PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION OF PHYSIOTHERAPISTS IN PORTUGAL

SATISFAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL DOS FISIOTERAPEUTAS EM PORTUGAL **PT**

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SATISFACCIÓN PROFESIONAL DE LOS FISIOTERAPEUTA EN PORTUGAL **ES**

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon because it is a subjective state of mind. This study evaluates the job satisfaction of physiotherapists working in Portugal for more than 6 months. In a sample of 780 physiotherapists, through the application of an online questionnaire that included questions of individual and professional characterization and related to job satisfaction, it was found that they were moderately satisfied with the profession (67.4%), with a positive correlation relationship between the dimensions of job content satisfaction ($r=0.134$; $p<0.01$) and work compensation ($r=0.180$; $p<0.001$) with years of service. Lower pay and general practice are associated with lower levels of satisfaction ($p<0.001$). Physiotherapists who saw three or more clients per hour had lower levels of satisfaction ($p<0.001$). With this study we can conclude that satisfaction is positively impacted by the relationship with patients and negatively influenced by the perspectives of career progression, remuneration received and the recognition of work by institutions.

Keywords: Physiotherapist; professional satisfaction; Portugal.

RESUMO

A satisfação no trabalho é um fenómeno complexo por se tratar de um estado subjetivo. O objetivo do estudo é avaliar a satisfação profissional de fisioterapeutas a exercer em Portugal há mais de 6 meses. Numa amostra de 780 fisioterapeutas, através da aplicação de um questionário online que incluía questões de caracterização individual e profissional e relacionadas com a satisfação no trabalho, constatou-se que se encontravam moderadamente satisfeitos com a profissão (67,4%), havendo uma correlação positiva entre as dimensões da satisfação dos conteúdos do trabalho ($r=0,134$; $p<0,01$) e compensações do trabalho ($r=0,180$; $p<0,001$) com os anos de experiência profissional. Remuneração mais baixa e prática generalista está associada a níveis de satisfação menor ($p<0,001$). Os Fisioterapeutas que atendiam 3 ou mais utentes por hora apresentaram menores níveis de satisfação ($p<0,001$). Conclui-se que a satisfação é influenciada negativamente pelas perspetivas de progressão na carreira, remuneração recebida e reconhecimento do trabalho pelas instituições e positivamente pela relação com os utentes.

Palavras-chave: Fisioterapeuta; satisfação profissional; Portugal.

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RESUMEN

La satisfacción laboral es un fenómeno complejo porque es un estado subjetivo. El objetivo del estudio es evaluar la satisfacción laboral de los fisioterapeutas que trabajan en Portugal durante más de 6 meses En una muestra de 780 fisioterapeutas, mediante la aplicación de un cuestionario online que incluía preguntas de caracterización individual y profesional y relacionadas con la satisfacción laboral, se encontró que se encontraban medianamente satisfechos con la profesión (67,4%), con una correlación positiva. entre las dimensiones de satisfacción con el contenido del trabajo (r=0,134; p<0,01) y compensación laboral (r=0,180; p<0,001) con años de experiencia profesional. Los salarios más bajos y la práctica general se asocian con niveles más bajos de satisfacción (p<0,001). Los fisioterapeutas que atiendían a 3 o más usuarios por hora tienían menores niveles de satisfacción (p<0,001). Podemos concluir que la satisfacción se ve influida negativamente por las perspectivas de progresión profesional, la retribución recibida y el reconocimiento del trabajo por parte de las instituciones y positivamente por la relación con los clientes.

Palavras-chave: Fisioterapeuta; satisfacción profesional; Portugal.

INTRODUCTION

The available literature reveals that job satisfaction significantly interferes in the ability to adapt to work, in the integration, autonomy, motivation, involvement and use of physical and mental capacities of health professionals. As the healthcare area is characterized by dynamic environments and patients sometimes with complex diagnoses, Physiotherapists are challenged to focus their patient-centered intervention efficiently and effectively, while adopting evidence-based practices and attending to best standards of clinical practice (Klappa et al., 2015). These challenges can represent an additional pressure for Physiotherapists, leading to a decrease in the quality of life of professionals, and consequently in their satisfaction with their work.

