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"Transmission of "safety knowledge" in professional contexts: is it a real priority or just an intention?

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Introduction: Numerous international studies address the importance of transmitting safety knowledge (e.g., Duryan et al., 2020; Goodbrand et al., 2021) and the perceived constraints for experts and novices (e.g., Cloutier et al., 2012; Cuvelier & Falzon, 2012; Le Bellu, 2016; Vincent-Genod, 2010; Thébault et al., 2014). However, it remains relevant to highlight, in portuguese contexts, whether this importance translates into the transmission that is actually possible.

Objectives: The main objective is to understand if safety knowledge is understood and mobilized as a priority in the transmission that takes place in professional contexts of the secondary and tertiary sectors, considering the perception of novices and experts.

Methodology: We conducted a questionnaire on knowledge transmission to 243 participants, from which two items related to safety knowledge were analyzed according to the group (novices and experts) and the activity sector: "while you were learning, were you taught tricks or gestures on how to do the job to protect health and safety?"; "is transmitting knowledge that will prevent accidents from occurring the most important type of knowledge?".

Results and Discussion: In both groups and activity sectors, 69% of the participants referred the absence of safety knowledge transmission in the initial learning phase. Of the remaining, who answered affirmatively, 71% were those who are currently experts. Also, in both groups and sectors, knowledge to prevent the occurrence of accidents is the second most important type of knowledge to transmit (out of six presented). Here, it stands out that novices in the secundary sector consider this type of knowledge as the most important (40,5%). These results lead us to discuss that despite the great importance attributed to the need for safety knowledge to be considered in transmission, it was not perceived as a real (realized) priority, particularly in the initial learning phase. The permanence in the intention field may be related to constraints of the activities caused by production and management systems that typically characterize this sector.

Conclusions: The study contributes to the empirical enrichment on the workers' perceptions about the real transmission of safety knowledge in their contexts. It also allows elucidating the need for awareness and intervention by decision makers in companies to make this intention a real priority in their contexts.