

Temporary work in the perceptions of nursing professionals*El trabajo temporal en las percepciones de los profesionales de enfermería**Trabalho temporário nas percepções de profissionais de enfermagem***Rafaela Ghiraldi Rocha¹**

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<https://dx.doi.org/10.5935/2675-5602.20200353>***Corresponding author:**tatieangel@yahoo.com.br**Submission:** 03-23-2023**Approval:** 05-18-2023**Abstract**

The aim was to identify the perceptions of nursing professionals regarding temporary hiring in a public university hospital. Qualitative, descriptive, exploratory research with outsourced nursing professionals from a public university hospital in northern Paraná in 2019. Data collection occurred through the application of a self-administered, closed questionnaire with a final open question. 70 nursing professionals participated, the majority of whom were women (85%), with an average age of 36 years and a prevalence of professionals with only one employment relationship (77%). The reasons for choosing the temporary work contract were remuneration (13.7%), job opportunity (13.4%) and financial need (12.7%). The potentialities identified were flexible working hours and hourly pay; The weaknesses mentioned were the lack of labor rights, insecurity and professional instability. For nursing professionals, temporary work contracts are an attractive option, but they feel insecure due to the uncertainty surrounding the continuity of the contracts.

Descriptors: Nurse Practitioners; Outsourced Services; Working Conditions; Nursing; Occupational Health.**Resumén**

El objetivo fue identificar las percepciones de los profesionales de enfermería sobre la contratación temporal en un hospital público universitario. Investigación cualitativa, descriptiva, exploratoria con profesionales de enfermería subcontratados de un hospital público universitario del norte de Paraná en 2019. La recolección de datos ocurrió mediante la aplicación de un cuestionario cerrado, autoadministrado, con una pregunta final abierta. Participaron 70 profesionales de enfermería, la mayoría mujeres (85%), con edad promedio de 36 años y predominio de profesionales con una sola relación laboral (77%). Los motivos para elegir el contrato de trabajo temporal fueron la remuneración (13,7%), la oportunidad laboral (13,4%) y la necesidad económica (12,7%). Las potencialidades identificadas fueron horarios de trabajo flexibles y remuneración por horas; Las debilidades mencionadas fueron la falta de derechos laborales, la inseguridad y la inestabilidad profesional. Para los profesionales de enfermería, los contratos de trabajo temporal son una opción atractiva, pero se sienten inseguros por la incertidumbre sobre la continuidad de los contratos.

Descriptoros: Enfermeras Practicantes; Servicios Externos; Condiciones de Trabajo; Enfermería; Salud Laboral.**Resumo**

Objetivou-se identificar quais as percepções de profissionais de enfermagem sobre a contratação temporária em hospital universitário público. Pesquisa qualitativa, descritiva exploratória, com profissionais de enfermagem terceirizados de um hospital universitário público do norte do Paraná no ano de 2019. A coleta de dados ocorreu por aplicação de um questionário autoadministrado, fechado e com uma última questão aberta. Participaram 70 profissionais de enfermagem, maioria mulheres (85%), com idade média de 36 anos e prevalência de profissionais com apenas um vínculo empregatício (77%). Os motivos para a escolha do contrato temporário de trabalho foram a remuneração (13,7%), oportunidade de trabalho (13,4%) e necessidade financeira (12,7%). As potencialidades identificadas foram a flexibilidade de horário e a remuneração por hora de trabalho; já as fragilidades mencionadas foram a ausência de direitos trabalhistas, insegurança e instabilidade profissional. Para os profissionais de enfermagem, os contratos temporários de trabalho se constituem em uma opção atraente, porém sentem-se inseguros devido as incertezas da continuidade dos contratos.

Descriptoros: Profissionais de Enfermagem; Serviços Terceirizados; Condições de Trabalho; Enfermagem; Saúde Ocupacional.

Therefore, this research aimed to identify the perceptions of nursing professionals about temporary hiring in a public university hospital.

Methodology

This is a qualitative research, with an exploratory and descriptive approach that followed the precepts of the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) checklist⁸.