The relevance of assessing the degree of satisfaction with work is justified by the implications it has on the health and quality of life of professionals, and by the repercussions on organizations, in terms of productivity. A dissatisfied worker can also develop various mental health problems such as lack of motivation, stress and burnout and even physical problems that ultimately prevent them from working, increasing absenteeism and harming employees' goals (Craig & Sprang, 2010; Dias et al., 2010)continuous and prolonged exposure to the stress of working with the myriad of trauma-related stressors experienced by their clients can lead to various responses including burnout, compassion fatigue, and compassion satisfaction. The present study investigates the impact of using evidence-based practices on compassion fatigue, burnout, and compassion satisfaction in a random, national sample of self-identified trauma specialists (N = 532.

Decreasing levels of job satisfaction can compromise, in the medium term, the performance of organizations and consequently the health level of the population (Pegorari et al., 2017).

One of the challenges for organizations is the creation and maintenance of teams with motivated and satisfied Physiotherapists. The possibility of autonomously monitoring patients and attend continuous training can help to build these teams. Some studies show that Physiotherapists seek greater independence in direct patient care activities, as well as in opportunities for promotion and salaries that are aligned with their education and experience (Campo et al., 2009; Harkson et al., 1982).

The creation of conditions for carrying out continuous training is more important for recent graduates, while Physiotherapists with a higher degree of academic training look for opportunities to be involved in the formulation of organizational policies (Limbasiya et al., 2014; Menon et al., 2009).

Professional development is essential for Physiotherapists to provide quality healthcare and meet the changing needs of the community over time. In fact, the increase in patient demand standards requires a level of management of the health services that encompasses constant evolution and continued adaptation of these professionals to new ways of working, a situation that may be more complex for more senior professionals. To respond to this need for professional development, it will be important to integrate continuous education that encompasses learning methods capable of enhancing skills and integrating evidence into clinical practice (Fleet et al., 2008; Grimmer et al., 2017).

In Portugal there are already some research works that assess the professional satisfaction of Physiotherapists. However, the fact that the relationship of Physiotherapists satisfaction with the length of professional practice, as well as the most sought-after continuing education was not studied, proving the high relevance of the present study.

Thus, the main objective of this study is to evaluate the relationship between the length of physical therapy exercise and the professional satisfaction of Physiotherapists in Portugal, in order to verify whether there are statistically significant differences when comparing the professional satisfaction of Physiotherapists with more or less time of experience.

For this purpose, a quantitative, correlational and descriptive study will be carried out, in which Physiotherapists working in Portugal will be invited to participate, by completing a questionnaire that will be sent through digital means. After collecting the data, these will be statistically treated and the results and discussion of them will be presented later.

1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Human behavior in the work environment has been extensively studied in recent years, with emphasis on the emotional aspect of the satisfaction that workers have in their professional activity. Given the factors addressed about job satisfaction, it was evident that there is not just a single aspect, but a complex network of factors that contribute to the level of job satisfaction (Marqueze & Moreno, 2005)analisando suas diferentes concepções. Associadas a essas concepções, também são apresentadas características do trabalho que interferem e determinam a satisfação, bem como as conseqüências da satisfação e da insatisfação no ambiente de trabalho.The purpose of this article is to present a short review of work satisfaction, analyzing its different conceptions. Associated to such conceptions we also present work characteristics that interfere and determine satisfaction, as well as the consequences of satisfaction and non-satisfaction at the work environment.","author":[{"dropping-particle":"","family":"Marqueze","given ":"Elaine Cristina","non-dropping-particle":"","parse-names":false,"suffix":""},{"droppi ng-particle":"","family":"Moreno","given":"Claudia Roberta de Castro","non-dropping-particle":"","parse-names":false,"suffix":""}],"container-title":"Revista Brasileira de Saúde Ocupacional","id":"ITEM-1","issued":{"date-parts":[["2005"]]},"title":"Satisfação no trabalho - uma breve revisão","type":"article-journal"},"uris":["http://www.mendeley.com/ documents/?uuid=9143f968-c548-41c8-89ce-b1e115992cf1"]}],"mendeley":{"formattedCi tation":"(Marqueze & Moreno, 2005.

For this purpose, this study aims evaluate the job satisfaction of physiotherapists working in Portugal for more than 6 months.

This is an observational, cross-sectional study with a descriptive analysis model and a correlational component. In empirical research, the quantitative method was chosen since, being a structured approach, it describes and quantifies the variation and diversity of a phenomenon, in addition to being an objective, reliable, generalizable, result-oriented and proof-oriented method (Koche, 2011; Kumar, 2019).

