

# Burnout Among Occupational Therapists in Portugal

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ENOTHE

European Network  
of Occupational Therapy  
in Higher Education





# Introduction

- **BURNOUT**

*"A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal fulfillment that may occur in individuals who work with people with some kind of disability"* (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996)

## Set of Three dimensions



emotional exhaustion



depersonalization

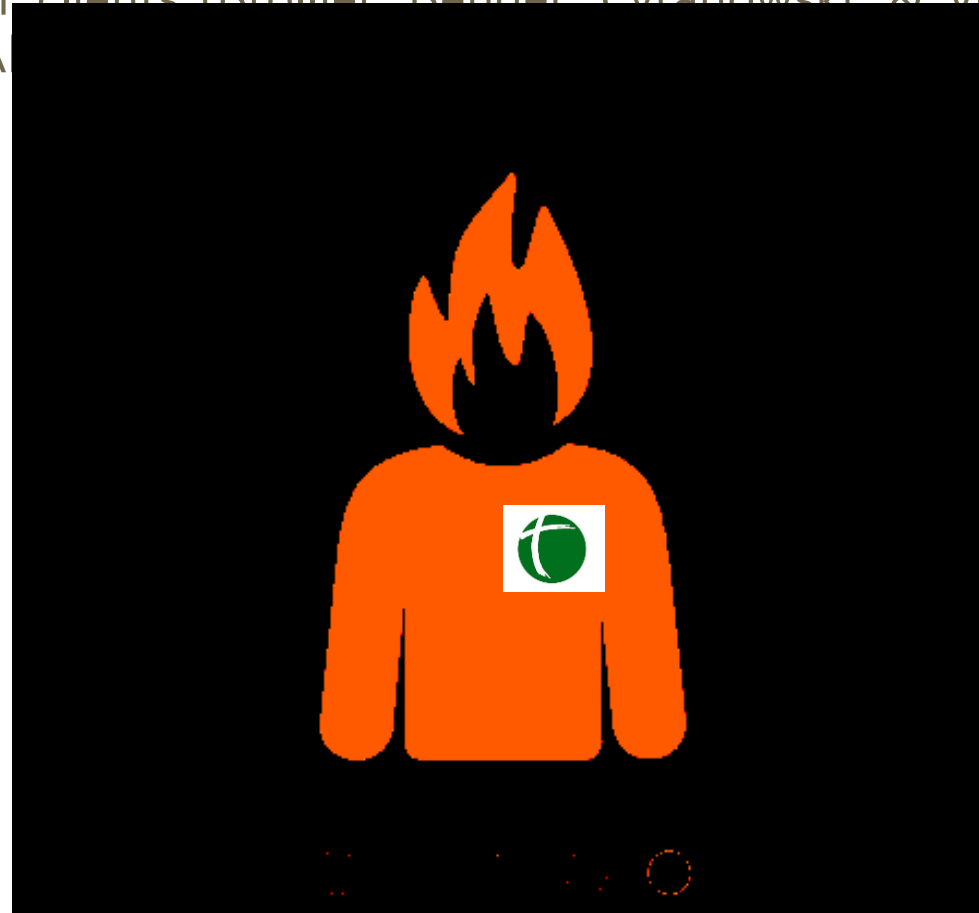


feeling of reduce  
professional  
achievement



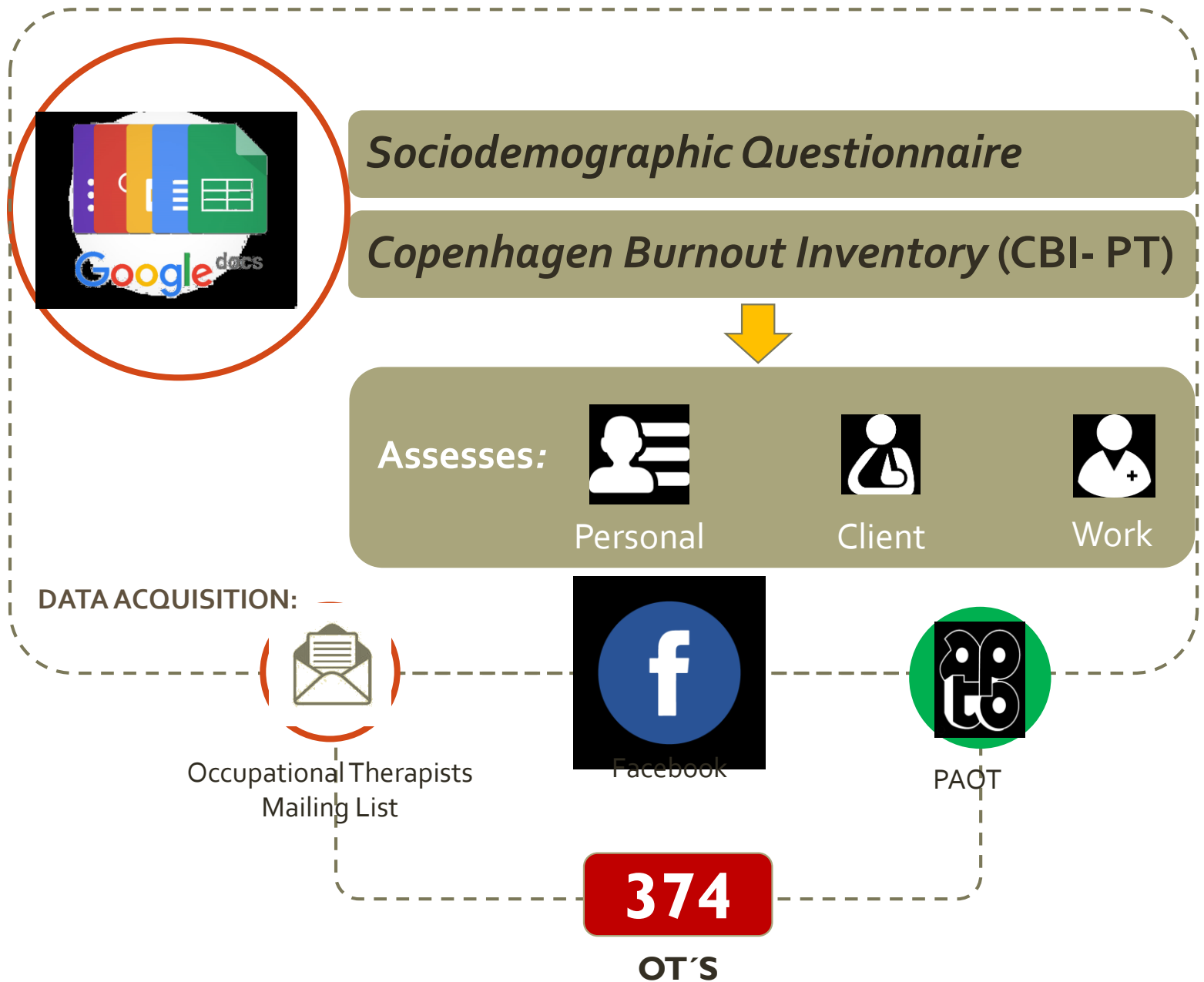
## Introduction (cont.)

- In their professional practice, occupational therapists are in permanent contact with emotionally draining situations, making these professionals vulnerable to a burnout diagnosis because of their constant emotional output with regards to the relationships with their clients (Brollier, Bender, Cyrankowski, & Velletri, 1987; Painter, A





# Methods





# Methods (cont.)

## Procedures

- This study was approved by the Polytechnic of Leiria Ethics Committee
- Participants were asked to volunteer for this study
- Informed Consent documents were provided

**COMISSÃO DE ÉTICA**  
da **Unidade Investigação em Ciências da Saúde: Enfermagem** (UICISA: E)  
da **Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra** (ESEnFC)