The study population consisted of 190 nursing professionals, personally invited to their work environment to participate in the research. The inclusion criterion was that the participants had worked for at least six months under a temporary employment contract in a public university hospital, located in the north of the State of Paraná. These professionals were hired via public call, through a notice valid for up to two consecutive years, without institutional ties, or the right to vacation and thirteenth.

Seventy professionals agreed to participate in the research, the rest were either not located (70) after three attempts or refused (50) to participate in the study. Data collection took place from July to September 2019. A self-administered, closed questionnaire with a final open question was used, which was previously analyzed by seven experts in nursing management. The experts were contacted by email and received the link to evaluate the form, filled out on Google Forms. The evaluations were returned over a period of 49 days, after three requests for responses. The suggested adjustments were in relation to the title of the script, as well as the ordering of the sessions, to facilitate the understanding of the participants.

The questionnaire was titled "Socioeconomic and work profile of self-employed nursing professionals", consisting of 29 items divided into four sections: Socioeconomic characteristics; Professional characteristics relating to training; Professional characteristics relating to professional performance; and Perception in relation to acting as a self-employed professional, which included questions regarding the reasons that led the worker to pursue a self-employed relationship, reasons for indicating or not indicating the relationship to another colleague in the area, strengths and weaknesses of the employment relationship.

The questionnaire was administered by the main researcher, who is a nurse and trained in qualitative data collection. The nursing professionals who agreed to participate in the study answered the questions in the workplace, in a private environment and at a time according to their availability, with only the researcher and the participant being present. The average time to answer the questions was approximately eleven minutes.

The participants' responses were analyzed using the Iramuteq version 0.7 Alpha software, which is anchored in the R statistical software, with Python language, free and open source, which allows statistical analyzes based on a textual corpus or individual/word tables. In this research,

Introduction

The meaning of work for society, for a long time, was associated only with the satisfaction of the results arising from the efforts made to generate goods for own consumption. However, this concept is important for individuals and organizations through the possibility of financial income, opportunities for personal growth, development of self-esteem, professional identity and social integration. In addition to subsistence and consumption, working represents a source of recognition and autonomy for the individual¹.

Work can be carried out in public, philanthropic and private institutions, but for many people, working in a public company means security and stability in their employment relationship. In public management, Law No. 8,112/90 regulates the Single Legal Regime for Federal Public Servants, establishing spending limits on hiring workers in the three spheres of government, municipal, state and federal². This limitation makes it difficult to admit professionals, leading to the diversification of contracting methods, to ensure the continuity of the functioning of health services.

In this way, alternative hiring models are inserted via the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLL), such as direct hiring or through agreements with other institutions, temporary hiring, remuneration for the provision of services and hiring health professional cooperatives³.

The hiring of outsourced services for self-employed professionals grew because of changes resulting from the labor counter-reform, such as changes in the forms of hiring and ease of dismissal of professionals from companies, changes in working hours, remuneration and working conditions⁴.

It should be noted that a self-employed professional is one who can work continuously and remunerated, but without an employment relationship with the contracting institution. Therefore, he has no rights or professional or financial stability, assuming the risks arising from the service provided⁵.

Health services have adopted the hiring of temporary professionals to ensure rapid replacement of the care team⁶. It is observed that the type of contracting to provide temporary services around nursing has become present in health institutions, mainly in the hospital environment. The nursing team is responsible for patient care, well-being, autonomy, safety, and health education. Furthermore, they represent many professionals who make up the healthcare team, therefore it is important that these professionals are satisfied, resulting in greater dedication and better quality of care offered⁷.

Given these considerations, as well as studies on temporary contracts for services provided by nursing, focusing only on aspects associated with the financial and administrative contexts, there is a gap in investigations into the perception of nursing professionals about contracts in this modality. Knowing such perceptions is of fundamental importance so that managers, together with nursing professionals, have an in-depth look at this type of hiring,



analysis based on word clouds was used, which groups and graphically organizes terms according to their frequency. It is a simple lexical analysis, graphically interesting, as it allows quick identification of keywords in the textual corpus⁹.

The software categorized a textual corpus according to the frequency of words, forming a cloud of words, highlighted by the font size of the letters, where the greater the frequency that a word appears, the larger its font. The active and complementary forms of the texts were considered and words that appeared less than twice were excluded.

