

## SATISFACTION OF THE NURSING TEAM IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES – A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTION PROFESSIONALS

SATISFAÇÃO DA EQUIPE DE ENFERMAGEM EM SERVIÇOS DE SAÚDE MENTAL: UM ESTUDO COMPARATIVO ENTRE PROFISSIONAIS DE INSTITUIÇÃO PÚBLICA E PRIVADA

SATISFACCIÓN DEL PERSONAL DE ENFERMERÍA EN LOS SERVICIOS DE SALUD MENTAL: ESTUDIO COMPARATIVO ENTRE PROFESIONALES DE LA INSTITUCIÓN PÚBLICA Y PRIVADA

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to compare the degree of professional satisfaction among nursing staff in a public institution and those who work in a private mental health service. A transversal, descriptive and quantitative approach was carried out in two psychiatric services (one public and one private). In total, 70 nursing professionals were part of the research. The data collection took place between April and May 2013, applying a characterization tool and, to evaluate the satisfaction of the professionals, the SATIS-BR instrument was applied. The results were analyzed with the aid of the statistical software R, admitting as significant p-value <0.05. Private service professionals represented 70% (n = 49) of the subjects; However, regardless of the institution, the majority of the participants were female and had a medium / technical level of education. Regarding job satisfaction, the public service professionals presented a mean score of 3.53 points, and the private service team scores a mean of 3.18 points, the difference being statistically significant (p-value <0.001). Thus, it was found that, in the overall analysis, the nursing team in the public institution was more satisfied with the service.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction; Working Conditions; Mental Health; Nursing.

### RESUMO

O estudo objetivou comparar o grau de satisfação profissional entre trabalhadores de Enfermagem de uma instituição pública e aqueles que atuam em um serviço privado de saúde mental. Realizou-se pesquisa transversal, descritiva e de abordagem quantitativa em dois serviços psiquiátricos (um público e outro privado). No total, 70 profissionais de enfermagem fizeram parte da pesquisa. A coleta de dados ocorreu entre abril e maio de 2013, aplicando-se um instrumento de caracterização. E para avaliar a satisfação dos profissionais foi aplicado o instrumento SATIS-BR. Os resultados foram analisados com auxílio do software estatístico R, admitindo-se como significativo p-valor <0,05. Os profissionais do serviço privado representaram 70% (n=49) dos sujeitos; porém, independentemente da instituição, a maioria dos participantes era do sexo feminino e apresentava grau de instrução de nível médio/técnico. Quanto à satisfação laboral, os profissionais do serviço público apresentaram escore médio global de 3,53 pontos e a equipe do serviço privado escore médio de 3,18 pontos, sendo a diferença estatisticamente significativa (p-valor <0,001). Assim, constatou-se que, na análise global, a equipe de enfermagem trabalhadora na instituição pública mostrou-se mais satisfeita com o serviço.

**Palavras-chave:** Satisfação no Emprego; Condições de Trabalho; Saúde Mental; Enfermagem.

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## RESUMEN

*Este estudio tuvo como objetivo comparar el grado de satisfacción profesional entre el personal de enfermería de una institución pública y el de un servicio de salud mental privado. Se realizó una investigación cuantitativa descriptiva transversal en dos servicios psiquiátricos, uno público y otro privado. En la investigación participaron 70 profesionales de enfermería. Para la recogida de datos, entre abril y mayo de 2013, se utilizó una herramienta de caracterización y para evaluar la satisfacción de los profesionales el instrumento SATIS-BR. Los resultados se analizaron con el software estadístico R, considerándose como significativo el valor de  $p < 0,05$ . Los profesionales del servicio privado representaron el 70% ( $n = 49$ ) de los sujetos. Sin embargo, independientemente de la institución, la mayoría de los participantes eran mujeres con nivel de instrucción medio o técnico. En cuanto a la satisfacción laboral, el personal del servicio público mostró puntuación media global de 3,53 puntos y el del servicio privado de 3,18 puntos, con una diferencia estadísticamente significativa (valor de  $p < 0,001$ ). Por lo tanto, se constató que, en el análisis general, el personal de enfermería que trabajaba en la institución pública estaba más satisfecho con el servicio.*

*Palabras clave:* Satisfacción en el Trabajo; Condiciones de Trabajo; Salud Mental; Enfermería.

