

# Prevalence, Risk Factors, and Levels of Burnout Among Oncology Nurses: A Systematic Review

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**Problem Identification:** To determine (a) the average levels of emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (D), and personal accomplishment (PA) among oncology nurses; (b) the prevalence of low, medium, and high levels of burnout for each dimension; and (c) the risk factors for burnout.

**Literature Search:** A systematic review was carried out using the CUIDEN, CINAHL®, LILACS, ProQuest, PubMed, SciELO, and Scopus databases.

**Data Evaluation:** The 436 search results obtained were reduced to a final sample of 27 articles after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Synthesis:** With respect to levels of burnout, published results differ in their conclusions. In general, they indicate that oncology nurses feel little sense of PA and suffer from EE, although few signs of D exist.

**Conclusions:** Oncology nurses present high levels of EE and of reduced PA. A large proportion of these nurses are at risk of developing burnout. Age, work experience, workload, and communication skills are among the factors that may influence development of the syndrome.

**Implications for Practice:** Programs should be developed to identify interventions that would reduce EE and enhance feelings of PA. In addition, risk factors and protective measures should be studied more comprehensively.

Healthcare work is characterized by the need to cope with complex situations arising from hospital settings in which treatment and care are provided to help people recover from disease. Healthcare providers are continually subjected to stress-inducing factors, which may provoke the development of burnout syndrome. Burnout syndrome, or, simply, burnout, is a psychological disorder that was first studied in the field of social services by Freudenberg (1974). Today, in the most widely accepted contextualization, it is characterized by the presence of emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (D), and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment (PA) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). EE refers to workers' feeling of physical exertion and also exhaustion of their emotional resources; D is the development of negative feelings and perceptions directed at patients, along with a cynical attitude toward them; and low PA is the tendency of workers to assess themselves negatively in dealing with patients and not feeling fulfilled by their work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

The prevalence of burnout is high among nursing staff (Cañadas-De la Fuente et al., 2015), indicating that a high percentage of nurses are emotionally exhausted, as well as have a diminished sense of PA and have developed a depersonalized, cynical attitude toward patients. In the hospital context, this staff group may be the most commonly affected by the syndrome (Bacaicoa Parrado et al., 2012; Losa Iglesias & Becerro de Bengoa Vallejo, 2013). Nurses' continual exposure to