



State of the art: mental health of teachers in Colombia

Estado da arte: saúde mental dos professores na Colômbia

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is to identify the state of the art through a literature review on mental health in teachers in Colombia. The methodology used is the search for information on platforms such as google academic where articles, Scielo, research, theses, degree projects and news that arose on the occasion of the pandemic and that affected the mental health of teachers in Colombia are published; as well as a brief review of the legal framework on the mental health of teachers in Colombia will also be made. The construction of this article on the mental health of teachers in Colombia is descriptive, its search and the collection of databases, bibliographic references, articles allowed achieving the research objectives, the realization of the RAE matrix and the research article. **Conclusions:** mental health in teachers in Colombia has been deteriorated by labor, psychosocial, affective and emotional factors, which are reported in the studies carried out from 2014 to 2023, since 2020 mental health diseases have been more marked, due to the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, where a high percentage of incapacities and diseases generated by stress, depression, depersonalization and emotional factors are reported.

Keywords: Mental health, Teachers, Pandemic, Psychosocial risk.

1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers in Colombia suffer from mental health problems, in a study conducted by Coschool, revealed that 67% of educators say that the biggest challenge they currently face are the challenges of mental and emotional health; after Covid-19, they have been more altered. Sanchez (2022).

The central theme of this research is the mental health of teachers in different educational institutions in Colombia, from which it is intended to build a state of the art, understood as Montoya (2005), the state of the art leads to documentary enrichment, where the key concepts are specified, for the deepening of the problem that concerns.

At first, mental health in Colombia is studied from two perspectives. The first perspective is mental health from the theoretical development, which allows arguing, from the production of different theorists, the ways in which mental health is considered academically to give a more technical and argumentative look at the subject in question.



The second consists of the legal perspective, which is defined by the Congress of the Republic of Colombia in Law 1616 of 2013, in addition to Resolution 4886 of 2018 issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Said legal instruments, configure the concern of the Colombian State, for the care of the mental health of citizens and develop the public policies to be executed, for the surveillance and implementation of the same.

The population, as the object of study, has two important situations to be defined for a better understanding; in the Colombian scenario, teachers are considered as such in official and non-official schools, the exercise of teaching at different levels (Decree 2777 of 1979), in turn, they are immersed in a National Education System, which is divided into initial and preschool education, basic education is divided into primary five grades and secondary four grades, middle education, two grades and culminates with the title of bachelor, and higher education undergraduate and graduate.

The Colombian context, in terms of mental health of teachers, is marked by the events of the past years, such as the pandemic of COVID-19, which presented a radical change at the time of directing teaching, a greater workload, inexorably involved the country's teachers, Despite the fact that nowadays the presentiality has been recovered, in the educational scenario, there was no transition in the sense of care for mental health or a policy implemented to ensure its care, no greater relevance was given to generate a serious and scientific diagnosis.

Mental health in teachers according to Camila (2019), talks about the quality as an educator of emotions and how to create an environment in the classroom, on emotional growth, this summarizes the importance of mental health of the teacher who has the ability and training to teach their students, if emotionally is not well, this will be detected by their students, which, in turn, their work life will also be affected. Céspedes relates in his book, a series of fundamental concepts to maintain an effective emotional education in teachers and what to do in the case of suffering from any pathology, whether emotional or diagnosed as mental illness. Céspedes refers to the need to protect the mental health of teachers and students, looking for ways to encourage and show government agencies the importance of investing in the mental health of teachers, they are the ones who need prompt and decisive attention, raising awareness that if teachers are emotionally ill they will not enjoy their teaching profession and it would be a failure for students.

For Castro & Sánchez, (2013), they refer to health problems such as stress, problems such as hoarseness, muscle aches, colds or flu, which are factors that affect the



health of teachers in Colombia, not only linked to external circumstances that may be evident in their lives, but those who are part of the work context, such as students can contribute greatly to a reduction in mental health, with behaviors and behaviors that may have inside the institution and at the time of receiving their classes.