## INTRODUCTION

The practice of evaluating mental health services has been recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) in recent years with the objective of ensuring the quality of services.<sup>1,2</sup> It is worth mentioning that one of the indicators used to assess the quality of services of the psychiatric institutions is the level of job satisfaction of health professionals working in this area. At the same time, it is possible through this evaluation to know the quality of human resources management.<sup>3</sup> Research shows that the level of satisfaction of professionals is closely correlated with the level of quality of the services performed.<sup>4,5</sup>

In this context, job satisfaction depends on meeting the expectations related to the most varied aspects (such as salary, recognition and personal and professional valuation) professionals place on the institution in which they work.<sup>6</sup> Thus, satisfaction is a feeling that can vary over time for the same person.<sup>7</sup>

In several countries, research has been conducted to investigate the satisfaction of nursing professionals working in psychiatric institutions. The concern with this theme is due to the changes occurred in the last decades in the model of care proposed to Psychiatric services, as well as to changes in the profile and the lack of nursing professionals who work in this area.<sup>6,8,9</sup>

Nursing professionals, especially those working in Psychiatry services have a high workload, conditions stimulating stress, emotional tension, physical and psychological exhaustion, most of the time causing a process of illness of the professional.<sup>6,10</sup> However, it is known that the nursing staff (nurses, technicians and nursing assistants) are professionals who spend most of their time in direct contact with patients. However, research shows that health services do not offer adequate working conditions to meet the needs of these professionals, which may also influence the level of job satisfaction.<sup>11,12</sup>

In the context of this discussion, it is highlighted that research conducted in Brazil found a significant correlation between professional satisfaction and the occurrence of stress in professionals working in psychiatric services.<sup>9</sup> Also, other studies carried out with nursing professionals in psychiatric institu-

tions show that the most influenced factors in the satisfaction were the level of participation in the work environment, salary, relationships and working conditions. Thus, due to the existence of several scales and the different methods used, it is difficult to compare the results found.<sup>7,8</sup>

Also, it is believed that the type of employment bond of the worker is related to the level of their professional satisfaction. A study carried out by researchers from the State University of Maringá (UEM), Paraná, found that there were differences between the professional satisfaction of the nursing team when compared to those who work in public service with private and philanthropic service professionals, showing that public service professionals had higher percentage values of satisfaction.<sup>9</sup>

In fact, being approved in a civil service examination is something that many nursing professionals want. In this sense, it is necessary to understand the different factors influencing professional satisfaction among those who work in public service and those who work in private institutions. This is because such knowledge can contribute to the establishment of strategies aimed to promote professional satisfaction and, with this, favor improvements in the quality of care offered.

Therefore, this study has the following guiding question: are there differences in the level of professional satisfaction between a nursing team acting in public service and another acting in private service mental health service? It is hypothesized that the Nursing team performing its work activities in public mental health service has a higher level of professional satisfaction. The goal of this research was to compare the level of professional satisfaction in nursing staff of a public institution and those who work in a private mental health service to ratify or refute this hypothesis.

## METHODS

This is a cross-sectional, descriptive and quantitative approach carried out in two psychiatric services (one public and another private) located in the north of Paraná. The public service had 26 beds and 22 nursing professionals, while in the pri-

ivate institution there were 240 beds for a nursing team of 61 professionals. The only inclusion criterion was to be present at the institution when data collection to recruit the largest number of participants. Thus, only one public service professional did not participate in the study because of the impossibility of responding to the questionnaire. In the private service, 12 professionals were absent from the institution for vacations, licenses and/or day off reasons.

In total, there were 70 nursing professionals, workers of both institutions, participating in the research. A questionnaire containing the following variables was applied for the characterization of the individuals: age, marital status, gender, time of bond to the institution, time of experience in psychiatry, the total time of work experience, the number of employment ties, professional qualification.

Also, the level of satisfaction of the professionals was verified applying the scale SATIS-BR (Evaluation Scale of the Satisfaction of the Team in Mental Health Services). This scale presents 32 quantitative items, composing a general scale, evaluating the overall satisfaction of the team with the service, and four factors (subscales) evaluating: a) satisfaction with the quality of services rendered; B) satisfaction of the team in their participation in the service; C) satisfaction with the general conditions of work; D) satisfaction with the interpersonal relationship with co-workers and superiors. It should be noted that SATIS-BR was developed by the WHO Mental Health Division and validated in Brazil.<sup>10</sup>

Following the provisions, it is also noted that each of the 32 questions contains answers grouped in a gradient Likert-like conformation, with five points corresponding to 1 – “very unsatisfied”; 2 – “dissatisfied”; 3 – “indifferent”; 4 – “satisfied”; and 5 – “very satisfied”. Thus, the calculation of the arithmetic mean of the answers obtained was performed to evaluate the level of satisfaction of the nursing team with the mental health service and each subscale. The score on the answers varies from one to five. The closer to five, the higher the level of professional satisfaction.