1.1 SAMPLE
In our research, we selected the universe of Physiotherapists who have been working in Portugal for at least 6 months. Physiotherapists who have interrupted their professional activity in the last 6 months, who accumulate another professional activity/profession, or who have not given consent to participate in the study were excluded.

This study was carried out within the scope of the research project of the Kinesiolab research center of the Piaget Institute with the name professional satisfaction of the physiotherapist in Portugal.

Physiotherapists were invited to participate in the study through email marketing and contacted via digital platforms. Platforms and social networks used by professionals were used to request participation in the study. All data collection was authorized by the participants through a consent form and all procedures in this project is in line with national and international guidelines for scientific research involving human subjects, and including the Declaration of Helsinki in 2013 on Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, and the 1997 Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (the "Oviedo Convention"). The questionnaire was available for online response since February 6 to March 11, 2021.

We obtained 808 responses, 11 of which were excluded for representing Physiotherapists with less than 6 months of professional practice, and 17 for being Physiotherapists who did not exercise their activity in the six months prior to filling out the questionnaire. Thus, the study sample consisted of 780 Physiotherapists.

As a quantitative research, an attempt was made to select the sample so that it was impartial and represented the population from which it was selected (Kumar, 2019). Considering that the number of Physiotherapists working in Portugal exceeds 14000 (Vital et al., 2020), this sample had a margin of error of 3.41% for a confidence level of 95%, according to the BioEstat 5.3 Software, which means being a representative sample of the profession (Thompson, 2012).

1.2 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS
A two-part questionnaire was designed to assess the sociodemographic and professional characterization data and the professional satisfaction of Physiotherapists. The Google Forms® platform was used to build this instrument, and it was developed in an interactive style, so that respondents feel as if someone was talking to them (Kumar, 2019).

The questionnaire was available for online response in the physiotherapy professional interest groups on the Facebook, Telegram and Whatsapp platform, as well as an authorized mail-list.

As there is no one to explain the meaning of the questions to respondents, an effort was made to make the questions clear and easy to understand. In addition, an easy-to-read, eye-pleasing layout was chosen, with an easy-to-follow question sequence.

In the section to assess the professional satisfaction of Physiotherapists, the questions were adapted from the Satisfaction at Work questionnaire (Vieira & Coimbra, 2006) consisting of 19 items organized into three dimensions: satisfaction with job content, satisfaction with work compensation and satisfaction with relationships at work.

The response scale used was the 5-point Likert type (1- not at all satisfied to 5- completely satisfied) whose items include "Relationships with my superiors" or "I have autonomy". This instrument was developed and validated from the results of an exploratory qualitative study next to the Portuguese higher education finalists. The study of its psychometric properties has been essentially carried out with recent higher education graduates, during the first year of their professional activity (Vieira & Coimbra, 2006).

Results from several studies point to the appropriateness of using this instrument to assess job satisfaction among individuals with different levels of education and years of work experience. This instrument has been used in different investigations in Portugal and Brazil, and in several studies it has shown good psychometric qualities (Vieira, 2012; Vieira et al., 2011, 2014) In the study by Vieira (2012), the internal consistency indexes were satisfactory: α Cronbach 0.88 on the job content satisfaction subscale, 0.84 on the satisfaction with work relationships subscale and 0.85 on the satisfaction with work compensation subscale.

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In the dimension of compensation at work, in the question that aims to assess the degree of satisfaction related to "Recognition received for my work" an adaptation was made, in which the aim is to assess the satisfaction related to:

a) "Recognition received by the institution for my work";
b) "Recognition received by patients for my work";
c) "Recognition received for my work by peers";
d) "Recognition received for my work by other professionals".

At the end of the questionnaire, the participant is asked to assess, on a scale from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied), how much he has felt satisfied with the profession.

1.3 DATA ANALYSIS

After data collection, a first analysis of all questionnaires was carried out to eliminate those that might be incomplete or that did not respect the inclusion criteria, and their coding and tabulation were then processed to prepare the statistical treatment.

For data analysis, and characterization of the sample, descriptive statistics and analytical or inferential statistics were used. Data were analyzed using a statistical analysis program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26.0.

