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EDITORIAL

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Dignity, the Necessary Companion of the Aging Process at the Workplace

Our society faces the changes of an aging workforce that requires support for the control and monitoring of its chronic conditions, as well as demands a greater opportunity to continue working, if necessary and, if it is considered or desired. It is evidenced that the labour continuity of the elderly and the socially productive years of life are prolonged in the population in response to correcting the low salaries and the poor social security. Under these conditions, what do we do as nursing professionals to address this situation? The nursing role is preponderant due to its integrative vision of health and its training in care, with an enormous potential to impact people's quality of life and well-being, but we must also do so considering the dignity of the elderly, with respect and esteem and that all human beings deserve.

Dignity is the quality of "worthy" which means valuable, honoured, deserving and the term "dignity" derives from the Latin word "*dignitas*". Human dignity is innate, positive, and fosters a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction, reinforcing self-esteem and self-fulfilment. Slavery, for example, opposes the vision of the other with dignity since people are not treated as such or as worthy, but as an object.

The aging of the population calls us to analyse the issue of work and how the occupational health of these workers should be maintained, and to face it with the dignity they deserve. It has been documented that the labour insertion of aging people is characterized by self-employment and informality, which makes it even more difficult to address occupational and safety issues. However, the elderly population has a more responsible behaviour with regard to complying with safety measures, which is demonstrated in the lower rate of work accidents. Despite this, their lethality is higher, associated with their situation of vulnerability.

Companies and labour institutions must be aware that they are social entities, in this sense, they also have to be fully involved in the exercise of a more equitable decision-making, one that focuses its gaze on the people who carry out the task: the workers and in the changes of the same. Workers, as they age, may experience sensory and cognitive impairments and a higher rate of musculoskeletal problems and longer times to recover from illness or injury. They have more difficulties when faced with demands for shifts or extended working hours. At the same time, they live the chronicity's of the general population and multimorbidity. This impacts their situation and makes them more vulnerable regarding the risks and illness.

Thus, the aging of the working population constitutes a challenge for public policies, for health and the world of work; relevant in terms of establishing standards of safety, health and quality of working life that allows meeting the needs of this workforce, as well as ensuring the right to an active, healthy and dignified retirement.

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