Data collection took place from April to May 2013, and the results were entered into a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet, version 2010, and later compiled for statistical software “R.” For the inferential statistical analysis, the assumptions of normality (by the Shapiro-Wilk test) and homoscedasticity (F test) were verified. Thus, considering the results of the assumptions to compare the level of satisfaction in the professionals of each service, the difference between the means of points presented by each institution was verified in the overall evaluation and by subscale, applying the non-parametric analysis for Mann-Whitney-U for independent samples. Also, the characterization data of the professionals of each service were compared comparatively by the Chi-square test for k proportions. In all analysis,  $p < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

The names of the services were replaced by the abbreviations HMM (public service) and HPM (private service) to preserve the identification of the institutions the professionals belonged. Thus, it is emphasized that all ethical precepts were followed by Brazilian Resolution N° 466/2012,<sup>11</sup> and the study was approved by Ethics Committee in Research with Opinion N° 228,003. Also, it is worth remembering that all the participants signed the Term of Free and Informed Consent.

## RESULTS

There were 21 (30%) of the total population of participants working in the public service (HMM) and 49 (70%) in the private institution (HPM). The professionals working in HMM were in the larger age range and longer in service, and, on the other hand, fewer employees with another employment relationship (Table 1).

Table 1 - Profile of nursing professionals according to the psychiatric institution in which they work - N=70. Maringá/PR. 2013

Variables	HMM (n=21)		HPM (n=49)		p-value
	n	%	n	%	
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	17	80.9	33	67.4	<0.001 <sup>a</sup>
Male	4	19.1	16	32.6	
<b>Age</b>					
Mean	40.5		37.1		0.128 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Level of Education</b>					
High School/technical	11	52	39	80	<0.001 <sup>a</sup>
Graduation	2	10	5	10	
Specialization	8	38	5	10	
<b>Studies</b>					
Nursing Assistant	11	52.3	6	12.2	<0.001 <sup>a</sup>
Nursing Technician	6	28.5	36	73.4	
<b>Nurse</b>					
Operational Nurse	4	19.2	4	8.2	<0.001 <sup>a</sup>
Time of service (years)	–	–	3	6.2	
<b>Mean</b>					
Another working link	6.66		5.25		0.024 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Yes</b>					
No	8	38.10	21	43.86	0.060 <sup>a</sup>
Não	13	61.90	28	57.14	

<sup>a</sup> Chi-square test for k proportions. <sup>b</sup> Mann-Whitney-U Test.

Regarding job satisfaction, the public service professionals presented a global mean score of 3.53 points and the private service team a mean score of 3.18 points, the difference being

statistically significant ( $p$ -value  $<0.001$ ). However, there was no significant difference between the professionals of the two institutions, when the team's satisfaction with their service relationship was evaluated ( $p$ -value = 0.8679) (Table 2).

Table 2 - Comparison of mean and standard deviation of the level of satisfaction in the professionals, according to the service in which they work - N=70. Maringá/PR, 2013

Scale	HMM	HPM	p*
Overall Satisfaction	3.53 ± 0.10	3.18 ± 0.22	<0.001
Sub-scale 1: level of team satisfaction with the quality of services offered to patients	3.63 ± 0.15	3.22 ± 0.22	<0.001
Sub-scale 2: level of team satisfaction in their participation in the service	3.42 ± 0.30	3.13 ± 0.36	0.002
Sub-scale 3: staff satisfaction and working conditions	3.48 ± 0.46	3.05 ± 0.54	<0.001
Sub-scale 4: Level of team satisfaction regarding their relationship in the service	3.63 ± 0.24	3.56 ± 0.39	0.868

\* Mann-Whitney-U Test.

## DISCUSSION

When the two mental health services were compared with the demographic data, the female variable was high in both HMM and HPM samples (80.9 and 67.4%, respectively). Similarly, authors of a similar study, developed in psychiatric hospitals in Minas Gerais, also identified a predominance of women (63.4%) among the participants in the study.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, the national literature describes that Brazilian Nursing has mostly female professionals.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in Brazil, the participation rate of women in the labor market increases gradually every year.<sup>14</sup>

Also in the characterization of the participants of this research, it was verified that, comparatively, there is a significant difference ( $p$ -value  $<0.001$ ) in the education level and in the studies of the professionals of each service, since, in the private service, there was (73.4% versus 52.3%), a higher proportion of professionals with specialization in the public service (38% versus 10%) (Table 1).

Therefore, professionals who work in public service (such as the case of the HMM nursing team) have the so-called stability of employment relationship. Thus, this contributes to the fact that they stay longer in the same job with the training they have been offered in the civil service. However, the existence of a career plan provides that individuals linked to the public service can improve their level of education through undergraduate courses and even graduate school. Unfortunately, in many private services, including mental health institutions (such as HPM), the career plan is not a reality, nor is job stability.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, in the global evaluation, the nursing team that works in the public institution (HMM) had satisfaction with the highest service compared to professionals from the private institution (HPM) (3.53 and 3.18, respectively), with a difference statistically significant ( $p$ -value  $<0.001$ ). Nevertheless, both services had average scores that ranged between indifference (score 3) and satisfaction (score 4) (Table 2). Considering that satisfaction can be used as one of the indicators to evaluate the quality of health services, the results show a need to promote improvements in the two institutions surveyed.

