


Memories of the Emergency and Resuscitation Medical Vehicle: experiences in a district hospital

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Abstract

Introduction

Nurses are part of the Emergency Medical and Resuscitation Vehicle (VMER) teams, assuming an important role in assisting the population in the pre-hospital context. The performance of paramedic nurses requires the mastery of skills in several areas, namely: Professional Responsibility, Ethics and Legal, Quality Improvement, Care Management, Professional Learning Development, Mastery of Technical Provision of Care to the Person and Mastery of Emergency Driving¹.

The great pressure to which these professionals are subjected as a result of exercising in the domain of emergency driving is well known and if, on the one hand, they consider their work rewarding and satisfying, on the other hand, anxiety and distress, physical and emotional wear and tear resulting from nurses' negative experiences in the pre-hospital environment are widely referred to in the literature^{2,3}.

Objectives

With this study, we sought to understand the experiences of nurses of an Emergency Medical Vehicle and a resuscitation team during the provision of assistance, from the moment of activation to the return to the hospital.

Method

A qualitative phenomenological study was developed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 13 participants, nurses of the VMER of a district hospital in the central region of Portugal who agreed to participate in the study.

Content analysis followed the method proposed by Diekelmann, Allen and Tanner according to Carpenter⁴, and was structured based on five categories: (un)motivations; the (un)unexpected moment of activation; arrival on site ("time to shine"); (un)accompaniment in the transfer; and re-(in)gress to base.

Results and discussion

The participants considered themselves experts in the field of pre-hospital emergency in the various domains, seeking calm, tranquility and concentration in the performance of their duties. They are aware of the responsibility of their role in society and feel valued by their peers. They see the unpredictability of emergency situations as a challenge and a motivation. The (unexpected) moment of activation is experienced with confidence, but also with some stress and anxiety related mainly to the age of the victims. In the "time to shine", concentration and lucidity are needed to ward off "unwanted" looks from onlookers, establish priorities, act with precision and do the best for the victim. The follow-up to the health unit is often done without the presence of the nurse, who nevertheless remains alert for any need to act in collaboration with the doctor; it is also a moment of relief and decompression with the feeling of "duty done". The entry into the emergency department to hand the victim over to the multidisciplinary team is done with satisfaction and on returning to base there is often the need to reflect on what was done, what was (more or less) and what could have gone better.

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Conclusions and implications for knowledge development

VMER nurses need to develop skills in the areas of paediatrics, obstetrics, exception/catastrophic situations in order to decrease the levels of anxiety and stress associated with them. The debriefing proved to be an important tool that should be developed as a routine by the VMER team in order to improve the team's performance, as well as allow for the release of anguishes, fears and concerns associated with the situations experienced.

Keywords

Nurses; Emergency Medical Services; Pre-hospital; Motivation; Stress; Satisfaction.

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