Abstract
The survey that aimed at studying the health professionals' work motivation at the Basic Health Units in the Municipality of Natal is reported. Motivation was understood as a processing phenomenon involving five components: work outcomes, expectations, valence, instrumentality, and motivational power. In addition, motivation was understood as a phenomenon related to the work context and a psycho-sociological perspective was adopted. Work Motivation and Meaning Inventory was applied to identify factors that contribute most, as well as weaken, to health professionals' motivational power. One concludes that the majority of professionals presented moderate motivational power and falling, because they experience and perceive a deteriorated context with unfavorable working conditions.

Keywords
Motivation, expectations theory, health professionals, basic health unit.