



Short Original Article

Collaboration between nurses in a vaccination day against Covid-19 in a meat industry in Lleida health region (Spain)

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ABSTRACT

The need for a collaboration between the public health system (PHS) nurses and the occupational nurses from occupational risk prevention services (ORPS) was made evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. In Catalonia, several examples of beforementioned necessity were seen. This document analyses the experience both PHS nurses and ORPS nurses had during the vaccination program of a meat industry workers. It was concluded that coordination and synchronization between both parts is, not only possible, but also key in bettering health markers at a community level. Planning and intervention from an occupational standpoint have proven effective and opens the door to future collaborations between occupational nurses and other nursing specialties.

Keywords: Occupational risk factors; biological risk; occupational accident; healthcare workers; needle sticks; occupational health.

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the vital role that health and safety at the workplace plays in safeguarding the worker's health, the well-functioning of society and the maintenance of continued economic and social activity. Therefore, economic growth and reactivation of productivity depends on a renewed compromise of making health and safety at work a priority and improving synergies between health and safety at work and public health policies¹.

Workplaces during and after the pandemic have grown in complexity, for this reason, an updated vision of the world of work that is in constant transformation is necessary. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized these complexities and has made health, safety at work and public health policies intertwine more than ever¹.

The occupational nurses from occupational risk prevention services (ORPS) have collaborated actively throughout the pandemic from their workplace, extending their activity to circumstances that affect the health of workers², carrying out different actions such as the study and management of cases and contacts, study and management of vulnerable people and workers especially sensitive in relation to infection by the SARS-CoV-2 and the performance of microbiological diagnostic tests. All these actions have been carried out in cooperation with the health authorities and public health services³.

We can safely state that the collaboration between nurses from the public health system (PHS) and the occupational nurses of ORPS has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Catalonia we have had several examples of this collaboration, one of them has been the exemplary vaccination campaign carried out in 2021.

The great task carried out by the nurses in Catalonia, leading the vaccination against COVID-19, with more than 14,000,000 doses administered in just over a year, makes the nursing profession claim its key role and the need for experience to face the high complexity that hides behind the immunization process⁴. This task has been of great significance in the labor market in Lleida. The aim of this study is to assess, using de SWOT analysis, the weaknesses, threats, strengths and opportunities how the collaboration between the different professional teams was perceived during the vaccination program against COVID-19 for the meat industry workers in Lleida Health Region.

Methods

A qualitative study of situation assessment was carried out using a SWOT analysis. The data source to conduct the assessment were four individual interviews with each team coordinator. The interviews were held by phone to facilitate the response of the professionals from each of the areas that intervened in the immunization action. All the participants agreed to the interview voluntarily and expressed their consent explicitly. An *ad-hoc* questionnaire was used, designed specifically to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that were perceived during the collaboration amongst the different teams that participated in the vaccination campaign. The questionnaire consisted of 15 open questions directed to the coordinator of the vaccination team of the PHS, the coordinator of the ORPS, the coordinator of Vaccination plan to the COVID-19 in Health Region Lleida and the coordinator of the Occupational Health Service in Health Region Lleida.

The questions were the following:

1. Do you think it was positive for the users/workers to have more human resources with qualified healthcare personnel?
2. Do you think vaccinating in the company installation was a good strategy to facilitate access to the vaccine to the working population?
3. Do you think there was good predisposition to collaborate amongst the different teams that intervened in the campaign?
4. Do you think the facilities where the vaccination task took place were adequate for that purpose? Why?
5. Do you think the sanitary conditions where the vaccination task took place were adequate for that purpose? Why?
6. Was the organization carried out by the company adequate? Why?
7. Do you think that a specific sector of the population could be accessed more easily? Which one?
8. Did the vaccination campaign make it possible to carry out health promotion?
9. Did the vaccination campaign make it possible to publicize the occupational risk prevention service?
10. Do you think that the users/workers believed false myths about vaccines?

11. Do you think the users/workers were reluctant to use the company healthservices?
12. Do you think that users/workers had decent access to health care?
13. In general, how do you assess the action taken in the company?
14. In general, how do you rate the experience of working with health professionals from other health fields?
15. Would you recommend carrying out future health actions together with health professionals from other fields in the work environment?

Ethic principals

The procedures followed in this analysis were in line with the Helsinki Declaration revised in 2013.

Results

Strengths

- More qualified health personnel. Resource optimization
- Good understanding between professionals from different fields, collaboration and clear objectives
- The company collaborated; provided data, provided space and time
- The action generates respect and trust towards the health system as well as decent access to health care

Weaknesses

- The workspace was not optimal, not adapted to the usual use of sanitary processes
- Minimum sanitary conditions, occasionally lack of space and ventilation
- Cadence not respected, temporary space between line stoppages hinders the speed of the action and its proper organization

Opportunities

- Future collaborations, for the good development shown in the coordination
- Introduce the company's occupational risk prevention service (ORPS) to the Support for

health professionals of the public health service of Catalonia (SISCAT), to the company and workers from another perspective

- Access to the most disadvantaged population, difficult to attract or temporary workers
- The implicit action of health promotion
- The ORPS is identified as the one that watches over the health of workers
- Excellent, positive and necessary collaboration
- Learning and opportunity

Threats

- False myths about vaccines held by some workers
- Reluctance to use the company's medical services due to fear
- Language barrier, difficulty in understanding
- Limited time of action to carry out health promotion

Having more qualified health personnel at a time when there was a shortage of qualified health labor capable of participating in immunization program was a positive point of consensus in the assessment of all the professionals surveyed. It is also worth noting, the good understanding among the professionals of the different areas shown throughout the day, the clear and common objective brought out an empathetic and beneficial collaboration between them.

All the professionals valued the collaboration as excellent, positive and necessary in the context of the pandemic. The perception of the participants was that the program was an opportunity to work with "colleagues" from different professional backgrounds and to learn about different ways of working.

All the professionals agreed that the false myths surrounding vaccination, the language barrier and the difficulty of understanding between the professionals and some of the workers constituted a threat to the proper development of the program.

The limited time of action was insufficient to carry out health promotion in a desirable way according to the perception of the nursing professionals.

Conclusions

Coordination and synchronization between professionals of the public health system, outside the Support for health professionals of the public health service of Catalonia (SISCAT), with companies and the ORPS is possible.

The importance of planning and intervention from the workplace perspective to improve community health is strategic.

The good outcome of this project and the evidence of the possibility of carrying out joint actions opens the door to future actions between occupational nurses and nurses from other specialties of the public health system.

Conflict of interests

The authors certify that they have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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