

Knowledge And Prevalence Of Burnout Syndrome In Military Police

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Abstract:

Burnout syndrome, or professional burnout syndrome, is an emotional disorder primarily caused by excessive work, with key symptoms including extreme exhaustion, physical and emotional depletion, deep depression, negative feelings, insomnia, loss of appetite, and prolonged stress.

Objective: *This study aimed to analyze the knowledge and prevalence of the dimensions of burnout syndrome among military personnel.*

Methodology: *The methodology was based on a quantitative, exploratory, and descriptive approach, utilizing questionnaires and the Maslach Burnout Inventory to identify factors contributing to the onset of burnout syndrome, including all inclusion and exclusion criteria for the research. Data were collected at the end of April and the beginning of May 2020, with the study sample consisting of 42 military police officers assigned to the 9th Battalion of Araguatins-TO.*

Results: *The study revealed that the majority of the participating military personnel (71.4%) were unaware of burnout syndrome. Among the evaluated dimensions, depersonalization showed a high prevalence (57.1%), while professional achievement was found to be low in frequency (47.6%), indicating a lack of satisfaction and motivation at work. These data demonstrate a profile of emotional exhaustion and distancing, consistent with other studies involving professional groups with high exposure to stress. The results suggest an urgent need for educational actions to raise awareness about burnout among military personnel and to implement preventive strategies within institutions.*

Conclusion: *The high prevalence of depersonalization and low professional achievement indicates a negative impact on both personal well-being and professional performance, highlighting the importance of early interventions to mitigate the effects of burnout in this group.*

Keyword: *burnout syndrome; military police; emotional exhaustion.*

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I. Introduction

Burnout syndrome, or occupational burnout syndrome, is an emotional disorder primarily caused by excessive work, where the main symptoms include extreme exhaustion, emotional and physical burnout, deep depression, negative feelings, insomnia, lack of appetite, and prolonged stress (Brazil, 2020). The word "burnout" derives from the English "burn," meaning to burn, and "out," meaning external. It was discovered in the early 1970s by Herbert Freudenberger, a psychoanalyst studying the behavior of professionals who felt defeated and exhausted from work, entering a state of suffering that led them to drug use. According to his studies, the cause is related to the individual characteristics of each worker, without considering social aspects (Freudenberger, 1974).

In this context, the study sought to understand the factors that trigger the onset of Burnout Syndrome among the military personnel of the 9th Battalion of the Military Police in the municipality of Araguatins-TO, aiming to propose preventive measures that could improve the general working conditions and well-being of public security agents.

Overall, studies that address public safety often focus primarily on police institutions, highlighting mainly the technical aspects of the profession. Thus, there is a need for more studies and research regarding the health issues of police officers in the occupational context (Fraga, 2005). In light of this, the objective of the present study was to analyze the knowledge and prevalence of the dimensions of Burnout Syndrome among military personnel.

II. Material And Methods

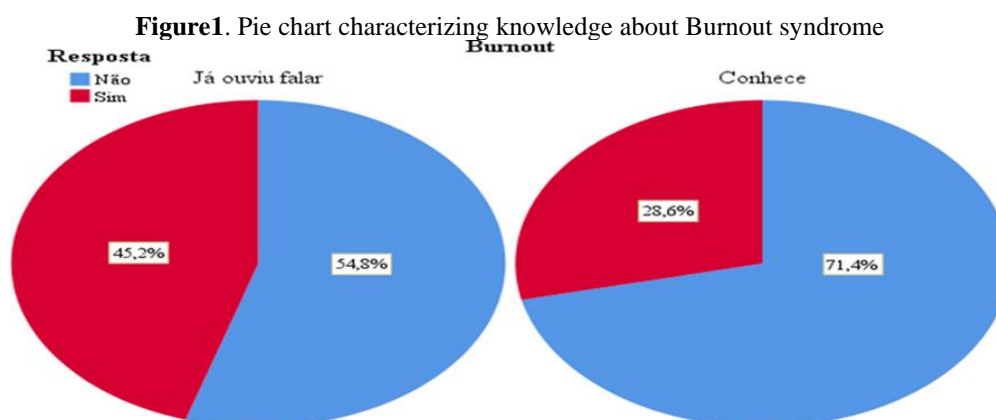
This study, which employed a quantitative and exploratory descriptive approach, evaluated the levels of Burnout in 42 military police officers from the 9th Battalion of Araguatins-TO. A questionnaire was used to gather sociodemographic information and elements from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Data collection took place between February and March 2020, conducted by the researchers at the beginning of the work shift, and all participants agreed to the Free and Informed Consent Term (TCLE). The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (opinion no. 3,689,565), ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of the data.

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26.0). The age distribution of the participants was described using a histogram, showing the mean and standard deviation values. The characterization of the sociodemographic profile and lifestyle habits was performed using absolute frequency (n) and relative frequency (%). The normality of the data was verified using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Spearman's correlation was used to assess the relationship between age and Burnout scores. The comparison of the mean Burnout scores with the sample profile was conducted using the Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests. The significance level adopted was 5% ($p < 0.05$).

III. Result Discussion

Starting from this chapter, the results will be presented through related literature, where the data obtained were correlated with other studies conducted and published, whose themes align with the overall objective of the research, supported by the specific objectives in seeking a solution to the proposed research problem.

Regarding knowledge about Burnout syndrome, a higher percentage was identified concerning the lack of awareness of the syndrome, highlighting a value of 71.4% for those who are not familiar with it compared to 54.8% who have heard of it, as shown in Figure 2.



Source: Research data, 2023.