**Parecer Nº 438\_06-2017**

**Título do Projecto:** Profissionais de saúde e burnout: o impacto da função e do contexto.

**Identificação do Proponente**  
Nome(s): Helena Isabel da Silva Reis; Maria dos Anjos Dixie  
Filiação Institucional: Escola Superior de Saúde do Instituto Politécnico de Leiria  
Investigador Responsável/Orientador: Helena Isabel da Silva Reis; Maria dos Anjos Dixie

**Relator:** Rogério Manuel Clemente Rodrigues

**Parecer**

As proponentes propõem-se desenvolver, estudo, com o objectivo de "Avaliar os níveis de Burnout dos Terapeutas Ocupacionais e verificar se existem diferenças significativas entre os níveis de Burnout dos Terapeutas Ocupacionais consoante a sua área de atuação."

O instrumento de recolha de dados é o "Copenhagen Burnout Inventory, versão traduzida e adaptada para a população Portuguesa".

O estudo é definido como "correlacional."


A amostra será constituída por terapeutas ocupacionais com pelo menos um ano de prática.


O contacto com os participantes será efectuado "através da divulgação pela associação portuguesa de terapeutas ocupacionais, da mailing list de terapeutas ocupacionais de Portugal e de redes sociais...".

Com base nos documentos apresentados:

- Estão definidos os critérios de inclusão;
- É garantida a participação livre, voluntária e informada dos participantes;
- Aos participantes é apresentado documento com esclarecimentos sobre o estudo;
- É garantida a confidencialidade dos dados recolhidos;
- Os instrumentos de recolha de dados são apresentados;
- Não são identificados danos, ou custos, para os participantes.

Pelo exposto o parecer da Comissão de Ética da UICISA-E é **favorável**, salientando que este parecer não dispensa a autorização expressa da entidade que divulga o estudo junto dos associados.

O relator: 

Data: 19/07/2017 A Presidente da Comissão de Ética: 



# Results

Table 1 – Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Nº	%
Gender	Female	344	92
	Male	30	8
Partnership	Married/non married	149	39.8
	Single	213	56.9
	Divorced	12	3.3
Educational Qualifications	3 Years Degree	9	2.4
	4 Years Degree	315	84.2
	Master/PhDDegree	50	13.4



## Results (cont.)

Table 1 (cont.) – Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Nº	%
Area of the Country	Azores and Madeira	21	5.6
	Alentejo	19	5.1
	Algarve	18	4.8
	Interior	13	3.5
	Coast	46	12.3
	Between Douro and Minho	103	27.5
	Estremadura and Ribatejo	39	10.4
	Lisbon and Setúbal	105	28.1
	Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro	10	2.7



## Results (cont.)

Table 1 (cont.) – Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Nº	%
Years as an Occupational Therapist	Up to 5	191	51.1
	6 to 10	70	18.7
	11 to 15	39	10.4
	16 to 20	27	7.2
	21 to 25	34	9.1
	> 25	13	3.5





## Results (cont.)

Table 1 (cont.) – Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Nº	%
Years working in the same institution	Up to 5	241	64.4
	6 to 10	55	14.7
	11 to 15	31	8.3
	16 to 20	23	6.1
	21 to 25	11	2.9
	> 25	13	3.5



## Results (cont.)

Table 1 (cont.) – Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Nº	%
Type of institution	Public Institution	94	26.2
	Private Institution	89	24.8
	SSPI	176	49.0



## Results (cont.)

Table 1 (cont.) – Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Nº	%
Weekly workload (hours)	1 to 10	8	2.1
	11 to 20	9	2.4
	21 to 25	16	4.3
	26 to 30	22	5.9
	31 to 35	161	43.0
	36 to 40	121	32.4
	> 40	37	9.9



## Results (cont.)

### Table 1 (cont.) – Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Nº	%
Setting	Integrated continuing care unit	42	11.3
	NEISC	17	4.6
	Nursing Homes	35	9.4
	SSPI, other facilities	53	14.2
	SSPI, OAC	57	15.3
	Hospital, physical medicine and rehabilitation services	65	17.4
	Hospital, psychiatry	25	6.7
	Hospital, child psychiatry	17	4.6
	RCI	42	11.3
	Health center	14	3.8
	Home support	6	1.6



