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Perception of the nursing staff about service of continuing education of a University Hospital*

PERCEPÇÃO DA EQUIPE DE ENFERMAGEM ACERCA DE UM SERVIÇO DE EDUCAÇÃO CONTINUADA DE UM HOSPITAL UNIVERSITÁRIO

PERCEPCIÓN DEL EQUIPO DE ENFERMERÍA SOBRE UN SERVICIO DE LA EDUCACIÓN CONTINUA DE UN HOSPITAL DE UNIVERSITARIO

Aline Togni Braga¹, Marta Maria Melleiro²

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to analyze the Service of Continued Education (SCE) of a university hospital, from the perspective of the nursing team in the evaluative dimensions of structure, process and outcome. This is an exploratory-descriptive study, carried through in a private teaching hospital. The data collection was conducted through a questionnaire, using a Likert scale. The treatment of the data was carried through a descriptive statistics using the Cronbach Alpha test. Analyzing the data, we observed that in the tree evaluated dimensions (structure, process and result) the nurse team had favorable perception relative to this service. However, the structure dimension received the highest favorability score, average of 42,56 (dp±4,97), with process dimension receiving the lower score of, average 40,44 (dp±5,11).

KEY WORDS

Education, nursing, continuing.
Health Services Evaluation.
Nursing.
Nursing, team.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste estudo foi analisar o Serviço de Educação Continuada (SEC) de um hospital de ensino, sob a ótica da equipe de enfermagem, nas dimensões avaliativas de estrutura, de processo e de resultado. Trata-se de um estudo exploratório descritivo, realizado em hospital universitário privado. Para a coleta de dados utilizou-se um instrumento composto por uma escala de Likert. O tratamento dos dados foi realizado por meio da estatística descritiva e pelo emprego do teste Alpha de Cronbach. Na análise dos resultados, observou-se que nas três dimensões avaliativas (estrutura, processo e resultado) a equipe de enfermagem teve percepção favorável quanto às atividades desenvolvidas por este serviço. Entretanto, na comparação, a que obteve maior escores de favorabilidade foi a de estrutura, média de 42,56 (dp±4,97) e o menor a de processo, média 40,44 (dp±5,11).

DESCRIPTORES

Educação continuada em enfermagem.
Avaliação de Serviços de Saúde.
Enfermagem.
Equipe de enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Lo objetivo de este estudio fue analizar el Servicio de la Educación de Continua (SEC) de un hospital universitario, de la perspectiva del equipo del oficio de enfermera en la evaluación de las dimensiones de estructura, proceso y resultados. Esto es un estudio exploratorio-descriptivo, ejecutado en un hospital de enseñanza privado. La colección de datos fue conducida a través de un cuestionario, usando una escala de Likert. El tratamiento de los datos fue llevado con las estadísticas descriptivas usando la prueba alfa de Cronbach. Analizando los datos, observamos que en el árbol evaluó las dimensiones (estructura, proceso y resultado) la enfermera que el equipo tenía opinión favorable concerniente a este servicio. Sin embargo, la dimensión de la estructura recibió la cuenta más alta del favorability, promedio de 42.56 (dp±4,97), con la dimensión de proceso recibiendo la cuenta más baja de, el promedio 40.44 (dp±5,11).

DESCRIPTORES

Educación continua en enfermería.
Evaluación de Servicios de Salud.
Enfermería.
Grupo de enfermería.

* Extracted from the master's thesis "Análise do Serviço de Educação Continuada de um Hospital de Ensino na percepção da equipe de enfermagem". School of Nursing, University of São Paulo, 2009. ¹ Master in Nursing. School of Nursing, University of São Paulo. São Paulo, SP, Brazil. alinetogni@yahoo.com.br
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INTRODUCTION

One of the main objectives in the process of professional qualification is to update and improve individuals due to the constant scientific and technological changes, with a view to meet the needs that the professionals themselves have in their work processes.

In health facilities, the qualitative percentage of nursing staff has been considered the most significant, in some cases reaching about 60% of the personnel. Therefore, these human resources have required closer attention from the nursing service administrators⁽¹⁾.

In nursing, the Continuing Education Service (CES) is the department responsible for updating and preparing personnel, and should be concerned with the learning characteristics of the education process to ensure it is dynamic, continuous, global, personal, gradual and cumulative⁽²⁾.

