

Leading article / Uvodnik

A healthy work environment: care for the well-being and health of employees in nursing

Zdravo delovno okolje: skrb za počutje in zdravje zaposlenih v zdravstveni negi

Mateja Lorber

Work is an important aspect of the lives of employees in nursing since we spend a large portion of our lives at work. Researchers (Waddell & Burton, 2006; Robertson & Cooper, 2011) emphasise that an employee's well-being at a workplace is a very important factor as it impacts physical health, work efficiency and career success. Personal well-being is an important basis of a person's life and the key concept in the definition by the World Health Organization (2018) which states that "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease". According to the International Labour Organization (2018), "workplace wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organization". Three main categories of well-being can be found in literature: mental well-being, physical well-being and social well-being (Grant, et al., 2007). This points to the fact that well-being is, similarly to health, a multi-dimensional concept.

It is a well-known fact that personal well-being has many benefits for the individual and the organisation in which he or she works. Research has shown that people who feel good are in better physical health, have better relationships, are more successful, find it easier to overcome stress at a workplace (Winwood, et al., 2007; Huppert, 2009), contribute to lower absenteeism levels and less illness-related costs (Harter, et al., 2003) and consequently to a more successful organization (Harter, et al., 2003; Wright & Cropanzano, 2004; Parks & Steelman, 2008). Boorman (2009) even emphasised that the well-being of employees in health organisations lowers the incidence of MRSA infections (*Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus*) in patients.

Health organisations are a challenging work environment. In their work, the employees in health organisations face continuous changes, so they have to be highly flexible. In addition to working in emotionally challenging conditions, employees in nursing also face challenges such as lack of staff, crowded hospitals, insufficient health services, lack of support from the management, many working hours and work overload. Therefore, nursing is an occupation that requires a lot of mental, emotional and physical energy from the employees (Divinakumar, et al., 2014), includes on-going interaction with different types of individuals such as doctors, nurses, other professionals, as well as patients and their families (Purcell, et al., 2011; Scheick, 2011).

Employees in nursing must take care of patients, but employers must also look after their employees by creating a healthy work environment. The World Health Organization (2010) defined a healthy workplace as a place of physical, mental and social well-being that fosters health and safety, which means that all employees work to achieve a state of health and well-being. A healthy work environment is an environment in which employees take care of the needs of the patients and their families, and at the same time reach the goals of the unit/department/organisation where they work. In addition, employees must also feel personal satisfaction when they are doing their jobs. It can, therefore, be said that employees in nursing who work in a healthy work environment provide quality care of the patients and foster a positive atmosphere to treat patients and also feel good at their workplace. With reference to encouraging awareness in establishing a healthy workplace, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurse defined six standards for making and keeping a healthy workplace for nurses of critically ill patients: skilled communication, true collaboration, effective

Assistant Professor Mateja Lorber, PhD, MSc, BSc, RN; University of Maribor, Faculty of Health Sciences, Žitna ulica 15, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia

Kontaktne e-naslov / Correspondence e-mail: mateja.lorber@um.si

Received / Prejeto: 30. 8. 2018

Accepted / Sprejeto: 4. 9. 2018

<https://doi.org/10.14528/snr.2018.52.3.851>

decision making, appropriate staffing, meaningful recognition and authentic leadership (American Association of Critical-Care Nurse, 2005). They are briefly presented below.

Firstly, efficient leadership is needed, and at the same time, awareness that all employees in nursing have the ability to be leaders is required. A healthy environment enhances leadership in employees and recognises the importance and expertise of the healthcare staff. In a healthy workplace, the leadership are aware that employees are valuable in ensuring a high quality care. Communication between employees, patients, their families and leadership is also important for a healthy workplace. In a healthy work environment nursing employees take part in the decision-making process regarding patient care and the work environment. In addition, employees are encouraged to express their thoughts and opinions that are appreciated. A healthy workplace also means that the employees are appropriately trained, professional development is offered to employees so that they can provide high quality care and treat patients with the respect they deserve. Also, a healthy workplace includes recognising the efforts and results of the staff, such as introducing celebrations on the occasion when a staff member gave a poster presentation or presented an article at a local, state or international event. Similarly, life-long learning and employee support should be encouraged. Mutual cooperation is one of the key components of a healthy workplace, so nursing employees should cooperate with other healthcare workers to reach the goals of patients, the department and the entire organisation. Mutual cooperation calls for good communication skills and the ability to work with others and make compromises. At a healthy workplace, employees are not afraid to speak their mind, but are rather encouraged to take part in making decisions related to healthcare and nursing.