In a study carried out in the interior of Rio de Janeiro-RJ, the global satisfaction of the professionals presented a mean score of 3.30 points.<sup>16</sup> In another study carried out by professionals of a long-stay mental health institution, also located in RJ, the average score for the global satisfaction of the participants was 3.29 points.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it is noted that the scores of both studies cited are in the range of points observed in this study since they are higher than professionals of the private institution (3,18). However, they are lower than the average score of the nursing staff of the public institution (3.53). It should be noted that the research carried out in the state of Rio de Janeiro did not include only nursing professionals in its participants.

On the other hand, professionals from the Mental Health Laboratory of the Federal University of São João del-Rei, Minas Gerais, presented a mean score related to the level of satisfaction with the service of 4.05 points, showing these professionals more satisfied both in comparison with the professionals of this research, and with those participants of the study in Rio de Janeiro. However, only eight professionals participated in Minas Gerais survey, which was also not exclusively in nursing.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, another study in Minas Gerais, which included professionals exclusively belonging to the nursing team of two psychiatric hospitals, the mean score for the level of work satisfaction was 3.06 points,<sup>12</sup> lower than those obtained in this study, as well as it was observed in the other investigations mentioned above.

Despite the differences between the level of satisfaction of the professionals of different services, a relational study with nursing professionals working in psychiatric hospitals with different characteristics (public, private and philanthropic) showed that job dissatisfaction might be the result of several factors, which are inherent in both conditions and labor relationships.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the comparative analysis between the average scores of the subscales, the results also revealed that the largest scores were presented by the public service professionals (HMM). The difference was not only statistically significant when comparing the average score of the teams to the subscale that evaluates the level of satisfaction of each team regarding their relationship in the service. Also, the average score inherent to the relationship was the one with the highest value in the subscale scores in both teams (Table 2).

In a study carried out by a multi-professional team from a psychiatric hospital in the state of São Paulo, it was found that the satisfaction of professionals with relationships also presented the highest mean score (3.7 points).<sup>19</sup> When evaluating the impact of work on mental health and the satisfaction of professionals with it, Researchers from the Department of Psychiatry of the Federal University of São Paulo showed that the emotional impact of the service was the one that showed the highest, while the satisfaction of the team with the relationship was higher than satisfaction with working conditions and participation in the service.<sup>20</sup>

These data lead us to infer that the emotional exhaustion suffered by professionals in mental health services is even greater than physical exhaustion and, in this way, the good relationship between the team can minimize such impact. Also, the autonomy of the professional for the development of the work and the good relationship between the colleagues and with the management are punctual facts for the increase of the satisfaction in the work, the establishment of harmony between the team and to mitigate the negative impact of the health service of the professionals who work in it.<sup>21</sup>

The results of this study also indicate that public service professionals were more dissatisfied with the participation of the team in the service (mean score of 3.42 points). In contrast, the private service nursing team was more dissatisfied with the working conditions (mean score of 3.05 points). In a study conducted in the interior of Minas Gerais, when evaluating patients' satisfaction in a mental health service, it was identified that the patients were more dissatisfied with the service than with the staff (mean score of 4.32 and 4.61, respectively). On the other hand, the professionals who participated in the study were more dissatisfied with both their participation in the service (mean score of 3.91) and with the quality of services offered (mean score of 4.27).<sup>18</sup>

Participation in work improves the level of satisfaction of professionals working in mental health services when they are inserted in the decision-making process.<sup>22</sup> Satisfaction with working conditions, among others, refers to the quality of work. Maintenance of equipment, the quality, and quantity of available work tools and the workspace.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, the harmonious relationship between the professionals favors the participation of all the team in the moments of institutional decision-making on aspects that directly implicate the labor processes, while the working conditions collaborate, so there is the satisfaction of the professional with the services that are performed/offered. This way, the work environment, interpersonal relationship, structure, security, and issues related to the work process are situations contributing positively or negatively to the level of satisfaction of the professionals. This will reflect on the level of patient's satisfaction with the service, regardless of whether it is public or private.<sup>24</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The professionals had significant differences regarding the general characteristics, which can be explained, in part, considering the type of bond of each team. Also, it was found that, in the global analysis, the nursing team in the public institution was more satisfied with the service. Nevertheless, in all four subscales of the SATIS-BR instrument, public service professionals had higher satisfaction scores. Thus, the hypothesis initially raised that there are differences in the level of satisfaction in mental health nursing teams, depending on the type of service in which they work. In this sense, it was concluded that those professionals of the public service presented a higher level of job satisfaction when compared to workers from the same area of activity, but who carry out their activities in private service.

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