This research followed all the precepts of Resolution No. 466/2012, which refers to research with human beings under Brazilian legislation and obtained approval opinion No. 3,171,598 granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Londrina. Participants received and signed the Free and Informed Consent Form before answering the questionnaire, in which it was made clear that they could leave the research at any time, without cost or harm to them. Participation did not generate any health risk or embarrassment to participants.

Results

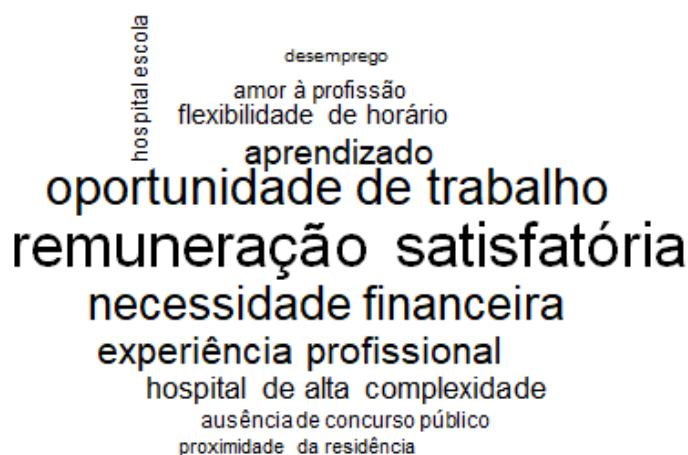
The results were presented in a described manner, with relative and absolute frequency and the reports through illustrative figures. 70 nursing professionals participated in the research, including 50 nursing technicians and 20 nurses. The professionals carried out their professional activities in adult and child inpatient units, adult and child intensive care, emergency care, maternity, surgical center, chemotherapy, burn treatment center and clinical pharmacy, in day and night shifts.

The participants' ages ranged between 21 and 57 years (36±7 years), the majority (85.7%) were women and 52.8% had a partner. In relation to income, 55.7% received between one and three minimum wages and 40% four to six minimum wages (reference minimum wage in 2019). Regarding the number of dependents, 32.8% declared that three people in the house depended on their family income. Furthermore, 48.6% responded that only two people contributed to the family income. The majority (71.4%) had children, 82.8% owned some type of vehicle and 74.3% reported having health insurance.

Regarding professional data, 10% were graduates, 22.9% specialists and 67.1% with technical training, 57.1% graduated from a public institution and 80% completed the course less than 15 years ago (9±6 years). In relation to professional training, 37.1% had it through courses and/or postgraduate studies (surgical instrumentation, first aid, basic emergency care, among others). Furthermore, 8.6% declared having professional training in another area (graphic designer, law, pedagogy). Regarding professional activity, 61.4% had been at the institution for less than two years, 90% worked only one shift (morning, afternoon or night) and 77.1% reported having only one employment relationship.

As for working as a self-employed professional, 45.7% reported having worked on more than two contracts at the institution under study. Those who declared that they had another employment relationship worked in the areas of nursing (34.3%), commerce or decoration (15.6%), under a CLL contract (31.2%), self-employed (15.6%) or statutory (3.1%).

Figure 1. Cloud words related to the reasons expressed by nursing professionals for choosing a temporary employment contract at a Public University Hospital. Londrina, PR, Brazil, 2021



It was observed that 84.3% would indicate the type of hiring to another nursing professional. Furthermore, the reasons that led participants to choose to work as temporary professionals are described in Figure 1. The responses resulted in 149 occurrences of terms, with 12 main words highlighted: satisfactory remuneration (16.7%), job opportunity (13.4%), financial need (12.7%), professional experience (9.3%), learning (8.0%), high complexity hospital (6.7%), schedule flexibility (6.0%), love

for the profession (4.6%), teaching hospital (4.0%), lack of public competition (4.0%), proximity to home (2.6%) and unemployment (2.0%).

Regarding the potential of the temporary work contract, 65.7% of participants informed them, 21.4% said they did not identify them and 12.8% did not inform any potential. In this question, 90 types of terms occurred, among these, 74 resulted in four text segments as shown in Figure 2 and 16 occurred less than twice.



