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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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INCONSISTENCY: THE KNOWLEDGE OF RELEVANCE AND DISUSE ON THE PART OF EPI HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

The perspective of an understanding of this incongruity between the understanding of the relevance and the disuse of PPE in the hospital unit is the objective of this study. This is a descriptive, exploratory, qualitative study carried out in two hospital units in the Cariri region of the State of Ceará with 76 health professionals, in the category of nurses and nursing technicians. It is noticed that most participants consider it relevant and essential for health prevention and promotion, in addition to minimizing or avoiding contamination by exposure during the practice of care. The participants do not consider the use of these equipment sanely to be important, thus demonstrating an indifference to their health, also unrelated to the third parties around them. The incongruity lies in knowing the relevance and being paramount for health prevention and promotion, in addition to minimizing or avoiding contamination by exposure during the practice of care above all, disuse is inevitable. Thus, evidencing the relevance of PPE to care in the most fully and effective way.

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INTRODUCTION

The hospital environment is very complex because it is considered to be an unhealthy environment, because it attends to patients who present several pathological classes and offers varied risks of accidents and diseases that can affect the health of the professional who works there, among these areas we can mention the emergency, the surgical center and the intensive care unit. The recognition of biological risks and concern for health professionals emerged from the AIDS epidemic around the 1980s, which prompted a change in standards of prevention and safety in the working environment, when perceiving the exposure of nursing professionals to multiple risk factors, the latter being more vulnerable to several risks during its activities and mainly to biological and ergonomic risks (Nishide, 2019). The occurrence of these risks is associated with nursing care, handling and use of perfure and/or sharp, in the preparation of medicines, and the absence of personal protective equipment results in several work accidents. To reduce and control the risks, the use of PPE should be adopted as a preventive method, since it is known that many problems that occur are due to the negligence of the use of PPE.

Thus, it is essential that the nursing team has knowledge about biosafety in the prevention of care allied to the patient and to itself (Carvalho, 2019). Given the non-adherence to prevention measures, nosocomial infections are propagated, so it is necessary to emphasize biosafety and how to get control of these infectious processes, which can be obtained through training of the multidisciplinary team (Oppermann, 2003). According to the regulatory standard - NR n°6, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is considered to be any device or product of individual use used by the worker to protect risks that could threaten the safety and health at work. Some equipment of the nursing professional practice such as: mask, glasses, gloves and others are necessary for the nursing assistance to be performed effectively (4). The perspective of an understanding of this inconsistency between the understanding of the relevance and disuse of PPE in the hospital unit is the objective of this study. The intention to carry out this research emerged from the observation of disuse, of some of the professionals, of the PPE even having the understanding of the importance in the prevention of diseases with the use of these instruments.

Due to the high risk of hospital contamination due to the disuse of PPE, it is important that the Hospital Infection Control Commission (CCIH) is active in hospital units, offering training, qualifications and training for health professionals, who are almost always exposed to the risks of contamination because they are directly in contact with the patient, thus becoming more vulnerable to accidents, and may even contract hospital infections. In Brazil, the concern with the health worker emerged due to the high rate of work accidents in hospitals and because they are susceptible to acquiring infectious - contagious diseases. In order to have the control of accidents at work it is indispensable the correct use of Epis' (Ramos, 2019).

METHODS

A descriptive, exploratory, qualitative study was carried out in two hospital units in the Cariri region in the state of Ceará. To represent the participants of the research, the researcher named P1, P2, P3 and so on. The survey was conducted from July to November 2019, consolidating from the study to completion. 76 health professionals participated in the study, in the category of nurses and nursing technicians. The criterion of choice was to be on duty on the days when the researcher went to the hospital unit to collect data, which happened in the morning and evening shifts, after clarification on the objectives of the research. We sought to integrate professionals from different hospital environments into the research: the outpatient clinic, the intensive care unit-ICU, the medical and surgical clinics, and also the professionals from the material and sterilization center who were willing to participate. With the contribution of Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council, the researcher guided the participants on the theme and objectives of the research, requesting after clarity the signing of the informed consent form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The panorama with the participants of the research was consolidated with 76 professionals of the nursing team, prevailing the female sex (87%); the majority in the age group of 23 to 48 years (78%); among the professionals who participated in the study, 39.8% were nurses and 60.2% were nursing technicians. The set of themes highlights the speeches of the participants who were called "The importance of Epis", "The disuse of Epis" and "Perception of exposure and biological risks".

The Importance of PPE: Regarding the importance of the use of PPE, attributed by nursing professionals, it is observed that most participants consider it relevant and essential for the prevention and promotion of health, in addition to minimizing or avoiding contamination by exposure during the practice of caring.

It is a device that protects me, whenever I go on duty directs me to the use of Epis (P1). The equipment serves to protect me from accidents and infections in my workplace (P3) Use always in my hospital activities (P24) PPE not only protects me as a professional, it also protects the people I care for (P28)

According to the Regulatory Standard N°6 of the Ministry of Labor and Employment, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

is considered to be any device or product, of individual use used by the worker, intended for the protection of risks that could threaten safety and health at work. For (Nascimento, 2009; Miranda, 2008) these PPE are intended to protect the physical integrity and preserve the health of workers. In addition to being a widely used resource for worker safety in the exercise of their duties. For this reason, they assume a role of great responsibility for the preservation of the worker against the most varied risks to which they are subject in the work environments.

The disuse of PPE: When asked about the disuse of PPE the most disturbing is that some of the participants do not consider the use of this equipment important, thus demonstrating an indifference to their health, and even to the third parties around them. Moreover, many act by the belief that their faith protects them from all evil and from all sickness, reinforcing the feeling of self-confidence which can propitiate the disuse of Epis.