Health and well-being at a workplace are the key elements of the Europe 2020 strategy to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (European Commission, 2010) since a healthy economy depends on a healthy population. European legislation and political measures recognise the importance of preserving the health and safety of employees, and maintenance of their well-being. With reference to safety and health, the 89/391/EGS directive (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2018) states that work should be adjusted to an employee and not the other way around. In 2008, the European Commission together with the responsible social partners and interested parties, signed a European pact for mental health and well-being and a competitive Europe (European Union, 2012). In accordance, every employee should be aware that a healthy workplace is of key importance not only for the sake of the well-being of the employer and their employees, but also for the sake of the success of an organisation. Understanding

the complexity of ensuring high quality nursing is essential for the changes, which effectively foster healthy workplaces (American Association of Critical-Care Nurse, 2005).

Encouraging health at work does not only mean respecting the legal rules and regulations related to the health and safety of the employees, but also that an organisation strives to improve the general health and safety of its employees. If employees feel good at work and are healthy, this may bring several positive effects such as decreased employee fluctuation, decreased levels of absenteeism, as well as higher employee motivation and efficiency. It is a reflection and recognition of a "careful organisation" in the environment.

Care for employee health and safety should become the basic task of a socially responsible management in nursing as positive effects for employees, employers and the society at large can only be achieved if employers and employees work together in maintaining and strengthening the state of health. Of course, these effects should not be short-term but long-term, as only in this way can they bring the benefits such as better health and well-being of employees, and greater security at a workplace, which would also result in decreased chances for injuries, lower costs resulting from sick leave, higher productivity and compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, which imposes on employers the responsibility of promotion of health at the workplace.

In order to improve the health and well-being of employees at a workplace, efforts should be made by the management, employees and society at large by means of encouraging the personal development of individuals and their role in the decision-making process.

Slovenian translation / Prevod v slovenščino

Delo predstavlja pomemben vidik življenja zaposlenih v zdravstveni negi, saj na delovnem mestu preživimo velik del svojega življenja. Raziskovalci (Waddell & Burton, 2006; Robertson & Cooper, 2011) izpostavljajo, da je na delovnem mestu dobro počutje zelo pomemben dejavnik, saj vpliva na telesno zdravje, delovno uspešnost in karierni uspeh zaposlenega. Dobro počutje je pomembna osnova za zdravje; ključni pojem definicije zdravja Svetovne zdravstvene organizacije, ki pravi, da je zdravje stanje popolnega telesnega, duševnega in socialnega dobrega počutja in ne zgolj odsotnosti bolezni (World Health Organization, 2018). Dobro počutje na delovnem mestu se po opredelitvi Mednarodne organizacije dela (International Labour Organization, 2018) nanaša na vse vidike delovnega življenja, na kakovost in varnost delovnega okolja, na počutje zaposlenih v delovnem okolju, na organizacijsko klimo ter organiziranost

dela. V literaturi zasledimo tri kategorije dobrega počutja: psihološko dobro počutje, telesno dobro počutje ter socialno dobro počutje (Grant, et al., 2007). Iz navedenega je razvidno, da je tako kot zdravje tudi dobro počutje večdimenzionalen koncept.

Znano je, da ima dobro počutje mnoge koristi za posameznika, družbo in tudi organizacijo, v kateri je zaposlen. Raziskave kažejo, da imajo ljudje, ki se dobro počutijo, boljše fizično zdravje, boljše odnose, so uspešnejši, lažje premagujejo obremenitve na delovnem mestu (Winwood, et al., 2007; Huppert, 2009), prispevajo k manjši odsotnosti z dela in manjšim stroškom zaradi bolezni (Harter, et al., 2003) ter večji uspešnosti organizacije (Harter, et al., 2003; Wright & Cropanzano, 2004; Parks & Steelman, 2008). Boorman (2009) je celo izpostavil, da dobro počutje zaposlenih v zdravstvenih organizacijah zmanjša pojavnost okužb z MRSA (angl. *Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus*, sl. *proti meticilinu odporni Staphylococcus aureus*) pri pacientih.