For inferential statistics, parametric statistics were used, as this was a sample with an N greater than 30. To compare the differences in the professional satisfaction of Physiotherapists regarding their area of expertise (generalist or specialist) defined by the profile of competences of the physiotherapist professional (APFISIO, 2018), the student's t-test was used to compare means of independent samples. The One-Way ANOVA test was applied to assess the differences in the professional satisfaction of Physiotherapists in terms of salary earned, and the ratio of patients treated per hour.

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was evaluated using the Levene test, as this test verifies the hypothesis that the variance in the groups is the same (that is, the difference between the variances is zero). Thus, when $p \leq 0.05$, we conclude that the null hypothesis is incorrect and that the variances are significantly different. When Levene's test was not significant (ie, $p > 0.05$), the null hypothesis that the differences between the variances is zero was accepted (Field, 2009). Considering the homogeneity of variance, post-hoc analysis was performed using Tukey's technique. Given the heterogeneity of variance, the post-hoc evaluation was performed using the Games-Howell technique (Field, 2009).

To study the correlation between the dimensions of Physiotherapists job satisfaction, age and years in service, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The correlation coefficient is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect: values of ±0.1 represent a small effect, ±0.3 represents a medium effect, and ±0.5 represents a large effect (Field, 2009).

2. RESULTS

2.1. SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION

The sample comprised a group of 780 Physiotherapists with an age average of 33.7 ±8,358 years, mostly female (78.5%) and licensee´s degree (63.7%).

The Physiotherapists have between 6 months and 45 years in service, which corresponds to an average value of 10.72 ± 8.327 years of experience. The area of expertise of most Physiotherapists in the sample is generalist (76.2%), and more than half (51.5%) earn less than €999 per month. We found that most Physiotherapists have an employment contract of employment. We found that 61.7% of Physiotherapists treat more than 1 patient per hour (Table 1).

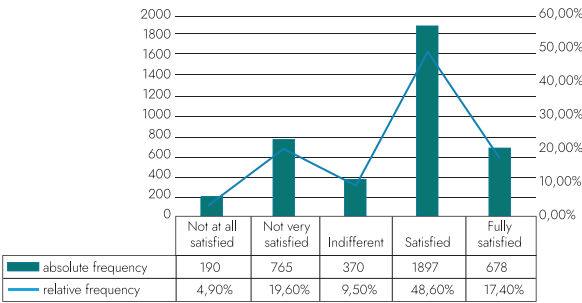|	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MÍN-MÁX
Years in service	10,72	8,327	0,5-45
		n	%
Occupation area			
Generalist		594	76,2
Specialist		186	23,8
Salary earned			
Less than €999		402	51,5
Between €1000 and €1500		294	37,7
More than €1501		84	10,8
Employment relationship			
Employer/entrepreneur		87	11.2
Employment contract		459	58.8
Service provider (green receipt)		234	30.0
Number of patients treated/hour			
1 patient / hour		299	38,3
2 patients/hour		217	27,8
3 or more patients/hour		264	33,8

TABLE 1: CHARACTERIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL FACTORS (N=780)

We found that there are few Physiotherapists working in primary health care, as they represent a percentage of less than 5.8% of the elements in the sample. In fact, the 5 places where Physiotherapists work in greater numbers are: home treatments (39.1%), physical medicine and rehabilitation clinics (38.1%), Physiotherapy office (32.9%), hospital (17.6%) and senior home/residence (5.8%). It should be noted that for the analysis of these percentages we must take into account that almost half of the Physiotherapists work in more than one place (46,5%).

2.2. JOB SATISFACTION

In the question "How satisfied have you felt with the profession" (on a scale of 1 to 10) we obtained an average value of 6.74 (±1.874).
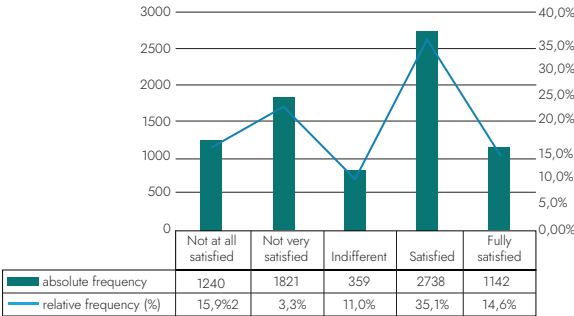
The satisfaction of Physiotherapists, regarding the dimension of satisfaction with the content of the work, we found that the majority answered "Satisfied" (48.6%) and "Totally satisfied" (17.4%) (Graph 1). We can see that for all items in this dimension, the most repeated answer is "Satisfied".