In this domain, the nursing personnel working with the CES is an agent of change, who interacts with the whole nursing team through strategies to prepare and improve their activities, encouraging their integration and development⁽³⁻⁴⁾. Therefore, nursing services need propositions that allow for managing the activities, work processes and resources related to health care services.

In fact, the evaluation of health service programs is one of those propositions, considering it is a process that determines the level of achievement of the goals and objectives and how this evaluative, technical and administrative process will support decision-making⁽⁵⁾.

With these considerations in view, it is implied that educational process management requires specific evaluation methods that meet the particularities of the health area.

On of these methods proposes the evaluation of health service quality by means of the triad: structure, process and outcome, from the Donabedian model⁽⁶⁾.

The present study used the referred evaluation model with the purpose of assessing the CES work process. Therefore, structure was associated with the conditions under which the professional training was performed, such as human resources (quantity, function and qualification), materials, both physical and structural (location, working hours, duration of the training programs and how people are informed about it); the process domain referred to the group of activities comprising the nursing staff development program, while the outcome domain concerned the consequences of the activities performed by the CES⁽⁷⁾.

Considering the context referred and believing that nurses should base their decision-making process on

health services and programs evaluations, this study was developed with the purpose to evaluate the CES of a university hospital.

OBJECTIVE

To analyze the CES of a university hospital from the view of the nursing staff, according to the evaluation domains of structure, process and outcome.

METHOD

This explorative-descriptive study used a quantitative approach, and was performed at a private, nonprofit, large-scale university hospital, which is a tertiary referral center located in Interior São Paulo state. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the institution, under register number 137/08.

The study sample consisted of 96 professionals, from the many departments of the hospital, who were invited to participate after being informed about the study objectives. Participants signed two copies of the Free and Informed Consent Form; one copy was kept by the researcher and the other was handed to the participant.

Data collection was performed using a specific instrument named: *Percepção do Serviço de Educação Continuada sob a ótica da equipe de enfermagem* [Perception of the Continuing Education Service from the nursing staff's view]. The data collection instrument had two parts: the first contained socio-demographic information of the study participants, and the second part contained 39

propositions of the structure, process and outcome domains, which were answered using a Likert scale, rated in five levels: level 1 – Strongly disagree (SD) and the extreme opposite level 5 – Strongly agree (SA); the intermediate level 3 – Undecided (U) and levels 2 and 4 – Somewhat disagree and Somewhat agree (SD and SA).

In order to verify if the content was significant considering the theoretical concepts it intended to measure, the instrument was validated by eight continuing education specialists, and Cronbach's Alpha was used to analyze the internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire. The value obtained was 0.893, which was considered reliable, as it may range from 0 to 1.

The data was stored using an Excel® spreadsheet for data processing. Data analysis was performed using the computer resources of Microsoft R Excel® and Statistic Package for Social Sciences (SPSS®) 15.0, both using Windows XP.

Data treatment was performed using descriptive statistics and Cronbach's Alpha. Scores were compared in

The nursing personnel working with the CES is an agent of change, who interacts with the whole nursing team through strategies to prepare and improve their activities, encouraging their integration and development.

the three domains using the Friedman and Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric tests⁽⁸⁾.

All tests were performed considering a 5% significance level.

RESULTS

The participants were young adults, within the age range of 25 to 30 years, with a mean age of 31.0 years and a median of 30.0 years.

As for the professional category, 61 (63.5%) participants were Nursing Technicians, followed by 20 (20.8%) Nursing Aides, and 15 (15.6%) Nurses.

The time since graduation among members of the nursing team ranged between 5 and 10 years, with an average 5.6 years, and a median of 5.0 years.

Structure domain

The two highlights of the structure domain were: the time used for the training programs and the time at which they took place at the institution.

However, other themes were observed regarding the CES dissemination, physical and material resources, duration of training programs, professional training, working hours, and location of the training room.

Figure 1 shows the nursing staff's view regarding the time spent with training programs.

