Association between nursing work environment and the perception of care quality and patient safety in a university hospital

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Introduction

According to Halm (2019), better nursing work environments and adequate staffing contribute to lower mortality rates, patient falls and infections related to care, as well as lower rates of burnout and job dissatisfaction among nurses. Failures to improve the practice environments and the deficit in the number of professionals in hospitals compromise patient safety and quality of care (Aiken et al., 2018). This scenario becomes even more worrisome and needs more studies in developing countries.

Objectives

To evaluate the nursing work environment and the number of patients seen per shift, in inpatient units of a university hospital in southern Brazil, and to verify the association with the quality of care and patient safety according to nursing professionals’ perception.

Method

Cross-sectional and analytical study, with systematic random sampling totaling 56 (39.4%) nurses and 86 (60.6%) nursing technicians / assistants working in inpatient units of a teaching hospital accredited by the Joint Commission International. In Brazil, only 25% of the nursing workforce is composed by nurses with Bachelor’s degrees (RN). Data were collected between August and December, 2018 using the Nursing Work Index-Revised (B-NWI-R) Brazilian version, validated for nurses and nursing assistants / technicians. The ethical aspects of this research have been met.

Results

The average age of the professionals was 42.0 ± 8.7 years and 82.4% were female. The nursing work environment was assessed as favorable by professionals in all domains of the B-NWI-R, with an overall score of 1.92 ± 0.46 points. All domains showed a positive evaluation, with scores below 2.5 points, as recommended by the tool. The number of patients assigned to nurses per shift was median 15 (14-19) and for nursing assistants / technicians, 6 (6-7). There was a moderate, inverse and significant correlation (p <0.001) between the domains of the B-NWI-R scale and the perception of the quality of care and patient safety.

Conclusion

The assessment of the nursing work environment was considered favorable in all domains of the B-NWI-R, according to the perception of the nursing professionals investigate. Higher scores in the nursing work environment which represent a less favorable perception, were associate with worse results for quality of care and patient safety.

Key words

References


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