


Rest for Professionals with a Lot of Emotional Distress at Work

Eduardo Pinto-Ferreira

Instituto Portugues de Oncologia Francisco Gentil, Portugal

***Corresponding author:** Eduardo Pinto-Ferreira, Instituto Portugues de Oncologia Francisco Gentil, Portugal
E-mail: epintoferreira@gmail.com

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Introduction

As a declaration of interest, I declare that I have no personal interest in the following topic, apart from the satisfaction of seeing the request presented below carried out.

Some services have a great deal of empathic suffering of their professionals, such as nursing and medical services, in oncology, which has not been properly valued, for the protection of its members.

I was a medical oncologist, at the Francisco Gentil Portuguese Oncology Institute in Oporto, and even today, at the age of 86, I still think about the emotional difficulties experienced by the health professionals who treat and accompany cancer patients, especially the nurses in the adult hospitalisation and the nurses and doctors in the Paediatric Oncology Service!

The nursing staff, in hospitalisation, with a relationship created at the bedside of the patients, during nursing care, are listeners of many human dramas! Some nurses give up their jobs and leave because they can't stand it! In Paediatric Oncology, the problem is even greater, both for doctors and nurses!

So I propose the following:

Taking into account that holidays generally occur during the late spring and summer months, these health professionals, in Oncology Institutes, will spend the long period of autumn and winter without a few days of rest, as a way to relieve the strong

emotional pressure that accompanies their work! Thus, besides the normal holiday period, I propose two weeks of rest for the nursing service in the adult hospitalization and for the doctors and nurses of the Paediatric Oncology service, one during the first quarter of the year and the other week during the last quarter of the year. These are long periods of work, with the need for some rest days, a great deal of stress, experienced every day! It's very difficult not to suffer, out of empathy!

I know that other professionals also suffer with the treatment and follow-up of cancer patients, as I often felt, but if it is not possible to generalize the request, at least receive those who need it most.

In other hospitals, I think that granting this respite will only be acceptable in inpatient services with exclusive treatment for cancer patients. In in-patients with different pathologies, this diversity helps to soften the emotional effect of the most serious illnesses.

Consider the benefit of this extra rest, for a small group of half a dozen nurses, from the Dressings Service, in Oncology. They have the noble task of renewing dressings on outpatients. It is a daily task, with a very emotional burden!

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