

NURSING CARE MANAGEMENT IN FRONT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC: AN EXPERIENCE REPORT

A GESTÃO DO CUIDADO DE ENFERMAGEM FRENTE À PANDEMIA CORONAVÍRUS: UM RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA

GESTIÓN DE LA ATENCIÓN DE ENFERMERÍA FRENTE A LA PANDEMIA DE CORONAVIRUS: RELATO DE EXPERIENCIA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to report the experience of a nurse regarding the challenges faced and strategies used in the management of care for suspected and confirmed patients with COVID-19 infection during the virus pandemic in Brazil. **Method:** this is an experience report developed by a nurse manager in the leadership of a sector for receiving patients suspected or confirmed by the virus in a hospital in the state of Rio de Janeiro, from April to July 2020. **Results:** care management involved aspects of structure, process and results directly related to ensuring safe and quality care developed by nursing professionals. **Conclusion:** the presence of nurses is essential in the care management of a sector involved with infected patients during a pandemic.

Descriptors: Nursing Care; Pandemics; Coronavirus Infections.

RESUMO

Objetivo: relatar a experiência de uma enfermeira quanto aos desafios enfrentados e estratégias utilizadas na gestão do cuidado a pacientes suspeitos e confirmados de infecção por COVID-19 durante a pandemia do vírus no Brasil. **Método:** trata-se de um relato de experiência desenvolvido por uma enfermeira gerente na liderança de um setor para o recebimento de pacientes suspeitos ou confirmados pelo vírus em um hospital do estado do Rio de Janeiro, nos meses de abril a julho de 2020. **Resultados:** a gerência do cuidado envolveu aspectos de estrutura, processo e resultados diretamente relacionados à garantia da assistência segura e de qualidade desenvolvida pelos profissionais de enfermagem. **Conclusão:** é essencial a presença do enfermeiro na gestão do cuidado de um setor envolvido com pacientes infectados durante o enfrentamento de uma pandemia.

Descritores: Cuidados de enfermagem; Pandemias; Infecções por Coronavírus.

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to transmit the experience of a nurse on the challenges faced and the strategies used in the management of care of suspicious and confirmed patients with COVID-19 infection during the coronavirus pandemic in Brazil. **Method:** report of the experience of a nurse manager who leads a sector dedicated to the reception of suspicious or confirmed patients of COVID in a hospital in the state of Rio de Janeiro, from April to July 2020. **Results:** the management of care involves related aspects the structure, the process and the results aimed directly at guaranteeing safe and quality care by nursing professionals. **Conclusion:** the presence of a nurse is essential in the care management of a sector that cares for infected patients during a pandemic. **Descriptors:** Nursing Care; Pandemics; Coronavirus Infections.

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide outbreak of the new Coronavirus Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), identified in China in late 2019, has hit the population hard. Symptoms of the disease appear within 14 days after contact with the strain and include: cough, fever, runny nose, muscle pain, anosmia/hyposmia, sore throat and dyspnea.¹ Health institutions, in view of this scenario, organized a new environment to meet the demands of professionals directly involved in assisting these individuals.²

Rio de Janeiro had its first confirmed case in a traveler in February 2020. After this period, the incident cases in the state showed an upward curve, as well as an increase in hospitalizations and mortality. The current record of confirmed cases of the disease in the region is 4,689,613, of which 140,537 died.³

In order to minimize the impacts on the pandemic and considering that health professionals are the most exposed, it was

essential to reflect on the management of nursing care with regard, in particular, to the prevention of contamination and health promotion of these workers.

The term nursing care management comprises the interconnection of management and care that involves the work of nurses in different fields of activity. It is used to characterize the activities of this professional with a view to planning care actions, forecasting and providing resources and intensifying interdisciplinary work, aiming at articulated assistance.⁴

Thus, this study is justified by the importance of strengthening the role of the nurse and sharing experiences and challenges of a nurse as a service manager in times of pandemic.

