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The Current Status of Working Conditions in Public Hospitals at a Selected Province, South Africa: Part 1

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this two-part paper was to explore and describe the status of working conditions in public hospitals at a selected province in South Africa. An explorative, descriptive, qualitative design was used for this study. Purposeful sampling was used to select the 32 participants comprising senior managers, middle managers, operational managers, occupational health and safety nurses and all employee representatives in the 27 public hospitals in the province. Data collection was achieved through individual in-depth interviews. The findings suggest that working conditions in public hospitals are poor and characterized by job dissatisfaction, high levels of psychological stress and burnout. The poor working conditions were attributed to poor infrastructure, budgetary constraints and unfair distribution of incentives, unsafe environment, poor interpersonal relationships, flawed communication channels, lack of support and lack of involvement in decision making. The results can inform development of policy and occupational health and safety measures.