The weaknesses highlighted by the interviewees were expressed in 147 occurrences of words, of which 137

Figure 2. Cloud words related to the potential of the temporary employment contract in a Public University Hospital, expressed by nursing professionals. Londrina, PR, Brazil, 2021

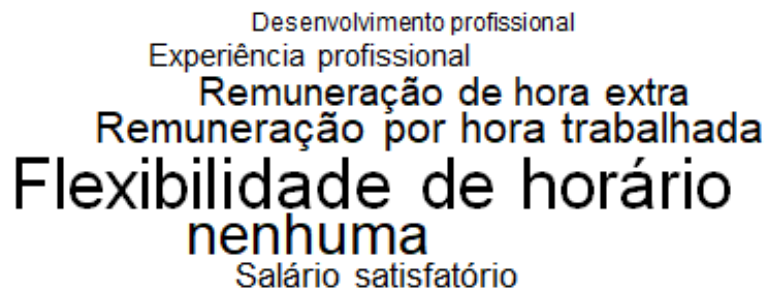
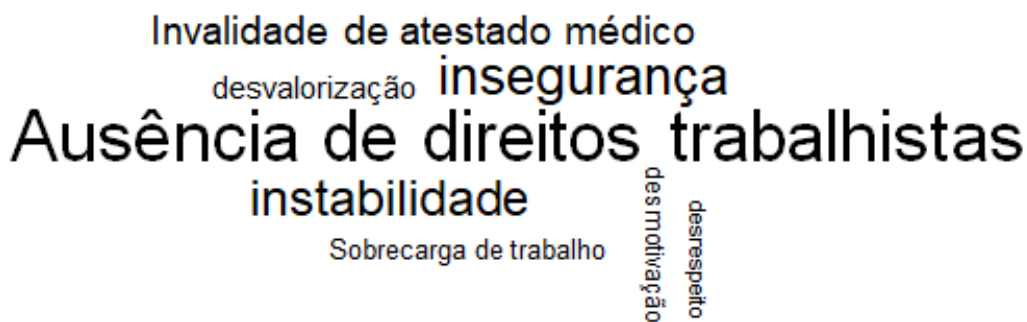


Figure 3. Word cloud related to the weaknesses of the temporary employment contract in a Public University Hospital, expressed by nursing professionals. Londrina, PR, Brazil, 2021



Discussion

The perceptions of nursing professionals about temporary work in a public university hospital permeate personal factors that influence the decision to take on this type of contract and to remain in it, even for a fixed period. Individual choices culminate in conceptions related to potentialities and weaknesses.

The changes resulting from the labor counter-reform generally provided employers with a range of options for atypical hiring, but with flexibility as its main characteristic¹⁰. Such changes also apply to hospital institutions, where there are alternative types of hiring to public competitions, promoting the outsourcing of nursing services. The flexibility at work provided by the type of employment is mentioned by the interviewees, who see themselves in a scenario that compensates for instability with flexibility in working hours and days^{3,5}.

The main reasons that led to the option of hiring as a temporary worker highlighted in this research consisted of satisfactory remuneration, job opportunities and financial needs experienced. These reasons can be understood as an escape from unemployment and a search for better financial conditions in the short term. In this way, it is understood that the nursing professional recognizes that his role is inserted in a context in which he needs to work hard to achieve better remuneration and consequently greater representation in the society in which he lives^{3,5}.

Over the last two decades, Nursing professionals in Brazil have experienced significant variations in the world

of work. The labor market has presented wage employment with salary linked to different forms: per shift, per hour worked, short and temporary contracts, lack of institutional linkage, leading to precariousness, multiple jobs and insecurity in the work environment¹¹.

The public university hospital where the study was carried out has as one of its goals training and developing professionals, therefore, when considering that the majority of interviewees had less than 15 years of training, were young adults and without specialization, it is possible to realize that working Being self-employed meant a strategy of professional development and growth, which was also highlighted in the responses related to the reasons for seeking employment and potential, showing an appreciation for the conquest of social space and professional achievement^{3,5}.