For Gómez, Rodríguez, Padilla and García. (2009), those affected by SAP have limitations to exercise their profession. The responsibility of teachers is of great importance, because of their duty to train and deliver knowledge to the students of the country, a task that may be affected through a number of factors that may affect their mental health and alter the teaching and learning process in different institutions, which would imply situations contrary to the duty of education.

In a study conducted by Manrique, Sanchez and Osorio (2014), through a quantitative method evidenced that this study reflects again, that the organizational security by the institutions must be thought for the prevention of facts generating violations of mental health as a result of obligations of the State rules imposed on them, in addition to this the study shows that external factors are equally important when it comes to influence the mental health of teachers.

Marengo and Avila (2016) highlight an important syndrome that underlies the daily work of teachers in Colombia, the burnout syndrome or syndrome of being burned out by work, these dimensions summarize all the circumstances that directly influence mental health, emotional exhaustion is related to their interpersonal relationships of family and emotional nature, implying that what happens in their relationships can be reflected. Depersonalization is the alteration of the self, where the patient feels as strange, distant and the low professional realization is about nonconformism that encloses his teaching work, where the salary, infrastructure, work projections that can be affected by external factors as well as the institution itself and the idealisms established by himself influence.

Psychosocial mental health risks among teachers in Colombia:

Burnout syndrome: for Garcia (n.d.), to speak of burnout syndrome or burnout at work refers to a psychological alteration linked to the context of work and that can build a disorder due to its harmful effects on daily life. Chronic stress is an accumulation of emotional episodes, which begin to somatize in their physical health so that the patient feels a strong wear and tear which he/she cannot control and cope with. When it comes to teachers, it can be said that the reasons why they begin to suffer from this syndrome is due to the high workload, extensive tasks which are outside their schedules, low pay and lack of opportunities to grow to better positions; During the Covid-19 pandemic, incapacities increased due to the abrupt change in the modality of classes, virtuality became the best option to continue teaching, but this in some



teachers generated chaos, fear and little support from governmental entities, predisposing factors for this syndrome to appear, and as a result it generates the alteration of the quality of life of the professional and the decrease in work productivity (Ibáñez P., 2011).

Depression: depression is recognized as a mental disorder, characterized by negative emotions, low self-esteem and loss of pleasure in daily activities McLean & Connor, (2015); a disorder that has also been related, in numerous studies with burnout syndrome, which states that teachers with burnout have a higher risk of presenting symptoms of depression, and vice versa Szigeti et al. This is a disease, which afflicts any person in certain situations, but it is known that professions greatly influence the suffering of this disease, which if not treated in time can be chronic and more complex to treat. As for the relationship that depression has with burnout syndrome, mood swings are the most frequent manifestation of emotions, with sadness and anger with oneself being the most prevalent. In teachers it is reflected more in their poor work performance and low motivation when they are in a classroom, their interpersonal relationships begin to alter, their family life and their physical and psychological health.

Anxiety: Barlow and Durand (2005) state that anxiety is a state of mind characterized by strong negative affect, bodily symptoms of tension and apprehension about the future. This refers to the emotional alteration and negative thoughts, fear or apprehension of what is being faced. In the case of teachers, anxiety is one of the most frequent psychosocial factors, at the time of Covid-19, this increased with more force and gender in most teachers moments of anxiety, some cases of these were momentary, but others influenced their physical and mental health.

In a study conducted in Bogota by Gonzalez, Derly Bernal, Plazas (2019), between the years 2015-2019, on incapacities and why teachers attend, to health service providers, it could be evidenced during the evaluated period 151,166 incapacities were recorded that contributed 940,747 days. The highest absenteeism was evidenced by women of 45 years of age, the type of incapacity that caused the most incapacity was acute rhinopharyngitis; by occupational disease it contributed 295,099 days, mostly caused by mental and behavioral disorders, of which the mixed disorder of anxiety and depression stands out.

