






Institutional strategies for fighting mental suffering among nursing undergraduates

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Dear Editors,

The article published by this journal in July 2019, entitled “Health alterations in nursing students after a year from admission to the undergraduate course”⁽¹⁾, brings to the foreground a relevant and urgent theme. Recent publications have been approaching the issue of psychological suffering among undergraduate students in Brazil⁽¹⁻⁶⁾ and worldwide⁽⁷⁻¹⁰⁾. A report⁽¹¹⁾ published in 2014 presented alarming data: 79.8% of students reported psychological suffering in the last 12 months prior to the research; 59,969 (6.38%) presented “death ideation” and 38,838 (4.13%) “suicidal thoughts”.

After the diagnostic period, the time has come for us to act. Worldwide, actions performed with undergraduate students, incorporated to the curriculum or not, have been presenting positive results, even though incipient⁽¹²⁾. These interventions comprise courses on health promotion⁽¹³⁻¹⁵⁾, meditation practices towards comprehensive care⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁹⁾, professional psychological support and the inclusion of physical activity and nutritional care⁽²⁰⁾.

Thus, through published researches, courses on health promotion are perceived to stimulate healthy lifestyles, reflecting in stress and anxiety levels^(21,22,23). Meditation has proven effective in reducing psychological suffering and in improving academic performance^(15,19,24). Psychological support to manage emotions has also proven efficacy^(14,24). Nonetheless all these studies are related to experiences in other countries.

Our experience in the Nursing School in Universidade Federal da Bahia after the implementation of the Psycho-pedagogical and Social Support Group (NAPP – *Núcleo de Apoio Psicopedagógico e Social*) has been showing encouraging results. Developed with the academic community participation, it includes an educator, two psychologists, and one social assistant, in addition to students and professors’ representatives. It promotes individual appointments and collective actions focused on well-being, integration, self-knowledge, study planning and it is positively evaluated by the students.

As we are certainly not the only institution to conduct such interventions, we propose the quick diffusion of other actions, thus promoting a broad discussion. Each higher education institution should adopt and disseminate as one of its objectives efficient and permanent evidence-based measures, aiming to impact the indicators which wreck undergraduate students nationwide.

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