

EMOTIONS IN WHITE COATS: A PILOT STUDY ON ATTITUDES TOWARD EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL LITERACY AMONG PHYSICIANS AND NURSES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine differences in attitudes toward emotions between physicians and nurses, as well as to explore aspects of their emotional literacy in the context of everyday professional functioning. The pilot study included a total of 89 participants, evenly distributed by profession. A questionnaire assessing attitudes toward emotions was used, encompassing cognitive, affective, and regulatory dimensions of emotional functioning. Chi-square analysis identified 16 items with statistically significant differences between the two groups ($p < .01$). The results indicated that physicians more frequently expressed emotional inhibition, a tendency to suppress emotions, fear of emotional evaluation, and reliance on rationalization. In contrast, nurses demonstrated greater emotional openness, acceptance of the functionality of emotions, and a higher readiness to express affect. The discussion focused on the influence of professional socialization, educational systems, and organizational culture on the formation of specific patterns of emotional literacy. The findings of this study have important implications for the development of training programs aimed at enhancing the emotional competencies of healthcare professionals, improving interprofessional communication, and preventing burnout. Furthermore, they highlight the need for a deeper understanding of emotional labor in healthcare, with an emphasis on tailored interventions that consider the professional context and specific challenges of each occupation.

Keywords: emotions, emotional literacy, physicians, nurses, professional socialization