Workplace Violence: Nurse Safety
Issue Analysis
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Nurse Safety: Workplace Violence, Health & Safety

Introduction
Objectives

• Define workplace violence and identify three examples of such behaviors.

• Identify 5 potential causes of workplace violence.

• Discuss the impact workplace violence may have on bedside nursing care.

• Discuss recommendations/interventions for protecting nurses against violence.
Workplace Violence Defined:

• Any physical assault, emotional or verbal abuse or threatening, harassing or coercive behavior in the work setting that causes physical or emotional harm.

Assessment of Healthcare Environment

**Policies**
- Significant underreporting of occurrences
- Implement mandatory reporting on identified behaviors
- Zero tolerance policy
- Only two states currently have felony charge for assaulting an RN.
  - Need for legislation

**Research**
- Influential factors of violence:
  - Alcohol/drug abuse
  - Drug-seeking behaviors
  - Dementia/cognitive impairment
  - Long ER wait times
  - Staffing issues/shortages
  - Inadequate security
Assessment of Healthcare Environment

• **Financial**
  - Burden of treating RN injuries as a result of violence
    - $4.2 billion annually
  - Lack of finances as a source of nursing shortages/staffing concerns

• **Political**
  - Legislators review
    - Gun laws
    - Privacy Laws
    - Wrongful termination

• **Resources**
  - Nursing shortages have been shown to increase risk of violence
  - Difficulty in RN recruiting due to threat of violence
  - Intangible costs of violence

• **Resource Websites**
  - [http://www.victimsofcrime.org](http://www.victimsofcrime.org)
Assessment of Healthcare Environment

- **Nursing Practice**
  - Job satisfaction
  - Job performance
  - Employee turnover
  - Patient Satisfaction
    - Decreased apathy towards patient

- **Ethical**
  - Autonomy
  - Nonmaleficence
    - Toward RN

- **Safety**
  - Highest Rate of Assault among other professions
  - 60% of all reported assaults occur in healthcare setting

  - Physical Violence
    - Verbal abuse

  - Sexual assault

  - At-Risk Groups:
    - Emergency nurses
    - Psychiatric nurses
    - Night shift nurses

  - Violence from patient’s & visitors
Root Cause Analysis

Lack of Policy
- Need for state Legislature
- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Underreporting

Acceptance
- Society culture of acceptance
- Nurses expectation of violence

Decreased violence towards Registered Nurses

Staffing Issues
- Understaffing
- Need for Security
- Training for Nurses

Lack of Resources

Need for Security
- Training for Nurses
Inferences & Implications

- Society’s **culture of acceptance** for violence/aggression
- Nursing’s Perception: “Part of the Job”
  - Acceptance of violence
- High nursing turnover leads to poor patient satisfaction
- Staffing issues/shortages
- Decreased nursing care quality/ability
Consequences

- Decreased Quality of patient care
- Higher anxiety levels
- Burnout leading to turnover
- Financial burden
- Decreased time for other patients
Recommendations

- Adopt a **proactive** plan (not **reactive**).

- **Training**
  - Recognition of high risk behaviors
  - Communication techniques
  - Diffusing volatile situations
  - Protective methods

- **Implementation** of mandatory reporting of violence

- **Zero Tolerance** policy
  - Management, RN, patients, visitors, all equally accountable

- **Ongoing evaluation** of violence trends
Conclusion

- RN’s and other healthcare providers are among the most at-risk profession for experiencing workplace violence.

- A certain level of acceptance by the RN lead to underreporting of violent acts.

- Healthcare facilities and RN’s need Congress support through enacting laws which enforce stricter punishment and penalty for committing an act of violence against healthcare workers.
  - Currently only 2 states have a felony charge for this crime

- Hospitals can decrease the risk of violence against their nurses through:
  - Training
  - Adequate staffing
  - Increased security
  - Decreased patient wait times
References


