



ORIGINAL

## Empathy in Professor of a Educational Institution in Metropolitan Lima

### Empatía en Profesores de una Institución Educativa en Lima Metropolitana

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#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** empathy is one of the qualities that health professionals must possess, which allows them to improve their relationship with the patient and in turn the care to be performed.

**Objective:** to determine empathy in Professor of an Educational Institution in Metropolitan Lima.

**Methods:** It is a quantitative, descriptive-cross-sectional study with a population of 102 Professor who developed a questionnaire of sociodemographic aspects and the Jefferson Medical Empathy Scale.

**Results:** In their results, we observed that 26,5 % (n=27) have a low level of empathy, 25,5 % (n=26) moderate low level, 24,5 % (n=25) moderate high level and 23,5 % (n=24) high level of empathy.

**Conclusions:** In conclusion, training in nurses should be improved, since it will allow quality and humanized care in the patient.

**Keywords:** Empathy; Nursing Care; Patients; Mental Health.

#### RESUMEN

**Introducción:** la empatía es una de las cualidades que deben poseer los profesionales de la salud, la cual les permite mejorar su relación con el paciente y a su vez la atención a realizar.

**Objetivo:** determinar la empatía en Profesores de una Institución Educativa de Lima Metropolitana.

**Métodos:** es un estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo-transversal con una población de 102 Profesores a quienes se les elaboró un cuestionario de aspectos sociodemográficos y la Escala de Empatía Médica de Jefferson.

**Resultados:** en sus resultados observamos que el 26,5 % (n=27) tienen un nivel bajo de empatía, el 25,5 % (n=26) un nivel moderadamente bajo, el 24,5 % (n=25) un nivel moderadamente alto y el 23,5 % (n=24) un nivel alto de empatía.

**Conclusiones:** en conclusión, se debe mejorar la formación en enfermería, ya que permitirá una atención de calidad y humanizada en el paciente.

**Palabras clave:** Empatía; Cuidados de Enfermería; Pacientes; Salud Mental.

#### INTRODUCTION

Empathy is a basic principle of quality for health professions, since they are exposed to stressful and emotionally intense situations in the workplace, which makes them more vulnerable to problems of work stress and emotional exhaustion, which has generated alterations in their physical and emotional state.<sup>(1)</sup>

It is difficult for nurses to establish empathic communication with patients in work-heavy work environments

and stressful environments, opportunities to deal with patients are not optimal.<sup>(2)</sup>

The lack or low levels of empathy depends on several reasons involving the conditions around the nurse; The most important are the number of health users with whom this professional has to deal, the lack of adequate time due to the high load of activities, the therapeutic approach, the culture of training in health faculties and the lack of training in empathy.<sup>(3)</sup>

However, empathy is closely related to the nursing care process and has an important role to play in establishing a positive relationship between nurse and patient; also, in the offer of favorable nursing care.

<sup>(4)</sup> However, nurses who demonstrate understanding of their patients' experiences of illness will see their relationship improved. Empathy is the essence of all nurse-patient interaction and should be seen as an important clinical indicator for delivering high-quality nursing care.<sup>(5,6)</sup>

In another aspect, empathy, in addition to having positive consequences for the patient, is associated with some factors such as respect, social behavior, ethical reasoning and positive attitude towards them, the ability to obtain a good medical history and the promotion of clinical results. In addition, the greater the nurse's capacity for empathy, the lower the medication errors, the greater patient satisfaction and adherence to treatment.<sup>(7,8)</sup>

Therefore, patients who face more empathetic behaviors experience less anxiety, better self-concept, less depression and hostility. Empathetic behaviors also have positive effects on nurses, including providing more effective care and an experience of less mental stress and job burnout. On the other hand, if empathy is low in a professional relationship with the patient, it can disrupt the diagnosis, treatment, and care of the patient.<sup>(9,10)</sup>

In a study conducted in Iran, with 112 nursing participants, they stated in their results that Professor working in mental health, emergency and ICU are those who have high and medium empathy. In conclusion, Professor tend to have high levels of empathy when they interact a lot with the patient.<sup>(11)</sup>

In a study conducted in China, with 539 nursing participants, they interpreted in their results that the participants had high levels of empathy and that they tended to experience work stress at low levels. Concluding that by being in constant communication and having strategies that allow the reduction of stress, nurses perform their care properly to the patient.<sup>(12)</sup>

In a study conducted in Spain, with 338 Professor, they stated in their results that 51 % of Professor had a high empathy for the humanized care they performed. Concluding that cognitive empathy, emotional intelligence, and stress management improved the nurses' mood and improved their quality of care.<sup>(13)</sup>

## METHODS

### *Research type and Design*

In the study, according to its properties is quantitative, with respect to its methodology is descriptive-transversal non-experimental.<sup>(14)</sup>

### *Population*

The total population is made up of 102 nurses who work in services of a Clinic in Metropolitan Lima

### *Inclusion Criteria*

- Participants who work more than 3 months in the Clinic
- Participants working in the emergency and hospitalization areas
- Participants who have voluntarily agreed to participate in the study

### *Technique and Instrument*

The technique used is the survey, which covers sociodemographic aspects and the data collection instrument of the Jefferson Empathy Scale (JEMS).