The issues mentioned above may in fact be potentialities, as they allow the professional to manage how much they will work and how much they will receive for it, but they are subject to warning, which may affect the worker's health and also reinforce the fragility of the contract relationship^{3,5}. However, it is noticeable that the potential is related to the financial need and the need to acquire professional experience, also interconnecting with the reasons that led individuals to choose outsourcing.

The employment relationships built in Brazil and other countries are replaced by the possibility of hiring self-employed people on an ongoing basis, while the salaried contract loses ground and the commercial contract gains,



workers lose access to labor rights, being subject to service continuously. This scenario impacts the nursing profession politically, socially, economically and culturally, as well as the contact situation based on this type of contracting¹¹.

Some dissatisfactions expressed by nursing professionals in relation to the temporary contract, such as the lack of labor rights, feelings of insecurity and professional instability, are in line with results obtained in a previous study, which brings these points as modifications inherent to the new work regimes¹². In general, due to changes in the hiring regime for nursing professionals, these dissatisfactions refer to the feeling that the worker is handing over his work activity, without guarantee of permanence in the institution, under the risk of being dismissed at any time and without any bonus.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) highlights the need to maximize decent work and points out interrelated dimensions of precariousness: insecurity in the labor market due to the lack of job opportunities; inadequate protection in case of dismissal; lack of activity delimitations or even work qualifications; insecurity of physical integrity and health due to the poor conditions of facilities and the work environment; low remuneration and lack of expectation of salary improvements; insecurity of representation when the worker does not feel protected and represented by a class association, unions, among others¹¹.

Remuneration for hours worked was expressed both as strengths and weaknesses of outsourced work in the hospital institution. When considering that the salary, in this case, is a highly variable component, as it directly depends on the workload worked, a certain deconstruction of the worker's perspective on their financial guarantee can be seen. In this way, the unequal distribution between capital and labor is reinforced, creating an illusion between the balance of both, while professional rights suffer¹².

Outsourcing is a trend in the field of hiring in public health institutions. However, professionals have favorable and unfavorable perceptions of assuming this type of relationship, depending on the socioeconomic context in which they are inserted. Therefore, managers must be aware of this new work relationship, which is still in its infancy and requires continuous assessments, so that these professionals can offer quality nursing care, within their possibilities and individualities^{11,12}.

Several factors contribute to professional satisfaction, such as remuneration, the institution's incentive for professional development, favorable working hours, interpersonal relationships, recognition of one's role, autonomy, resoluteness in the work process, pleasure in

In the world of work, there is intense competition for jobs due to technological advances and capitalism, requiring worker flexibility to adapt to market fluctuations, subjecting themselves to unstable hiring to expand work possibilities and obtain income. This scenario is the result of a market in constant change, which aims at profit and sometimes does not include the worker as part of a whole, but as an individual who provides services to the institution^{14,15}.

It is also worth highlighting that the conditions of the Brazilian nursing team in the labor market reflect an economically active professional category. However, this contingent shows signs of problems with full employability, when almost 5% of open unemployment is recorded and 1.9% declare temporary absence from professional activity, which corresponds to more than 100 thousand workers¹¹. Therefore, it can be said that reflections and public policies are needed for nursing workers with temporary contracts, aiming to enhance their health and, consequently, provide better assistance to patients and families.

Final Considerations

Temporary contracts were an option due to the financial needs of nursing professionals, as well as an opportunity to enter the workforce. Flexibility in working hours and financial return were relevant points highlighted by the interviewees. The suppression of labor rights during the contractual period, fear and uncertainty regarding the continuity of contracts are seen as weaknesses.

The need to improve the service management process is highlighted, to ensure that labor rights are fulfilled, and health professionals feel safe when performing their duties, even on temporary contracts.

This study has the limitation of being carried out in only one institution and with only one professional group. For future research, it is relevant to include new professional groups, with larger populations and in several institutions, where it is possible to make comparisons between groups to produce more consistent evidence.

The study advances knowledge, as it demonstrates a method of contracting services that is increasingly prevalent, but with few guarantees for the worker. Service management must make efforts to assure outsourced health professionals that their labor rights will be respected and fulfilled and, therefore, they will be able to perform their duties with greater quality.

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