After reviewing the scientific references, it can be seen that approximately 10 years ago, in Colombia there is no state of the art on the mental health of teachers, therefore, this article was made with the purpose of explaining the problems experienced



today by teachers in Colombia, generalized concepts and found with figures and data in other research, which allow the construction of the state of the art; also, analyzing this problem that should concern all Colombians, it is not among the government priorities, mental health in teachers, not only affects them and their families, but also the students, who need a teaching pedagogy, with good bases and foundations that allow them to learn and understand each subject in their classes, children and young people are affected by seeing their teacher sick, distressed and often absent, they lose time to learn.

2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Mental health as a derivative of the constitutional right to health, is regulated in 2013 by the Congress of the Republic of Colombia, which issued Law 1616 of 2013, being this the first normative manifestation by the Colombian State, to establish mental health as a government policy to be implemented nationwide.

In Article 1, the enactment of this regulation has two major populations for which they are prioritized for attention, children and adolescents, giving an important connotation, mental health is initially prioritized for minors, ignoring that this problem is a general situation of all citizens on equal terms.

In Article 4, this obligation is coherent in the sense that the EPSs (Health Care Provider Entities) are the guarantors of the execution, since they are the ones in charge of providing health care at the national level in every sense of the word.

Regarding Article 9, the regulations, in addition to what is indicated by the execution of the health care entities, establish that the ARL (Administrators of labor risks) must carry out all the necessary actions for the prevention and attention of the possible mental health affectations of the workers, of which the teachers in Colombia are no strangers.

Teachers in Colombia, as public and private employees, are no strangers to the problem of mental health; several academic studies have shown the situations in which they are immersed:

Different risk factors have been documented in relation to the development of SAP in teachers. Among these are being in charge of large groups of students, misbehavior and destructive or aggressive behaviors of their students (Gómez, Rodríguez, Padilla and García. 2009. p. 281).

Article 43 of the 1991 Political Constitution of Colombia establishes the following:



As for Article 49, it refers to the norms of constitutional rank have prevalence over the rest of the regulations of the State, so that what is established by the Political Constitution, has a superior category that imposes duties and obligations according to its mandates, said the article cited above, health as a concept and derivations are public services that are in charge of the State for the organization and execution. Therefore, health and its treatment is a constitutional right of citizens.

3 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MENTAL HEALTH

The genesis of the concept of mental health as it is known today, has had a great evolution, the current conception is the result of a historical background that has involved the concept of "mental health" as an ambiguous concept and its margin of theorization, however, Bertolote (2008) states that at first mental health was born from a movement called "mental hygiene" which ensured the improvement in the care and attention of people with possible mental disorders, This was the starting point of this concept, through research conducted on patients, prevailing in the adequate care of mental disorders.

An institutionalized WHO definition of mental health is:

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which the individual, aware of his or her own capabilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and have the capacity to make contributions to the community. The above definition poses an ideal scenario for the research that is being developed, by including the concept of "work" as a differentiating item of mental health, a situation that is related to productivity at work. Efficiency in work is implied by a number of factors that allow the ideal execution of the work, a situation that is recognized by the Colombian State, deploying a normative in relation to mental health care.

After this brief historical review of the first appearances of the concept of mental health, different theorists who have proposed the concept from different perspectives are linked.

Starting with Carranza (2002) that in his text, can be evidenced from the different perspectives of health and psychology, as they have considered mental health in its theoretical scope, mental health is the state of balance and active and sufficient adaptation, (Vidal, and Alarcón, 1986), taking into account from psychiatry, mental health uses a concept, This is linked to their social environment, where there is a direct relationship between maintaining a balanced mental health, which will allow personal growth, in addition to this, recognizes that it can improve their closest social circle, which gives a



very important connotation to maintain a healthy mental health, because of this circumstance may be affected by people close to them.

4 IN THE CLINICAL SETTING:

According to Dávila (1994), for a long time the concept of mental health has been referred to as mental illness, Carranza (2002). The clinical discipline places mental health as a condition that tends to care for it, from multiple clinical treatments that can be performed for its improvement, what is striking is that they do not consider it from a preventive scope, on the contrary, they intend to solve it by means of subsequent medicines, recognizing that there is a condition, obviating the concept of prevention in mental health.