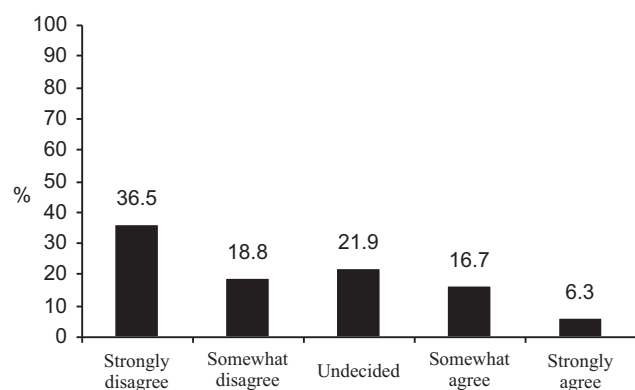


Figure 1 - Distribution of ratings for the statement: most training programs take up too much time - Interior São Paulo state - 2008

It is observed that 53 (55.3%) participants disagree with the proposed statement, of which 35 (36.5%) strongly disagree and 18 (18.8%) somewhat disagree. The percentage of undecided was 21 (21.9%) and 22 (23.0%) agreed.

Figure 2 shows that most participants (52 individuals, representing 54.2%) marked they agree with the negative proposition of the statement, 30 (31.3%) or which marked strongly agree, and 22 (22.9%) marked somewhat agree. Thirty-six individuals (37.5%) marked they disagree. There

were eight (8.3%) undecided subjects. The findings suggest there is a negative view regarding the training program hours.

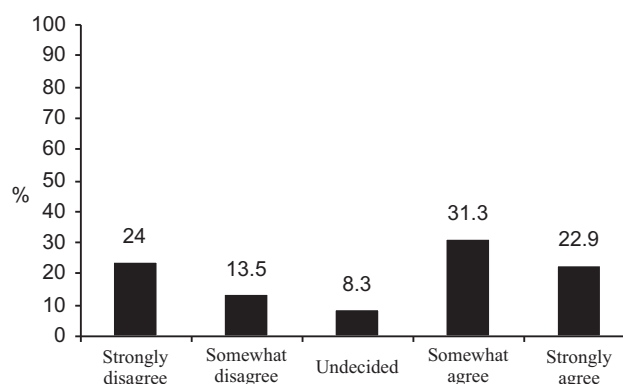


Figure 2 - Distribution of ratings for the statement: the training program hours are inadequate for me - Interior São Paulo state - 2008

Process domain

The items with the best scores were: the forms of training and the strategies used by the ECS 82 (85.4%), the doubts solved in the training programs 82 (85.4%), the content addressed in the admission training program 65 (67.7%), the CES staff availability to help professionals 73 (76.1%) and the hospital's authorization for workers to leave work to participate in the training program 61 (63.6%).

Most undecided ratings referred to items addressing the specificity of the training programs per area 28 (29.2%).

According to Figure 3, 62 (64.6%) participants disagree with the statement. This implies that the training programs have met the nursing staff's needs.

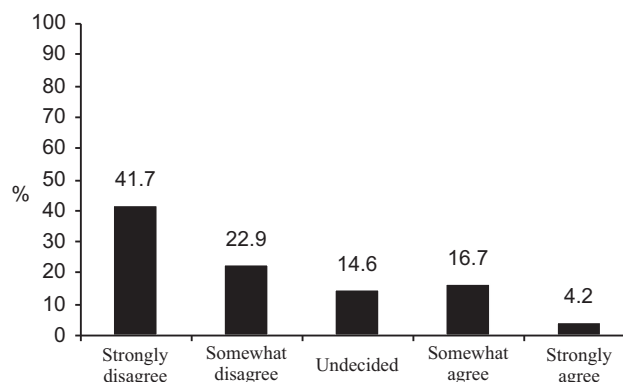


Figure 3 - Distribution of ratings for the statement: the training programs developed by the ECS do not meet the nursing staff's needs - Interior São Paulo state - 2008

Outcome domain

There was a high rate of agreement among participants to the following statements: CES activities improve the quality of nursing services 89 (92.7%); training provides professional update 79 (82.3%); they feel welcomed in the admission training program 72 (75.0%); they take advan-

tage of the training programs 60 (62.5%); the nursing team confidence to perform routine practice is improved after the training programs 85 (88.5%); CES information is kept confidential 81 (84.4%).

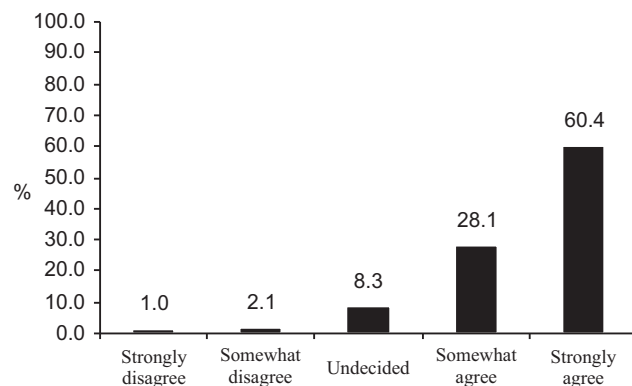


Figure 4 - Distribution of ratings for the statement: My participation in the training programs offered by ECS improves my confidence in performing routine activities - Interior São Paulo state - 2008

Most professionals 85 (88.5%) agreed, strongly or somewhat, with the statement that the participation in training programs improves their confidence in performing routine nursing activities.