## Results (cont.)

Table 1 (cont.) – Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Nº	%
Age of client population	Adults (18-64 years)	145	38.8
	Children (0-6 years)	65	17.4
	Seniors (+65 years)	88	23.5
	Youth (6-17 years old)	76	20.3



## Results (cont.)

Table 2 – Prevalence of burnout levels in the sample of Portuguese occupational therapists

	Presence		Absence		Mini mum	Maxi mum	mea n	SD
	N'	%	N'	%				
CB	86	23.0	288	77.0	0.00	79.1	33.5	17.5
PB	163	43.6	211	56.4	4.1	91.6	46.7	16.1
WB	167	44.7	207	55.3	3.5	89.2	45.1	17.0



## Results (cont.)

Table 3 – Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test between burnout levels and age of the client population with regards to occupational therapists

		Mean rank	mean	SD	X <sup>2</sup>	p
CB	Children (0-6 years)	188.15	33.5	17.5	5.482	0.140
	Youth (6-17 years old)	212.50	37.8	18.5		
	Adults (18-64 years)	178.91	32.1	17.6		
	Seniors (+65 years)	179.59	31.8	16.0		
PB	Children (0-6 years)	<u>210.75</u>	<u>50.0</u>	15.9	8.043	0.045
	Youth (6-17 years old)	198.98	48.3	15.6		
	Adults (18-64 years)	185.15	46.4	17.0		
	Seniors (+65 years)	164.29	43.6	14.9		
WB	Children (0-6 years)	194.40	46.0	16.0	6.038	0.110
	Youth (6-17 years old)	208.84	48.5	17.0		
	Adults (18-64 years)	184.69	44.5	18.2		
	Seniors (+65 years)	168.60	42.4	15.5		



Results (cont.)

Table 4 – Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test between burnout levels and years of practice

	Years as a therapist	Mean rank	Mean	SD	X <sup>2</sup>	p
CB	Up to 5 <sup>1</sup>	163.79	29.4	16.5	20.843	0.001
	6 to 10 <sup>2</sup>	222.03	39.2	17.1		
	11 to 15 <sup>3</sup>	201.58	36.2	18.5		
	16 to 20 <sup>4</sup>	223.48	39.1	17.3		
	21 to 25 <sup>5</sup>	196.81	35.6	19.8		
	> 25 <sup>6</sup>	208.69	36.2	13.1		
PB	Up to 5	172.49	44.6	15.3	10.935	0.053
	6 to 10	203.42	48.8	17.2		
	11 to 15	196.69	48.3	16.7		
	16 to 20	222.91	52.1	15.6		
	21 to 25	182.62	45.5	17.8		
	> 25	234.00	53.8	13.2		
WB	Up to 5	165.62	43.8	15.6	10.841	0.055
	6 to 10	203.46	49.5	16.1		
	11 to 15	200.84	49.9	17.7		
	16 to 20	211.25	50.2	13.7		





## Conclusions

- OTs in Portugal, as health professionals involved in care who have a direct, continuous, and highly emotional relationship with clients, are vulnerable to burnout as previous research has indicated (Maslach et al., 2001; Luken & Sammons, 2006).
- OTs in Portugal are highly likely to have burnout, especially Work related Burnout and Personal Burnout
- Burnout related to personal issues increase with therapists' age
- Therapists who work with children have higher levels of Personal Burnout
- Significant differences were observed with regards to CB ( $p=0.001$ ). Increased years of practice is followed by a greater self-assessed physical and psychological fatigue as well as exhaustion related to working with clients.



## Implications for Practice

- Scientific reasons that justify the fatigue and psychological exhaustion among occupational therapists who work with children (0-6 years) and to characterise their job demands.
- To continue to explore burnout rates, including personal and family variables.
- To conduct quantitative and qualitative research in order to verify if strategies to reduce burnout rates are used and which ones.



# Publication

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