

# Presenteeism and Burnout in Nurses: A Review of the Literature

Subjects: **Psychology**

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Presenteeism, characterized by going to work sick, has become increasingly prevalent in nursing, a profession with high social and interpersonal demands. It is associated with a deterioration of the health of nurses, a reduction in the excellence of care, and a decrease in safety for users. Burnout is related to stress and mental overload and is characterized by exhaustion and fatigue. Objective: To map the evidence on the relationship between presenteeism and burnout in nurses. Methods: A literature review was carried out using the EBSCOHost Research search engine in various databases. Eight studies were selected and analyzed. Results: The studies identify a consistent relationship between burnout and presenteeism in nurses. Emotional exhaustion, resulting from burnout, can lead nurses to go to work despite being ill, due to a sense of responsibility, ethical duty, or organizational pressures. Most studies are cross-sectional, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships and identify specific interventions to reduce burnout-related presenteeism in nursing. Conclusions: It is essential to invest in health management policies for nurses to reduce burnout and minimize the consequences of presenteeism.

presenteeism

burnout

nurses

Presenteeism is a phenomenon that has been addressed since the 1950s. It refers to the presence of professionals in the workplace when they are ill, which has an impact on their performance, concentration, and productivity <sup>[1]</sup>.

Although it is a global phenomenon, it is particularly common in the health sector, and especially in professions that are more socially and interpersonally demanding, such as nursing <sup>[2][3]</sup>.

Nurses are the largest group of caregivers in the healthcare system <sup>[2]</sup>. This professional class often shows up for work even if they have physical or psychological limitations, driven by a sense of responsibility and commitment to their profession <sup>[3]</sup>.

In a study conducted in Portugal in 2016, involving 151 nurses, it was found that 91.4% of nurses, even with one or more health problems, go to work <sup>[4]</sup>.

In the field of nursing, presenteeism, in addition to reducing work performance, will increase health costs and can affect the care provided <sup>[5]</sup>, increasing the number of adverse events related to patient safety through medication errors, falls, or the transmission of hospital infections <sup>[2]</sup>.

Presenteeism represents a considerable challenge to organizational performance [2], making it essential to understand its underlying factors in order to develop effective interventions in health systems. This phenomenon is driven by a diverse set of reasons, ranging from work-related factors [2][5], such as work overload, and emotional factors, such as burnout [3][6], to cultural and personal influences, such as a strong sense of professional duty [2][3].

Burnout is characterized by exhaustion, demotivation, and reduced professional effectiveness due to stress in the workplace [6]. Burnout and psychological exhaustion are prevalent in nurses and are related to poorer professional performance. A direct relationship between burnout and presenteeism has also been reported [6].

It is therefore clear that presenteeism and burnout are two phenomena that significantly affect the health of nursing professionals and the care provided to patients. We therefore set out to map the evidence on the relationship between presenteeism and burnout in nurses by carrying out a literature review.

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