible for the pathophysiology, providing physical and psychological well-being.²⁰

The foot bath, another technique used, is ancient knowledge, where by resting the feet immersed in warm water with crystals of sodium chloride and coarse salt, it promotes relaxation by improving venous return in the systemic circulation, yet, this technique is often associated with herbs and/or essential oils and time is relative and optional.¹¹

Regarding meditation, it is considered a self-care tool capable of offering its adherents a "break", where the capacity for attention, control and relaxation are developed.²¹

It is undeniable to perceive the contributions of Integrative and Complementary Practices in Health (PICS - Práticas Integrativas e Complementares em Saúde) to health. It also points out that the National Policy on Integrative and Complementary Practices (PNPIC - Política Nacional de Práticas Integrativas e Complementares) created

and implemented in the SUS in 2006 encourages these ancient and current techniques in the process of health promotion, prevention and recovery.²² Considering that the search for complementary therapies, both by patients and professionals, is a movement of multi-factorial choice, where the search for attention to the physical, spiritual and social dimensions, has been motivating the search for PICS.²³

CONCLUSION

Although the researched group was impacted by the negative stimuli of the pandemic period, they did not neglect self-care. The impetus and capacity of self-care significantly improve the quality of life of human beings. It is also

important to recognize that PICS do not replace or devalue conventional biomedical treatments, but rather act in a complementary and associative way, aiming to improve people's quality of life.

It is necessary not to neglect the perception of the human being as integrated into the environment, since the system in which the subject is inserted often influences the human life process. Therefore, recognizing and valuing millennial knowledge with their knowledge and self-care techniques is relevant and necessary.

It is important to reflect on the incorporation of unconventional health services into care, given the recognized importance of adding different medicines and knowledge to integrate new

tools in favor of humanized care.

It is worth emphasizing that the encouragement of studies, scientific work and the search for instruction should be encouraged from the graduation process to the daily work. Still, the more studies related to this theme, the more refined and recognized it will be.

As limitations of the study, it can be inferred that the pandemic period has been a limiting factor for the total adherence of workers to answer the questionnaire, since the demand for work has increased considerably,

in the same way that the online questionnaire could also have been another limiting factor, since not all people are familiar with such resources.

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