It is noteworthy that it was appropriated the concepts of Donabedian regarding the components of structures (relatively stable and necessary characteristics for the care process, covering the physical area, human resources), Law Suit (provision of

assistance according to technical-scientific standards, established and accepted in the scientific community on a given subject) and results (consequences of activities carried out in health services, or by the professional in terms of changes in the patients' health status) to anchor the discussions of this report.⁵

The objective was to report the experience of a nurse working in a ward regarding the challenges faced and strategies used in the management of care for suspected and confirmed patients of COVID-19 infection during the virus pandemic in Brazil.

METHOD

This is an experience report that aims to contribute to the discussion about the importance of nurses in the management of nursing care through the experiences, challenges and expectations experienced during the pandemic of COVID-19 in Brazil.

The present report was developed by a nurse as a ward manager, from April to July 2020, in a hospital in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

The hospital institution has a total of 525 beds, 166 of which were intended for assistance to confirmed or suspected patients of COVID-19.

The study did not require the approval of the Research Ethics Committee,

but all the precepts of Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council were respected.

EXPERIENCE PRESENTATION ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURE

This report was developed in a medium complexity sector of a hospital of the Unified Health System, a reference in the state for COVID-19.

The setting is an infirmary, consisting of 16 beds, structured for suspected or confirmed patients of the COVID-19.

The nursing team included 37 nursing technicians and 13 nurses, with a 12x60 hour shift, from wards that stopped functioning to meet the demand of COVID-19. There was a need to train these professionals and raise awareness about the importance of PPE, flows and routines.

WORK PROCESSES

Organizational processes in the pandemic

The start of the pandemic required several changes in the institution's routine. It was established that they would be in the care of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients, only employees who were not in the risk group. Professionals who fit into this group (elderly, immunocompromised, people with chronic diseases) were removed from or relocated to sectors that had no increased exposure to the virus.

Professionals suspected of contamination were referred for respiratory screening, performed a test for COVID-19, maintained home isolation and control by the institution.

The daily adaptation of the work schedule was necessary to cover the gaps left by leaves. The relocation of nursing professionals from other sectors was sometimes necessary, so that there was a minimum number of employees in day and night services.

For the infirmary to function, it was essential to create an inflow and outflow of employees and patients; and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) during assistance. These flows were elaborated in partnership with the Hospital Infection Control Commission (CCIH) and the institution's Nursing Training Service, aiming at structuring the service and articulating nursing activities.

The partnership of the medical team regarding compliance with the flows was important, so that there were no failures or breaks in barriers between clean and contaminated areas.

The participation of multidisciplinary teams in the feedback of the proposed work process was essential for its adaptation, when necessary, and better adaptation of the teams to existing routines.

Optimization of care through training in the face of new flows and routines

The assistance to patients with COVID-19 required the training of professionals, from hand hygiene to the use of PPE.

The attributions of nurses who work in care management permeate the team's awareness of the need to optimize the demand for care for common schedules. Escalating a staff member to meet, in the corridor/outside, requests from professionals who are in isolation was an effective strategy to avoid changing PPE due to forgetfulness or the need for new supplies to perform the care.

The use of the strategy of concentrating materials such as infusion pumps, mechanical ventilators, cardiac arrest cart and rapid intubation case outside the isolation beds was beneficial to the flow of care, since these materials were available for quick use.

There was a need to hold meetings with service heads to resolve issues of lack of materials and supplies. The sectors of CCIH, Material Center, Warehouse and Nursing Coordination were present, so that situations of shortage of materials could be solved. However, the lack of inputs on the market meant that there was a change in standardization during the period, requiring frequent updates from the teams.

Mental health of frontline nursing professionals

Frontline health professionals in patient care COVID-19 are among the groups most exposed to the physical and psychological consequences of this pandemic. They experience exhausting routines that combine with the fear of contamination. Thus, backing for mental health has become a priority with regard to support and structuring actions for those who provide care.