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Fully satisfied
absolute frequency	190	765	370	1897	678
relative frequency	4,90%	19,60%	9,50%	48,60%	17,40%

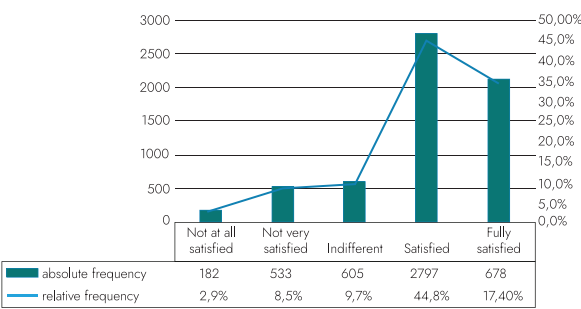**GRAPH 1: ANALYSIS OF SATISFACTION WITH WORK CONTENT (N=780)**

In the dimension of satisfaction with work compensation, the distribution of responses is a little different. In fact, as we can see in Graph 2, 35.1% of the answers are "Satisfied", but 23.3% answered "Slightly satisfied".

These values can be explained by the fact that the answer to the item "Progression prospects" that is most repeated is "Not at all satisfied", as well as in the items "Remuneration received" and "Recognition of my work by the institution(s)" the most repeated answer is "Slightly satisfied".

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Fully satisfied
absolute frequency	1240	1821	359	2738	1142
relative frequency (%)	15,9%2	3,3%	11,0%	35,1%	14,6%

GRAPH 2: ANALYSIS OF SATISFACTION WITH WORK COMPENSATION (N=780)

The dimension of satisfaction with work relationships has the highest satisfaction values. Of all the responses obtained, 44.8% were "Satisfied" and 34% "Totally satisfied" (Graph 3). In this dimension, the item "Relationships with my patients" stands out, whose most repeated answer was "Totally satisfied". In the remaining items, the most repeated answer was "Satisfied".

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Fully satisfied
absolute frequency	182	533	605	2797	678
relative frequency	2,9%	8,5%	9,7%	44,8%	17,40%

GRAPH 3: ANALYSIS OF SATISFACTION WITH RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK (N=780)

By analyzing the correlation between years in service and job satisfaction, we found that all correlations are positive and statistically significant, except for the correlations between scores in the dimension of relationships at work and years in service (Table 2).

	1	2	3	4
1 - Years in service				
2 - Score work content dimension	,134**			
3 - Score Work Compensation Dimension	,180**	,649**		
4 - Score dimension relationships at work	,050	,612**	,643**	
5 - How satisfied have you been with the profession	,209**	,586**	,649**	,537**

TABLE 2: CORRELATION BETWEEN PHYSIOTHERAPISTS' SATISFACTION AND YEARS IN SERVICE

When analyzing the job satisfaction according to the area of expertise we see that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$), with the average satisfaction value of Physiotherapists with a specialized area of expertise higher than those with a general practice (Table 3).

	AREA OF EXPERTISE	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T	P
Score dimension work content	Generalist	594	3,4387	,87955	-6,014	0,000
	Specialist	186	3,8656	,83349		
Score dimension Work Compensations	Generalist	594	2,9943	,76339	-6,355	0,000
	Specialist	186	3,4059	,79438		

Score dimension relationships at work	Generalist	594	3,9289	,62834	-5,009	0,000
	Specialist	186	4,1640	,53492		
How satisfied have you been with the profession	Generalist	594	6,58	1,900	-4,442	0,000
	Specialist	186	7,27	1,690		

TABLE 3: DIFFERENCES IN PHYSIOTHERAPISTS' SATISFACTION REGARDING THE AREA OF EXPERTISE

When we analyzed the differences between the groups with remuneration "≤ €999, "≥ €1000 and ≤ €1500 and "≥ €1500, we verified that there are statistically significant differences for all dimensions ($p < 0.001$). In fact, according to the analysis of Table 4, the group with the lowest degree of satisfaction in all dimensions is the group of Physiotherapists who earn a lower salary. Thus, it can be said that the Physiotherapists professional satisfaction also depends on the salary earned.