Zdravstvene ustanove predstavljajo zahtevno delovno okolje. Zaposleni v zdravstvenih ustanovah se pri svojem delu srečujejo s stalno spreminjajočim se okoljem, zato morajo biti zelo prilagodljivi. V čustveno zahtevnih okoljih se zaposleni v zdravstveni negi soočajo še z izzivi, kot so pomanjkanje osebja, pomanjkanje usposabljanja, prenatrpane bolnišnice, nezadostne zdravstvene storitve, pomanjkanje podpore s strani vodstva, veliko delovnih ur in preobremenitev. Zdravstvena nega je torej eden od poklicev, ki zahteva od zaposlenih veliko energije na duševnem, čustvenem in fizičnem področju (Divinakumar, et al., 2014), vključuje pa tudi stalno interakcijo z različnimi posamezniki, kot so zdravniki, medicinske sestre, drugi strokovnjaki, pacienti in njihove družine (Purcell, et al., 2011; Scheick, 2011).

Tako kot so zaposleni v zdravstveni negi dolžni skrbeti za paciente, imajo tudi delodajalci dolžnost skrbeti za zaposlene, tako da ustvarijo zdravo delovno okolje. Svetovna zdravstvena organizacija (World Health Organization, 2010) je definirala zdravo delovno okolje kot prostor fizičnega, psihičnega in socialnega dobrega počutja v podporo zdravja in varnosti, kar pomeni, da vsi zaposleni delujejo v smeri doseganja vizije spodbujanja zdravja in dobrega počutja. Zdravo delovno okolje je tisto okolje, v katerem zaposleni zadovoljijo potrebe pacientov in njihovih družin ter hkrati dosežejo cilje enote / oddelka / organizacije, kjer so zaposleni. In neke na tej poti morajo zaposleni občutiti tudi osebno zadovoljstvo ob opravljanju svojega dela. Glede na navedeno lahko rečemo, da zaposleni v zdravstveni negi v zdravem delovnem okolju zagotavljajo kakovostno oskrbo pacientov ter ustvarjajo pozitivno vzdušje za zdravljenje pacientov in se na delovnem mestu dobro počutijo. Glede na spodbujanje in zavedanje potrebe po vzpostavitvi zdravega delovnega okolja je Ameriško združenje medicinskih sester v zdravstveni negi kritično bolnih

(American Association of Critical-Care Nurse, 2005) opredelilo šest standardov za vzpostavitev in vzdrževanje zdravega delovnega okolja: učinkovita komunikacija, dobro sodelovanje, učinkovito odločanje, usposobljeno osebje, dobro prepoznavanje in avtentično vodenje. Na kratko jih predstavljamo v nadaljevanju.

V prvi vrsti mora biti prisotno učinkovito vodenje, hkrati pa je potrebno zavedanje, da imajo vsi zaposleni v zdravstveni negi sposobnost biti vodja. Zdravo delovno okolje je tisto, ki spodbuja vodilno vlogo pri zaposlenih ter priznava pomen in strokovno znanje zdravstvenega osebja. V zdravem delovnem okolju se vodstvo zaveda, da so zaposleni dragocen vir zagotavljanja kakovostne oskrbe. Prav tako je za zdravo delovno okolje ključnega pomena komunikacija med zaposlenimi, pacienti, njihovimi družinami in vodstvom. V zdravem delovnem okolju zaposleni v zdravstveni negi sodelujejo tudi v procesu odločanja glede oskrbe pacientov in delovnega okolja. Zaposlene se spodbuja k izrekanju misli in mnenj, ki so cenjena. Zaposleni so ustrezno usposobljeni. Načrtujejo se ukrepi za njihovo ustrezno usposabljanje, da bodo pacientom zagotavljali kakovostno zdravstveno nego in jih obravnavali spoštljivo. Zdravo delovno okolje vključuje tudi prepoznavanje prizadevanj in dosežkov osebja, kot je npr. uvedba praznovanj ob predstavitvi plakata ali prispevka na lokalnem, državnem ali mednarodnem srečanju. Prav tako se spodbujata vseživljenjsko učenje in podpora zaposlenim. Medsebojno sodelovanje je ena od ključnih sestavin zdravega delovnega okolja, zato morajo zaposleni v zdravstveni negi skupaj z drugimi člani zdravstvenega tima sodelovati pri doseganju ciljev pacienta ter oddelka in organizacije. Sodelovanje zahteva dobre komunikacijske spretnosti in zmožnost sodelovanja z drugimi ter sklepanje kompromisov. V zdravem delovnem okolju zaposleni ob izražanju lastnih mnenj niso prestrašeni ali zaskrbljeni, temveč se jih spodbuja k sodelovanju pri odločanju o zdravstveni negi ter oskrbi pacientov.