When I leave home I pray that I will not be affected by disease (P19)

Several factors prove to be determinant for disuse: the deficit in the acquisition of PPE, the rationing by hospitals, cited by the participants of the research, the discomfort when using them, or even are unrelated to the obligation provided for in Law 6514 of December 1977. We highlight the need to qualify health professionals, since many infer that they do not have the necessary knowledge to report exposure and the risks to which they are susceptible during technical actions, enabling health risks.

I know the safety of the hat mask and props, but sometimes I forget one of these and when I see I have already performed the procedures. (P56)

For ⁽⁸⁾ nursing professionals often do not use personal protective equipment for various reasons, always questionable and futile, or even for lack of guidance. For each PPE there are several excuses, the most common being the use of the gloves of procedure, stating that there is a decrease in sensitivity in procedures such as peripheral venous access puncture or that there is no possibility of using them in the activities that use tape. According to (Sousa, 2008) we have observed in practice the inappropriate use or disuse of personal protective equipment (PPE) by these professionals, in addition to the non-washing of the hands after performing the procedures. This happens because, in practice, nursing professionals often perform the care within the perspective of doing and do not adopt the biosecurity measures necessary for their protection during the assistance they perform, which may cause harm to your health and that of the patient under your care. Furthermore, (Silva, 2010) confirms that standard equipment and other measures to prevent occupational risks are insufficiently offered to health workers, as described in a study conducted in the United States that showed a high level of non-compliance with standard procedures for managing medical waste and lack of training in occupational safety measures.

I always wear the glove with irritated and itchy hands. (P26)

The goggles are blurred in the inspiration, my vision is blurred, however I should not remove it because I will

contaminate the procedure I am doing. So I prefer not to use it. (P 57)

Affirming the study carried out by (Souza *et al.*, 2011) nursing professionals, it points out that when asked about the difficulties encountered during the use of PPE, fifteen interviewees said they faced daily situations that prevented the use of this equipment, among these: be allergic to the use of the mask, the discomfort caused by the use of the hat and the difficulty in puncturing the venous access with gloves. According to (Scheidt, 2006) the masks, hats and goggles should be used to perform procedures where there is a possibility of blood splashing or other bodily fluids in the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose and eyes. Second (Gailiene, 2009) in a study conducted with professionals who work in the surgical center of an American institution, pointed out that 51.4% of the participants suffered cuts during the performance of their functions, 62.1% were exposed to biological fluids and 39.6% were exposed to both.

The adherence to the use of PPE is directly related to the perception that professionals have about the risks to which they are exposed and the susceptibility to these risks (14). To paraphrase ⁽¹⁵⁾, the nursing team workers are the ones who suffer the most work accidents and experience unhealthy and inadequate working conditions. Involved in the dynamics of patient care and focused on doing and impulsively intuited to preserve the lives of patients with imminent risk of death, they end up forgetting the maintenance of their integrity, exposing themselves to the relevant risks of such care, which makes them more susceptible to occupational accidents and illnesses.

Perception of biological risks: When asked about the level of knowledge of biosafety standards, the study participants demonstrated a level of understanding about the protection, or even how to avoid it, but reported insecurity because they were always in susceptible environments, often having no control over the contagion. It is noticed that many of the professionals present certain insecurities to the real risk, and attribute little importance to the use of PPE, revealing behaviors that provide greater exposure. What is very clear in the lines described below.

I'm a little insecure, we learn the importance of PPE, but not every shift I use. (Q03)

It can be seen that the high rate of work accidents with health professionals, due to exposure to the risks of contamination without any protective measure, is due to the fact that, even knowing the biosafety standards, they do not always follow the parameters of precautions. In some studies, the nurse is affected by a significant portion of work-related accidents. Some questions are extracted from these data, such as: whether they are subject to inattention, as well as another professional, whether they are exposed to biological risks in the same way and whether they are offered inadequate working conditions. Propositions to be reflected in another investigation (Ribeiro, 2007; Nishide *et al.*, 2004).

I have seen professionals using and contaminating themselves because the quality of the PPE offered is not good. (P42)

For (Caetano, 2009) all patients, even those who do not show signs or symptoms, are colonized or even infected by

microorganisms, which confirms the vulnerability to which professionals are exposed. The highest risk exposures can occur during certain procedures such as blood withdrawal, peripheral venous puncture, and resurfacing of contaminated needles. From the social point of view, NR 32 also intends to expand the knowledge about the risks that health workers are exposed in their day to day work (Nishide, 2014). Adherence to PPE is an important measure of protection to health professionals, although not complying with certain criteria, such as adequate use and frequency of exchange, may expose professionals to accidents and contamination (Moura, 2009). Many of the testimonies reveal that the non-use of PPE, during the practical activities, by the evaluated team was more related to the convenience of the professionals, than to logistic problems (Miranda, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The hospital environment presents itself as a medium with high potential for contamination for those who work in it. Thus, there is a thin line between contamination and health promotion in the relationship of care, since the health professional does not measure efforts to offer an effective therapy for the illness of his patient, which may become, if appropriate preventive measures are not taken, a means of contagion to those who assist it. In view of this, it is evident the need for a qualification of health professionals who explain the relevance of the use of PPE in the execution of their professional skills in the hospital area, ensuring to all patients a safe care, ethical and without breaks of aseptic techniques, providing security with double professional/patient. It is also important to emphasize that the use of PPE is the responsibility of the nursing professional who proposes to take care of the other when the latter is dependent and vulnerable. Thus, it can be seen that many health professionals are mistaken in the idea that being committed to caring for others is a subterfuge to neglect self-care. Thus, highlighting the relevance of the Epis for the realization of caring in the most full and effective way.

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