		≤ 999€	≥ 1000€ E ≤ 1500€	≥ 1501€	TOTAL	F	P	POST HOC
		1	2	3				
	n	402	294	84	780			
Score dimension work content	M	3,34	3,66	4,07	3,54	29,762	0,000*	1<2<3
	SD	0,88	0,86	0,68	0,89			
Score dimension Work Compensations	M	2,81	3,26	3,82	3,09	81,102	0,000*	1<2<3
	SD	0,72	0,71	0,76	0,79			
Score dimension relationships at work	M	3,87	4,07	4,24	3,98	17,770	0,000*	1<2<3
	SD	0,60	0,62	0,54	0,62			
How satisfied have you been with the profession	M	6,23	7,06	8,07	6,74	44,551	0,000*	1<2<3
	SD	1,93	1,69	1,28	1,87			

* $p<0,05$; M: mean; SD: Standard deviation; F: One-Way ANOVA

TABLE 4: PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION IN RELATION TO THE SALARY EARNED

In Table 5, we can see the differences in Physiotherapists' satisfaction regarding the number of patients seen per hour. In fact, in the "Work Compensation" dimension, the differences are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), with Physiotherapists treating 1 patient per hour corresponding to higher average satisfaction values than those treating 2 patients per hour, and these values superior to professionals who treat 3 or more patients per hour.

		1 PATIENT/H	2 PATIENTS/H	+ DE 3 PATIENTS/H	TOTAL	F	P	POST HOC
		1	2	3				
	n	299	217	264	780			
Score dimension work content	M	3,84	3,68	3,09	3,54	62,120	0,000*	1>3 2>3
	SD	0,77	0,78	0,91	0,89			
Score dimension Work Compensations	M	3,37	3,14	2,74	3,09	51,774	0,000*	1>2>3
	SD	0,80	0,68	0,73	0,79			
Score dimension relationships at work	M	4,14	4,02	3,78	3,98	26,216	0,000*	1>3 2>3
	SD	0,55	0,59	0,65	0,62			

How satisfied have you been with the profession	M	7,18	6,92	6,1	6,74	26,433	0,000*	1>3
	SD	1,849	1,558	1,969	1,874			2>3

* p<0,05; M: mean; SD: Standard deviation; F: One-Way ANOVA

TABLE 5: PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION REGARDING THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS SEEN PER HOUR

In the dimensions "Work content", "Relationships at work" and "Satisfaction with the profession", Physiotherapists who treat 3 or more patients have lower levels of satisfaction than those who treat 1 or 2 patients per hour. However, between the group of Physiotherapists who treat 1 patient per hour and those who treat 2 patients per hour, there were no statistically significant differences.

DISCUSSION

The degree of satisfaction of the Physiotherapists who participated in the study in relation to the profession is 67.4% (n=780), when asked through a Likert scale-type answer question. These results corroborate the studies of other authors (Alva & Lobo, 2016; Brattig et al., 2014; Gupta & Joshi, 2013; Usman et al., 2013)consequently influencing growth of the profession. Physiotherapy in India is maturing making such data indispensable. This study aims to assess the level of job and career satisfaction among Indian physiotherapists. Methods: A cross-sectional pilot survey was done with a self-administered e-questionnaire and the 265 surveys collected were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis. Results: Overall job satisfaction is 63.68% (3.35±1.32 that indicate that the percentage of Physiotherapists satisfied with their profession is higher to 50%. However, and as this conclusion from just one question seems very reductive, the adaptation that was made to the job satisfaction questionnaire (Vieira & Coimbra, 2006) was considered, where three dimensions of job satisfaction are analyzed.

In fact, when analyzing the dimensions of content satisfaction, compensation, and relationships at work, it appears that Physiotherapists who practice in Portugal present some differences between each of these dimensions.

Regarding the content of the work, most participants answered "Satisfied" and "Totally satisfied". In the dimension of work compensation, Physiotherapists have the worst scores, it being evident that in the item "Progression prospects" the most obtained answer was "Not at all satisfied", and in the items "Remuneration received" and "Recognition of my work by the institution(s)" the most frequent answer was "Slightly satisfied". In the dimension of relationships at work, the best satisfaction scores were evidenced, highlighting the item "Relationship with my patients" which obtained the most frequent answer "Totally satisfied".