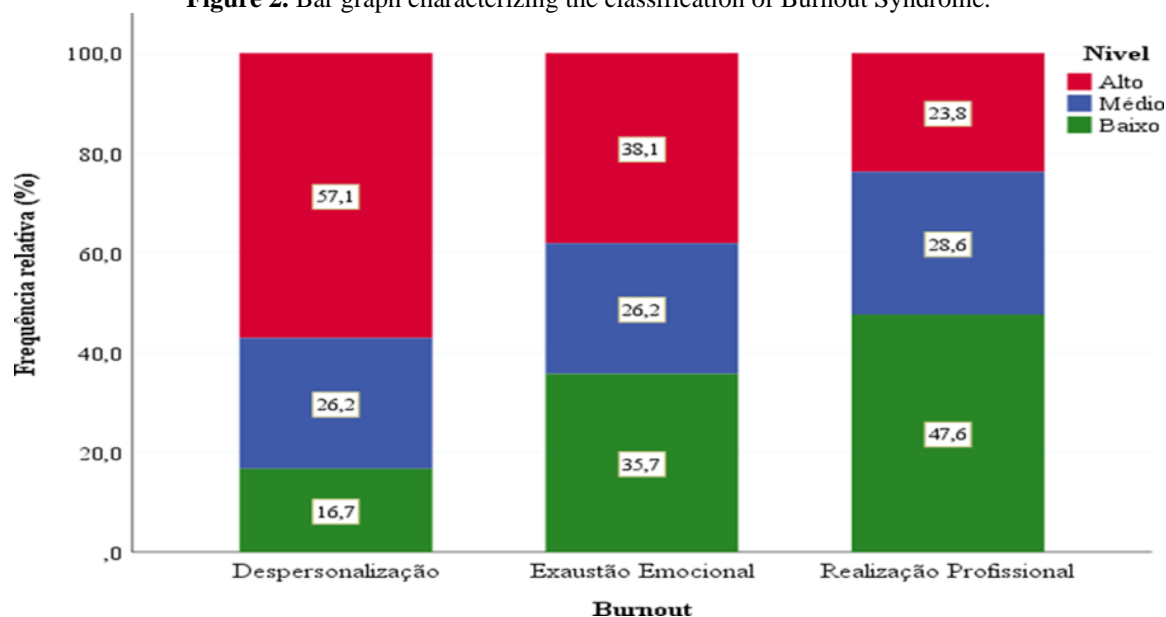
The majority of the studied population showed a lack of knowledge about the pathology, and several other studies support these findings. Dóro et al. (2018) conducted a study analyzing health professionals' knowledge of Burnout Syndrome and concluded that it is necessary to improve knowledge regarding the syndrome in order to seek coping and prevention measures.

It is essential for both professionals and institutions to understand the syndrome and its related factors so that preventive measures can be implemented and it can be recognized early to avoid future issues.

Burnout Syndrome occurs due to physical and mental exhaustion that interferes with the professional's relationship with their work environment, which becomes exhausting and demoralizing. It is a response to chronic stress, with symptoms that include, among others, severe headaches, shortness of breath, mood swings, difficulty concentrating, digestive problems, and more. This is not irrelevant in the military career, which has numerous triggering factors for burnout.

Constant exposure to the symptoms of Burnout Syndrome has negative effects on the personal and professional lives of those involved, reducing productivity and quality of life. Therefore, understanding the pathology and its aggravating factors significantly contributes to changing the lifestyle of military professionals (Rolim, 2013; Campos, 2013).

Figure 2. Bar graph characterizing the classification of Burnout Syndrome.



Source: Research data, 2023.

Figure 2 indicates the percentages of the groups that fall into the three dimensions of Burnout, showing the relative frequency of high, medium, and low levels according to the given dimensions of Burnout. In relation to this classification, it is evident that there is a prevalence of 57.1% in high levels of depersonalization. Meanwhile, in professional accomplishment, there is a higher prevalence of 47.6% classified as low Burnout, and the profile of these dimensions aims to analyze the professional profile through the scores of each dimension.

Despite the existence of other instruments for assessing burnout among workers, this one remains one of the most widely used. The findings of this research corroborate those conducted by Menegali et al. (2010), where the majority of police officers presented a high level of depersonalization (60%), and when emotional exhaustion was evaluated, the levels ranged between high and low.

Based on the distribution of scores across the three dimensions studied (DE, EE, and RP), it was found that the results show similarities with those corroborated by Lima et al. (2020), where the three factors exhibited differentiated behavior when considering the syndrome in its three dimensions. It was observed that 38.3% exhibited moderate emotional exhaustion, 54.7% demonstrated moderate depersonalization, and 53.4% showed low professional accomplishment.

Thus, the results are significant for diagnosing Burnout Syndrome in the studied sample, as the fundamental element for this is the DE, which achieved a high index, distinguishing it from other pathologies. Furthermore, the majority of professionals showed a low level of professional accomplishment, indicating a lack of motivation at work and dissatisfaction with the activities performed.

IV. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study indicates that the majority of participants demonstrate limited knowledge about Burnout Syndrome, reflected in a high percentage (71.4%) of those who are unaware of the condition. The lack of knowledge about the syndrome among professionals suggests an urgent need to promote educational and awareness-raising actions regarding Burnout, especially to enable the implementation of preventive measures and early interventions.

Moreover, the results showed a high prevalence of depersonalization and low professional accomplishment among participants, confirming a profile of emotional exhaustion that not only affects the quality of life of professionals but also compromises their productivity and job satisfaction. Understanding and early identification of the syndrome are essential to reduce the negative impact of Burnout, fostering a healthier and more collaborative work environment.

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