The nursing teams demonstrate the feeling of impotence in the face of COVID-19's lethality. Tiredness, distancing from family members, fear of the lack of PPE and the population's lack of adherence to government recommendations add to the psychological distress of these individuals.

To minimize the emotional burden and exhaustion of these professionals, it was possible, together with the nursing coordination, to acquire six nursing technicians and six nurses, totaling the fifty professionals that make up the scale.

The management of care in view of the psychological burden of nursing teams required a careful look at the individual. In order to provide moments of emotional relief to the teams, psychologists provided assistance to employees as required.

When reflecting on caregivers' management, it is important to point out effective actions to keep professionals

protected from stress and poor mental health: ensuring quality and reliable information; establish space for rest and team interaction; maintenance of a good relationship between colleagues, enabling the expansion of social support.

CARE MANAGEMENT RESULTS

Managing nursing care in the face of a pandemic required a lot of caution and determination. Making professionals aware of the importance of adapting to changes and new behaviors during care was a daily work with the teams.

With the increase in incident cases and hospitalizations, there was not enough time to physical structure of the institution, as well as prior training of the multidisciplinary teams.

Planning the quantity of supplies used in care, as well as the PPE needed to protect the teams, was a weekly challenge, since the professionals' awareness of the rational use of these materials directly influenced the quantity used.

Despite being a medium-complexity ward, the fact that it is related to patients with COVID-19 made it essential to provide materials related to orotracheal intubation, deep venous puncture and cardiac arrest cart for clinical emergencies.

Making professionals aware of the importance of keeping calm in the face of a moment of clinical urgency implied not

only the performance of efficient care and within the protocols, but also the guarantee of correct attire and undressing.

The teams' adherence to the guidelines regarding care for suspected or contaminated patients increased daily, which minimized the professionals' exposure to existing risks.

DISCUSSION

This report highlights the importance of the nurse's role in the construction of a service and in the performance of the nursing team. The nurse's managerial practice involves multiple actions of managing by caring and educating, of caring by managing and educating, of educating by caring and managing⁶, which makes this professional an indispensable part in the care organization during a pandemic.

The attributions of the nurse manager permeates the structuring of the sector, the forecast and provision of inputs, the organization of the nursing work schedule, as well as the process of training teams with a view to protecting and promoting health.

The nurse leadership demanded management processes that go beyond routinely known care. The development of skills and competence was necessary, so that professionals who were in the front line

had the necessary structure to carry out their activities.

This experience report corroborates the publication of the World Health Organization, in partnership with the International Council of Nurses, and the Global Nursing Now campaign, with the support of governments and partners, which highlighted the challenges and value of the global Nursing workforce.⁷

The World Health Organization pointed to the need for strategies directed by nurses in order to reduce the consumption of various inputs through preparation, prevention and resource innovation.⁷ The use of criteria for their use is essential for increasing the protection window of the team that is in front of the care.

Ensuring the safety of professionals in the multidisciplinary team against the virus is to ensure that they will not be vectors of transmission and that, as a result, they will not get sick. This precaution becomes beneficial, as it allows the maintenance of the complete health team to assist in the pandemic.⁸

Recent studies show that being isolated, working in high-risk positions and having contact with infected people are common causes of trauma and can have a direct impact on front-line workers, leading to mental health problems.⁹⁻¹⁰

The health of frontline professionals deserves great attention. Managing the

stress of the team's daily routine and taking a look at the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of these individuals is the greatest challenge to be achieved.

CONCLUSION

Nursing care management in a COVID-19 reference hospital represented a professional challenge. Being together with the team in order to minimize the difficulties and provide a peaceful environment for the professionals to work was essential for quality care.

The role of the nurse manager in this context was essential for the structuring of nursing care and involved the search for quality of care and better working conditions, management of human and material resources, leadership, care planning, nursing team training, the coordination of care production and the evaluation of the developed actions.

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