Zdravje in dobro počutje na delovnem mestu sta ključna elementa splošne strategije Evropa 2020 za pametno, trajnostno in vključujočo rast (Evropska komisija, 2010), saj je zdravo gospodarstvo odvisno od zdravega prebivalstva. Evropske zakonodaje in politični ukrepi priznavajo pomen ohranjanja zdravja in varnosti zaposlenih ter vzdrževanje njihovega dobrega počutja. Direktiva 89/391/EGS (Evropska agencija za varnost in zdravje pri delu, 2018) o ukrepih za izboljšanje varnosti in zdravja zaposlenih navaja, da je treba delo prilagoditi posamezniku in ne obratno. V letu 2008 je Evropska komisija skupaj s pristojnimi socialnimi partnerji in zainteresiranimi stranmi podpisala evropski pakt za duševno zdravje in dobro počutje, ki poudarja pomen duševnega zdravja in dobrega počutja za močno in konkurenčno Evropo (European Union, 2012). Glede na navedeno bi se

moral vsak delodajalec zavedati, da je zdravo delovno okolje ključnega pomena ne le zaradi dobrega počutja delodajalca in njegovih zaposlenih, temveč tudi zaradi uspeha organizacije. Razumevanje zapletenosti zagotavljanja kakovostne zdravstvene nege je namreč bistvenega pomena za spremembe, ki učinkovito spodbujajo zdrava delovna okolja (American Association od Critical-Care Nurse, 2005).

Spodbujanje zdravja na delovnem mestu ne pomeni le spoštovanja zakonskih predpisov ter zahtev o zdravju in varnosti zaposlenih, temveč tudi, da organizacija svojim zaposlenim pomaga izboljšati splošno zdravje in počutje. Če se zaposleni na delovnem mestu počutijo dobro in so zdravi, to pripomore k številnim pozitivnim učinkom, kot so manjša fluktuacija, manj odsotnosti z dela, večja motiviranost in učinkovitost zaposlenih. Gre za odraz in prepoznavanje »skrbne organizacije« v okolju.

Skrb za zdravje in dobro počutje zaposlenih mora postati osnovna naloga družbeno odgovornega ravnanja menedžmenta v zdravstveni negi, saj lahko le s skupnim sodelovanjem delodajalcev in zaposlenih na področju ohranjanja in krepitve zdravja dosežemo pozitivne učinke pri zaposlenih, delodajalcih in širši družbi. Seveda pa ti učinki ne smejo biti le kratkoročni, saj bodo le tako lahko prinašali številne koristi, kot so boljše zdravje in dobro počutje zaposlenih, večja varnost na delovnem mestu in s tem manjše tveganje za poškodbe, manjši stroški bolniških odsotnosti, večja produktivnost ter delovanje v skladu z Zakonom o varnosti in zdravju pri delu, ki delodajalcem določa izvajanje promocije zdravja na delovnem mestu.

Za izboljšanje zdravja in dobrega počutja zaposlenih na delovnem mestu so potrebna prizadevanja menedžmenta, zaposlenih in celotne družbe, ki pa morajo temeljiti na spodbujanju osebnostnega razvoja posameznika in omogočanju sprejemanja odločitev.

