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Impact of Civility at Work on Portuguese Healthcare Professionals' Work Engagement and Mental Health

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Purpose

Research has increasingly highlighted the detrimental effects of workplace incivility. However, less attention has been given to the effects of civility at work, defined primarily by the presence of four positive features in the work environment: mutual respect and acceptance, cooperation, supportive interpersonal relationships, and fair conflict resolution.

Design/Methodology

This study is part of an ongoing person-centered intervention project, with time-lagged mixed methods assessment, designed to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships, and health and well-being of healthcare professionals in nine Portuguese hospitals. The current study investigates the impact of workplace civility on work engagement and mental health using pre-intervention survey data from 293 healthcare professionals working in one hospital in the Lisbon area (76% female; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.3$, $SD = 9.9$; 60% nurses).

Results

Regression analyses conducted with PROCESS for SPSS confirmed our hypotheses. Workplace civility had significant positive direct effects on both work engagement and mental health, and a significant positive indirect effect on mental health through work engagement. Together, workplace civility and work engagement accounted for 26% of the variance in mental health.

Limitations

This study used cross-sectional data and therefore precludes attribution of cause and effect among the study variables.

Research/Practical Implications

Results imply that fostering civility at work is beneficial for healthcare professionals' occupational well-being, which in turn has been linked to quality care and patient safety.

Originality/Value

To our knowledge, this is the first study in Portugal to examine the impact of workplace civility on hospital-based healthcare professionals' work engagement and mental health.