

Quale rischio di patologia psichiatrica per la categoria professionale degli insegnanti?

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KEY WORDS

Teachers; students; school; helping professions; burnout; psychiatric disease

SUMMARY

«Is there any correlation between psychiatric disease and the teaching profession?» Background: *Some professional categories are at risk for burnout due to job-related stressors. Burnout is characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion, apathy, cynical attitude, low personal accomplishment and reduced self-control. Several studies on occupational stress have demonstrated that burnout has a strong impact on certain professions and in particular on teachers.* Objectives: *The purpose of the study was to highlight and compare differences among clinical disorders diagnosed in four different classes of workers in the Public Administration sector, with particular focus on job-related and mental disorders.* Materials and methods: *Based on the data collected in 3.447 medical examinations, performed by the Milan Health District from January 1992 to December 2003, in order to assess work fitness, researchers compared four categories of state employees (teachers, clerks, health care professionals and blue collars).* Results: *The findings revealed that the risk of teachers to develop psychiatric disorders is 2-, 2.5-, and 3-fold higher than that of clerks, health care professionals and blue collars, respectively. Age or sex did not represent a confounding factor for increased rate of psychiatric disorders. Interestingly, teachers also presented an approximately 1.5-2 fold higher risk of developing neoplasms, compared with clerks and blue collars.* Conclusions: *The increased prevalence of psychiatric disorders among teachers that was detected in this cohort of state employees applying for a disability pension is striking and warrants further investigation. This finding points to the need for job-related interventions aimed at preventing teachers' psychiatric disorders, a multidimensional issue which requires active debate among institutions, unions, school authorities, the scientific community, professional associations and, last but not least, students and their families.*