Figure 5 shows that, from the professionals' view, the training program outcomes are not informed to the whole nursing team.

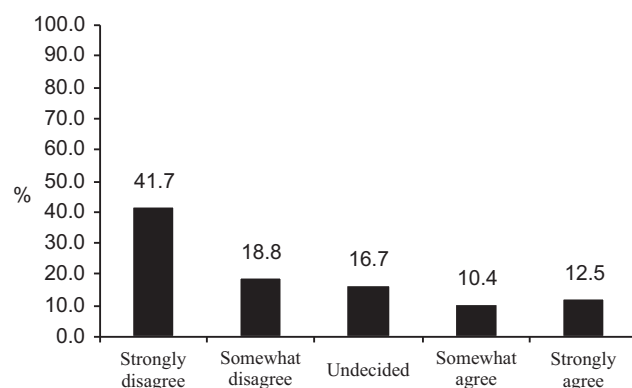


Figure 5 - Distribution of ratings for the statement: Training program outcomes are informed to the whole nursing team - Interior São Paulo state - 2008

According to Figure 5, 58 (60.5%) individuals disagreed with the statement, while 22 (22.9%) agreed (12.5% strongly and 10.4% somewhat). There were 16 (16.7%) undecided participants.

DISCUSSION

Most subjects had a positive view regarding the structure of the ECS in statements that addressed themes about the dissemination, physical and material resources, du-

ration of the training programs, professional training, working hours, and location of the ECS training room.

It was also verified, regarding the structure domain, that there was a positive view towards the duration of the training program, which is one of the items that reveals the workers' participation in the programs. This may be due programs that are very long and thus become ineffective for the teaching and learning process, besides interfering in the dynamic of the units.

As for the training session hours, they occurred during morning, afternoon and night shift, according to the hours of each unit. However, the results revealed that the training session hours were inadequate.

It should be considered that the hour of greatest difficulty for conducting training programs was that of programs for night-shift workers, which was held at 7:30 AM, after their shift; an unproductive hour for learning. Training programs held at the beginning of their shift, at 7:30 PM also had low attendance rates from workers, due to the dynamic of the units.

The difficulty to find an adequate time for educational activities directed to workers with secondary-level education was reported in a study that analyzed the statements of administrators from 25 hospitals in São Paulo. The study found disagreements in the statements regarding the best time to conduct training programs⁽⁴⁾.

As for the nursing staff's training needs, the service has a program that approaches professionals about their needs for knowledge acquisition and development. It should be considered that the workers' requirements are mostly regarding the technical domain, and also the fact that some approaches are a part of the annual training program, which is mandatory for all workers.

It was confirmed that the CES provides the nursing staff with an opportunity for learning, but the contents should consider the real everyday work situation and needs of workers, department and institution⁽¹⁾.

Nevertheless, to follow those premises, the current ECS structure of organizations should conduct discussions and propose strategies that increase workers' confidence and proficiency in the addressed topic⁽⁹⁾.

The result found for the statement addressing the dissemination of training program outcomes shows the current situation of the institution, where the results of the nursing staff training programs are not disseminated.

Also regarding the training program outcomes, it was found that the educational activities performed with workers are scarcely evaluate⁽¹⁰⁾.

In this sense, it is recommended that the CES should not only be concerned with the dissemination of results among the team, but also with developing mechanism for continuous evaluation and follow up, which would permit to iden-

tify the impact and effects of the education actions, making it possible to reorganize and rearrange the programs⁽¹¹⁾.

CONCLUSION

The present study showed the complexity involved in analyzing a ECS, in the context of a health organization.

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The high rates of agreement occurred in the statements that addressed the structure, while the worst scores were regarding the process domain followed by outcomes, thus these two domains require further attention from administrators.

In conclusion, is it believed that this study may contribute with making the necessary changes in the referred CES, especially regarding the process and outcomes domains.