Since the beginning of mental health, as an element of concern of the sciences, it has tried to establish clear concepts that allow its treatment to be comprehensive, as reflected in the above, which indicates that in addition to clinical efforts, at the time of being treated, the preventive field as an equally important element to subsequent treatments.

For Davini, Gellon De Salluzi, Rossi, (1968), mental health is understood as a positive state, of self-realization, taste for life. The above concept contains important components in people's lives, i.e., mental health as a normal state that accompanies a kind of happiness, for the reasons that guide their lives and that these can be fulfilled, however, this definition, alienates that the very components of life can be generators of an alteration of mental health, such as work, social relations among others, which in principle may seem normal but that in the background contains implications that attack mental health.

The above development, allows to give a contextualization of the research conducted. The mental health of teachers in Colombia is a situation that is seen as a problem, besides affecting the relational, emotional and work life of teachers, it has important implications at the time of teaching, that is, if there is an affectation to the mental health of teachers, this will lead to their educational exercise is affected, making a negative interaction, the duty of their vocation and profession, so in the study and prioritization of mental health, higher levels of education in the country would be achieved and at the same time for the care of mental health.



5 METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive of exploratory nature, which allows the development of the scientific review on mental health in teachers in Colombia, documenting the information found by means of scientific articles, degree theses, updated news from portals such as Scopus, Latindex, Scimago, Scielo, Redalyc, Dialnet and Google Scholar. Thirty research articles on mental health in teachers in Colombia were obtained, taking into account the legal framework, psychosocial factors and mental illnesses reported in the research documents, excluding research from countries other than Colombia and works without review. Research on primary, secondary and university teachers is taken into account.

6 RESULTS

The first article found is from 2014, which indicates that mental health in teachers has been reporting important information for several years. In 2015, there are two articles that address mental health from a theoretical and public health perspective. In 2016, burnout syndrome and mental health problems in teachers were found. In 2018, five articles were found, which shows for that year, more research on mental health in teachers from different institutions in Colombia. For 2019, there are three articles related to stress and burnout. For 2020, there are three articles related to mental health, stress and work environment. In 2021, there are six articles related to Covid-19, the change of teaching from face-to-face to virtual and how this process affected teachers and students. For 2022 there are four articles, continuing with the consequences of Covid-19 in the labor, social and physical and mental health of teachers and students. For the current year, there is news of interest about the concern of teachers after the Covid-19 pandemic, where there was a greater number of reports of incapacity due to sequels, alteration of some basic diseases, mental illnesses more outstanding than in previous years and thus the alertness of teachers and students with their mental health.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In Colombia, teachers are a central axis in education, which requires better mental health care, improving their quality of work by offering better salaries, more opportunities and defending their health rights.

The research allowed me to understand concepts, analyze information, acquire more knowledge about a subject that has become alien to our society, which, if we look at it



from a different perspective, we should be more empathetic with such an excellent profession, which has been violated and affected as much as it has been seen in a public problem.

After reviewing the scientific references, it can be seen that approximately 10 years ago, in Colombia there is no state of the art on the mental health of teachers, so this article was made with the purpose of explaining the problems that teachers live today in Colombia, generalized concepts and found with figures and data in other research, which allow the construction of the state of the art; also, analyzing this problem that should concern all Colombians, it is not among the government priorities, mental health in teachers, not only affects them and their families, but also the students, who need a teaching pedagogy, with good bases and foundations that allow them to learn and understand each subject in their classes, children and young people are affected by seeing their teacher sick, distressed and often absent, they lose time to learn. The above development allows us to give a contextualization of the research carried out. The mental health of teachers in Colombia is a situation that is seen as a problem, besides affecting the relational, emotional and work life of teachers, it has important implications at the time of teaching, that is, if there is an affectation to the mental health of teachers, this will lead to their educational exercise being affected, making a negative interaction, to the duty of their vocation and profession, so that in the study and prioritization of mental health, higher levels of education would be achieved in the country and at the same time for the care of mental health.



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