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between job satisfaction and years in service, the results show a direct relationship except for the dimension associated with relationships at work. These results, in part, are also aligned with the results found in previous research that concluded that years in service are one of the most significant factors in terms of job satisfaction for health professionals (Al Eisa et al., 2015; Gupta & Joshi, 2013; Śliwiński et al., 2014a).

Regarding the dimension of relationships at work, the fact that there is no statistically significant correlation with years in service can be explained by the scores given in this dimension: it seems that most professionals are "Satisfied" or "Very satisfied" in all investigated items, highlighting the "Relationship with my patients", which makes this feeling of satisfaction transversal to most professionals. Likewise, people who have been working longer adapt and adjust their expectations to reality, leading to higher levels of satisfaction, in other words, decreasing the level of demand.

Also noteworthy is the fact that Health Centers are not included in the first five workplaces where Physiotherapists work, with this figure being less than 5.8% of the sample population. The same fact was found in the study published by APFISIO (2018) concerning a population of 212 Physiotherapists, where, in descending order, Private Physiotherapy Units, Hospitals, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Units and Private Solidarity Institutions were identified. Social as the main places of professional practice. The main difference is that in the present study, the practice of Physiotherapy at home (39.1%), followed by practice in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinics (38.1%), Physiotherapy Offices (32.9 %), Hospital (17.6%) and Senior Home/Residence (5.8%). This reality demonstrates that the offer of Physiotherapy care can be found, with increasing frequency, in Private Physiotherapy Units, and that Physiotherapists are in deficit with regard to primary health care.

However, no significant differences were demonstrated between Physiotherapists with a contract and service providers (green receipt). This result can be explained by the fact that Physiotherapists who provide services enjoy greater autonomy in managing their daily schedule, and therefore, it means having the option of "trying to do it on their own". Thus, a worker with more autonomy is one who, based on the organizational culture and the parameters stipulated for their area of activity, has a little more freedom to take certain actions, which will translate into greater satisfaction (Gupta & Joshi, 2013; Limbasiya, 2014).

It was evident in this study that Physiotherapists with specialized practice have higher scores in all dimensions of job satisfaction. Based on the substantial increase in knowledge and skills, as well as the possibility of academic training at the highest level, Physiotherapists primary objective is to be considered first-contact professionals, which makes the previous performance model completely unreasonable (Cunningham et al., 2020; Soares, 2017).

The analysis of the results shows that lower wages correspond to a lower degree of satisfaction. This conclusion is supported by the results of several studies (Al Eisa et al., 2015; Alva & Lobo, 2016; Arkwright et al., 2018; Bernal-Utrera et al., 2021) associate a lower level of satisfaction with lower wages, situations that can fit into Herzberg's motivational theory (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl & Maude, 2017).

It was found that, for all dimensions of job satisfaction, Physiotherapists who see 3 or more patients per hour have less satisfaction. It seems obvious that this ratio of patients per hour may represent excess work, putting into question the quality of the professionals service (Śliwiński et al., 2014b; Speakman et al., 1996; Usman et al., 2013; Wilson, 2015).

Except for the dimension of work compensation in which the degree of satisfaction of Physiotherapists who treat a patient per hour is higher than those who treat two and three patients per hour, in the other dimensions there seems to be no differences in professional satisfaction between professionals who treat a or two patients per hour.

CONCLUSION

In general, Physiotherapists who practice in Portugal are moderately satisfied, although a considerable number of less satisfied professionals cannot be ignored, which should be seen with some concern.

Employers must properly reward professionals, providing opportunities for evolution and conditions for the performance of the profession. Likewise, it is important that the responsible entities understand that quality work cannot be expected when many patients are treated per hour, either due to the lack of time for each treatment, or due to the level of fatigue and dissatisfaction generated by this practice. The ideal is to treat one or two patients, at most, per hour.

It is important to make some considerations around the limitations of this study and to suggest recommendations for future studies. The main limitation of the study is related to data collection, as it was carried out exclusively by disseminating the questionnaire link online through mail marketing and contact via digital platforms. Therefore, Physiotherapists who did not have a social media account or who were not internet users were not included in the sample. However, considering the time option for data collection and the scope of the target population, this proved to be the most effective method, as it is fast and guarantees data confidentiality.

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