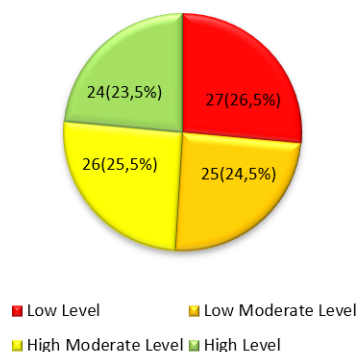
The EEMJ instrument comprises 20 items grouped into 3 dimensions: perspective taking (10 items), care with compassion (7 items) and ability to put oneself in the patient's place (3 items). The answers will have two significant frames on a Likert-type scale, for each of the items, if you disagree it is 0 and if there is agreement it is valued at 7, with a variation score of 20 to 140. Between "20 to 83" refers to low empathy, "84 to 91" refers to low empathy, "92 to 97 moderate high empathy and "98 to 140" refers to high empathy.<sup>(15,16)</sup>

Regarding the validation of the instrument, it was performed by the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin test obtaining a coefficient of 0,815 (KMO > 0,8) and Bartlett's sphericity test obtained significant results (Approx.  $X^2=7767,213$ ; gl = 160 Sig. p=0,000).

And for the reliability of the instrument was performed by Cronbach's Alpha obtaining a score of 0,625 ( $\alpha > 0,6$ ) for the 20 elements of the instrument, where we can determine that the instrument is reliable.

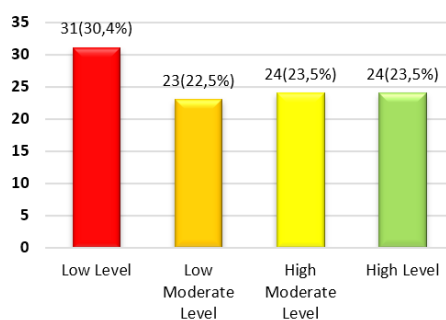
*Place and Application of the Instrument*

Prior coordination is made with each nursing professional so that they can carry out the questionnaire for the research, in addition to providing them with information so that they have the necessary knowledge of what is being covered in the research.

**RESULTS**

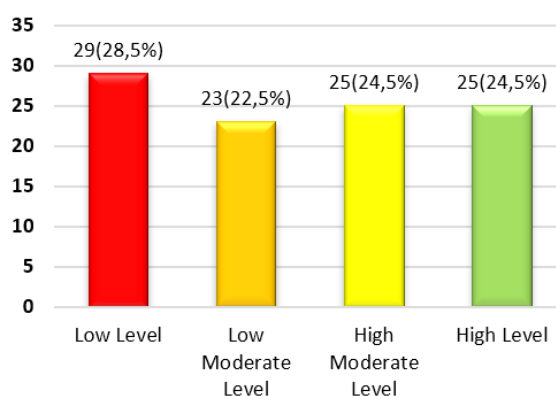
**Figure 1.** Empathy in Professor of an Educational Institution in Metropolitan Lima

In figure 1, we can see that 26,5 % of Professor have a low level of empathy, 24,5 % a low level of moderate empathy, 25,5 % a high level of moderate empathy and a high level of empathy.



**Figure 2.** Empathy in Professor in their dimension perspective of the services of a clinic in Metropolitan Lima

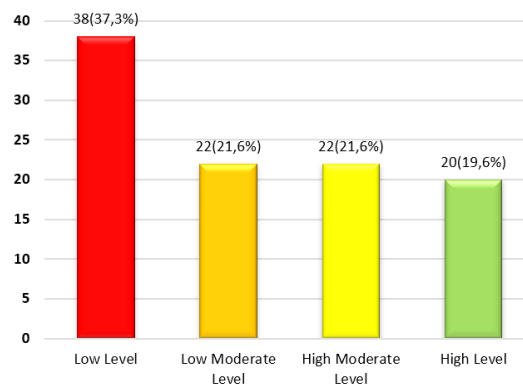
In Figure 2, we can see with respect to the dimension perspective that, 30,4 % of Professor have a low level of empathy, 22,5 % moderate low level, 23,5 % moderate high level and 23,5 % high level of empathy.



**Figure 3.** Empathy in Professor in their dimension care with compassion of the services of a clinic in Metropolitan Lima

In Figure 3, we can observe with respect to the dimension care with compassion that, 28,5 % of Professor have a low level of empathy, 22,5 % moderate low level, 24,5 % moderate high level and 24,5 % high level of empathy.

In Figure 4, we can observe with respect to the dimension ability to put oneself in the patient's place that, 37,3 % of Professor have a low level of empathy, 21,6 % moderate low level, 21,6 % moderate high level and 19,6 % high level of empathy.



**Figure 4.** Empathy in Professor in their dimension ability to put themselves in the place of the patient of the services of a clinic in Metropolitan Lima

## DISCUSSION

This research topic seeks the relationship that exists in the empathy of nurses with patients, since empathy allows to improve the quality of patient care, making the nurse-patient relationship more relevant and that this generates trust in the patient.

As for the level of empathy in nurses, the low level predominated, this we interpret that during the coronavirus pandemic, the rates of saturation and demand of patients, has affected the well-being of all health professionals, especially in nursing, given that environmental factors can influence the empathy of Professor, Although, understanding the role of empathy is an issue of special relevance in geographical contexts where professionals have to meet daily social needs with scarce resources and this generates greater tension for them, as occurs in many public health institutions in Latin American countries.

As for its dimensions, professionals have low empathy, this we can interpret, that given the difficult situation due to the pandemic, the care to be carried out due to the high demand of patients is compromised, although nurses who present a high empathy, generating empathic skills that, being a protective measure, against physical and mental exhaustion resulting from workload; Thanks to this process, the personal relationship and communication with patients is not compromised. Although, empathy during care in the midst of a pandemic has been of great help to Professor, since empathic abilities improved learning and the ability to promote community skills in nurses and thus allows better care for patients.

The results were obtained in the middle of the pandemic, where the number of patients treated and the situation of extreme care to avoid infection should have influenced these results; In addition, to distance patients from their families for health safety measures.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that continuous training should be carried out for Professor, since it will allow care to be carried out in a more humanized and quality way.

It is concluded that strategies should be sought that minimize work overexertion in Professor, and thus improve their quality of patient care.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

## AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

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