

Burnout syndrome in public school teachers after the pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

Brazilian public education presents a very problematic picture with regard to the conditions in which teachers perform their work activities: low remuneration; overload; structural physical conditions; inadequate materials; small classrooms with excess number of students; lack of recognition and social appreciation. The combination of these factors often leads the workplace to be a place of suffering and promotion of fatigue, stress, anxiety, depression and consequently Burnout. Therefore, these professionals may feel less enthusiastic about performing their tasks, resulting in a vicious circle of affliction, physical and mental illness, leading them to sick leave (ASUNÇÃO, OLIVEIRA, 2009; PEREIRA *et al.*, 2020). These historical difficulties faced by teachers related to the illness of these professionals are currently added to others resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic that has impacted society as a whole (BORLOTI *et al.*, 2020; SANTOS, 2020). There are several studies on the health of teachers (SANTOS, SILVA, 2017; PENACHI, 2018; VANZIN, 2019). The teaching category of the municipal elementary school system has been little explored, with scarce literature. In this context, research on stress and burnout syndrome becomes pertinent, as the identification of stressors can propose improvements to the category, promoting health and well-being. In this sense, the present study sought to evaluate the perception of occupational stressors and burnout indicators of teachers in the municipal school system in the municipality of Castelo – ES.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this study, 20 teachers working in the public school system of the city of Castelo, Espírito Santo, Brazil, were interviewed. The inclusion criterion was to have been teaching since 2020 and not to have been on sick leave in the last six months. The evaluation method was the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), used to assess Burnout Syndrome, consisting of 20 items distributed in three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE); Professional fulfillment (PR) and Depersonalization (D). The items are evaluated with a five-point Likert scale (0 "never" to 4 "always"), and the items are inverted when necessary. Values equal to/above value two on the frequency scale were considered as high levels on the subscales. This



assessment instrument is recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO), and is allowed to be used only for research purposes, and should not replace the diagnosis made by a physician or psychotherapist.

RESULTS

The results indicate that the teachers are women (100%), and have an average age of 36 years. Regarding training, all of them have higher education and specialization. The majority (80%) have a stable marital relationship, and 86% have children. In relation to the employment relationship, 40% are tenured, and are dedicated exclusively to the teaching career. They serve an average of 22 students per class, and have, on average, 15 years of class conduction. The burnout assessment showed that 43% of these are in the "initial phase of burnout", in addition to another 33% with "the possibility of developing burnout". From the results obtained, it was possible to identify that the older the teachers, the greater the feeling of detachment and the lower the feeling of accomplishment at work. Regarding the workload, it is verified that the higher it is, the greater the feeling of emotional exhaustion and the lower the feeling of accomplishment with the work. The increase in the number of students served daily increases emotional exhaustion, distancing and decreases professional fulfillment. Thus, the main problems pointed out by the teachers were: the exhaustive workload and physical/environmental aspects of the work.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As presented, the return to face-to-face classes brought other challenges to public school teachers, such as the social inability of students and colleagues, the need for leveling of students who have presented many learning deficits after the long period of remote teaching, which has increased the rates of stress and burnout in teachers, especially in the public network. This study highlights the challenge faced by teachers and proposes the construction of mental health strategies for teachers in the school environment.

Keywords: Education, Professional devaluation, Coronavirus.



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