EXPLORING THE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT SCALE OF THE NURSING WORK INDEX IN A BRAZILIAN NEURO ICU: VALUABLE INSIGHTS FOR IMPROVEMENT!

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**ABSTRACT:**

**Introduction:** The Practice Environment Scale of the Nursing Work Index (PESNWI) is a valuable tool for assessing the factors that impact nurses' abilities to provide high-quality care. This scale consists of five domains, each evaluated using a Likert scale ranging from "Totally agree" (4) to "Totally disagree" (1). A higher score in each domain indicates a more favourable presence of that specific feature within the unit. **Method:** The PESNWI was distributed to nurses in the Neuro Intensive Care Unit (ICU) using Google Forms to gather their insights. **Results:** All 20 nurses in the Neuro ICU (100%) participated in the survey, comprising 16 female and 4 male nurses. Most of the participants had varying levels of experience: 11 (55%) had 1 to 5 years, 6 (30%) had 6 to 10 years, and 3 (15%) had 16 to 20 years. The nurses reported an average of 3.2 years of experience within the hospital and 1 year specifically in the ICU. The PESNWI scores were compared with those from Magnet Hospitals, yielding the following results: Nursing Foundations of Quality Care: (3.50 vs. 3.20), Nursing Participation in Hospital Affairs: (3.42 vs. 3.01), Nursing Manager Ability: (3.41 vs. 3.07), Staffing Adequacy: (3.36 vs. 3.07) and Collegial Relations: (3.28 vs. 2.88). The overall work environment score was recorded at 3.39 compared to 3.00, suggesting a favourable perception that is consistent with the standards of Magnet-certified hospitals. **Conclusion:** Unit leadership strategies help create a safe, high-quality work environment, positively impacting patient outcomes, even in middle-income countries.

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