Literature

- American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, 2005. *AACN standards for establishing and sustaining health work environment*. Available at: <https://www.aacn.org/WD/HWE/Docs/HWESTandards.pdf> [28. 8. 2018].
- Boorman, S., 2009. *NHS Health and well-being: final report*. London: Department of Health. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130103004910/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_108799 [28. 8. 2018].
- Divinakumar, K.J., Shivram, B.P. & Ram, C.D., 2014. Perceived stress psychological well-being and burnout among female nurses working in governmental hospitals. *International Journal of Research in Medical Sciences*, 2(4), pp. 1511–1515. <https://doi.org/10.5455/2320-6012.ijrms20141150>
- European Union, 2008. *European pact for mental health and well-being: EU high level conference Together for mental health and well-being*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style_mental/docs/pact_en.pdf [28. 8. 2018].
- Evropska komisija, 2010. *Evropa 2020: strategija za pametno, trajnostno in vključujočo rast*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/1_SL_ACT_part1_v1.pdf [28. 8. 2018].
- Evropska agencija za varnost in zdravje pri delu, 2018. *Okvirna direktiva o varnosti in zdravju pri delu*. Available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/sl/legislation/directives/the-osh-framework-directive/the-osh-framework-directive-introduction> [28. 8. 2018].
- Grant, A.M., Christianson, M.K., & Price, R.H., 2007. Happiness, health, or relationship: managerial practices and employee well-being tradeoffs. *Academy of Management perspectives*, 21(3), pp. 51–63. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2007.26421238>
- Harter, J.K., Schmidt, F.L., & Keyes, C.L.M., 2003. Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: a review of the Gallup studies. In C.I.M. Keyes, & J. Haidt, eds. *Flourishing: positive psychology and live well-lived*. Washington: American Psychological Association, pp. 205–224. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10594-009>
- Huppert, F.A., 2009. Psychological well-being: evidence regarding its causes and consequences. *Applied Psychology: health and well-being*, 1(2), pp. 137–164. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2009.01008.x>
- International Labour Organization, 2018. *Workplace well-being*. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/safework/areasofwork/workplace-health-promotion-and-well-being/WCMS_118396/lang--en/index.htm [28. 8. 2018].
- Parks, K.M., & Steelman, L.A., 2008. Organizational wellness programs: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 13(1), pp. 58–68. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.13.1.58> PMID:18211169
- Purcell, S.R., Kutash, M. & Cobb, S., 2011. The relationship between nurses' stress and nurse staffing factors in a hospital setting. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 19, pp. 714–720. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2834.2011.01262.x> PMID:21899624
- Robertson, I., & Cooper, C., 2011. *Well-being: productivity and happiness at work*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230306738>

Scheick, D.M., 2011. Developing self-aware mindfulness to manage countertransference in the nurse-client relationship: an evaluation and developmental study. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 27, pp. 114–123.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2010.10.005>
PMid:21420044

Waddell, G., & Burton, K.A., 2006. *Is work good for your health and well-being*. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214326/hwwb-is-work-good-for-you.pdf [28.8.2018].

Winwood, P.C., Bakker, A.B., & Winefield, A.H., 2007. An investigation of the role of non-work-time behaviour in buffering the effects of work strain. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 49(8), pp. 862–871.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0b013e318124a8dc>
PMid:17693784

World Health Organization, 2010. *WHO healthy workplace framework and model: background and supporting literature and practice*. Available at:
https://www.who.int/occupational_health/healthy_workplace_framework.pdf [28. 8. 2018].

World Health Organization, 2018. *Constitution of WHO: principles*. Available at:
<https://www.who.int/about/mission/en/> [28. 8. 2018].

Wright, T.A., & Cropanzano, R., 2004. The role of psychological well-being in job performance: a fresh look at an age-old quest. *Organizational Dynamics*, 33(4), pp. 338–351.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2004.09.002>

Cite as / Citirajte kot:

Lorber, M., 2018. A healthy work environment: care for the well-being and health of employees in nursing. *Obzornik zdravstvene nege*, 52(3), pp. 148–152. <https://doi.org/10.14528/snr.2018.52.3.851>