

Original Article

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE TOWARDS NURSES OF INTENSIVE CARE AREAS AND EMERGENCIES AT CIVIL HOSPITAL KARACHI

Khadim Hussain Maaari*, Chaudhry Muhammad Amjad**, Muhammad Ibrahim Ansari*, Nazeer Ali Buriro*, Aurang zaib***

**Lecturer, SMBB Medical University Larkana

**Assistant Professor, Health Services Academy Islamabad

***Lecturer at Rehman Medical Institute (RMI) Hayatabad Peshawar

ABSTRACT:

INTRODUCTION: Workplace violence (WPV) is very common routine problem faced by majority of health care providers among them nurses are at great risk of violence because of nature of their work and usual contacts with patients and their relatives. Most of the cases are not handled and reported properly and these incidents include verbal abuse, physical assault, bullying/mobbing, and sexual harassment.

OBJECTIVES: To determine the prevalence of Workplace violence being faced by nurses at work and To find out the nature of workplace violence among nurses.

METHODOLOGY: A cross sectional survey was conducted and questionnaire was adapted from a standardized questionnaire designed collaboratively in GENEVA (2003) by the International Labor Office (ILO), the International Health Organization (IHO), the International Council of Nurses (ICN), and the Public Services International (PSI).

RESULTS: Out of 104 questionnaire Ninety nurses responded to questionnaire (response rate was 86.5%). The prevalence of WPV was 35.5% and respondents reported that exposure to physical attacks (46.7%), verbal abuse (52.2%), bullying/mobbing (27.8%) and sexual harassment (15.6%) at least one time during their last year of service. Most of the violence was attempted by patients and their family members and majority of sexual harassment cases were reported by female nurses and most of them were attempted by staff or co-workers.

CONCLUSION: High rate of workplace violence shows that the environment in which nurses are working is not safe and healthy for them and preventive measures are needed to protect the nurses at their work place.

KEYWORDS: (workplace violence, nurses, Hospital)

INTRODUCTION:

Health care industry is facing very serious issues among them workplace violence is one of the major problems faced by health industry in terms of its magnitude and frequency. Workplace violence is a distressing situation all over the world and exact burden of this dangerous situation is not known because studies are showing only the tip of the iceberg.^[1]

Workplace violence is any type of violent act directed towards person on duty or any physical assault, threatening behavior, verbal abuse occurring in the work setting or psychological

Corresponding Author:

Khadim Hussain Maaari
(MSPH from Health Services Academy Islamabad)
Lecturer, SMBB Medical University Larkana
Email: abbasi_khadim0007@hotmail.com

violence, abuse, bullying/mobbing, harassment either racial or sexual at workplace as defined by the national institute for occupational safety and health (NIOSH).^[2] Literature review also suggests that nurses are at great risk of violent behavior because they have very close contacts with their patients.^[3] It also finds that nurses are four times at greater risks of violence as compared to an average employee and are two times at greater risks of violence as other health care workers are facing.^[4] Workplace violence is considered as dangerous, complex and occupational hazard especially for nursing profession. Patient related violence is generated either by patients or their relatives and some time co-worker are also creating violence which occurs at different areas specially intensive care areas including emergencies and psychiatric units.^[5] Inappropriate security measures in most of the hospitals, long waiting time for doctors, stressful conditions of patient's relatives, working at night and end of shift (when nurses are exchanging their duties) are certain factors which increase the risk of workplace violence towards nurses.^[6] Exact prevalence of workplace violence towards nurses is unknown due to under reporting of incidents because health care workers are considering this violence as an essential part of their daily work.^[7] Workplace violence is not only responsible for major health effects but also affects the productivity and quality of patient care because workplace violence is one of the leading cause of death for workers of 15-44 years of age as reported by world health organization.^[8] Incidents of workplace violence are more common than these findings because there is no uniform definition of workplace violence.^[2] Employers are responsible for implementation of procedures, policies and practices which promote safety, comfort and well being of nurses and government needs to fund and support for work environment that promote safety, security and healthy atmosphere for nurses to take their own decisions to improve the quality of life.^[9]

RATIONAL OF THE STUDY:

Workplace violence is a very serious issue throughout the world and incidence of workplace violence towards nurses is increasing

day by day. Nurses are at frontline due to their nature of job and therefore at an increased risk of experiencing WPV compared to other health care personnel. The quality of patient care is directly related to nurse's performance which itself is dependent on environment in which they are working. It is important to provide them safe, secure and healthy working environment in order to improve their work performance which will ultimately improve the better quality of patient care.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To determine the prevalence of workplace violence being faced by nurses in the units
- To find out about the nature of WPV towards nurses in the units

MATERIALS AND METHOD:

Study design and setting:

Cross Sectional Study was conducted in intensive care areas including gynecology and three Emergency Departments (children, adults and gynecology) in one of the largest tertiary care public hospital of Karachi. It is one of the oldest 1900-bedded tertiary care public hospitals that imparts both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and average number of patients presenting at hospital Emergency Departments was approximately 4000 to 5000 on daily basis. The Emergency Departments of hospital are staffed by full time nurses who had registered nurse (RN) degree awarded after four years of education either three years diploma in nursing and one year post basic specialty or four years generic nursing. This study was approved by Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Health Services Academy (HSA) Islamabad and ethical committee of participating hospital.

Selection of Participants:

Complete list of nurses working in intensive care areas and Emergency Departments were obtained from the nursing department in the first week of December 2016. Participants were approached with the help of trained research assistance (RA) and explained the objectives of the study and invited them to participate in the study and participants were registered in the study after oral consent and requested to fill out

the questionnaire without their identification and return back to research assistant. The data was collected in the month of December 2016

Methods of measurements:

A survey instrument was adopted which was used in previous study conducted by Agha Khan University Hospital Karachi, Pakistan "Somani RK. Workplace violence towards nurses: A reality from the Pakistani context. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*. 2012 Apr 5;2^[3] and developed by the joint program on workplace violence in the health sector of the international labor office, the international council of nurses, the world health organization and the public services international (ILO/ICN/WHO/PSI joint program). Similar questionnaire has been use in a number of other studies^[6,7,10,8]. We used the English version of tool developed by ILO/ICN/WHO/PSI joint program

DATA ANALYSIS:

All the responses of questionnaire were entered into SPSS data with the help of trained research assistant and data was analyzed by using SPSS version 21, percentages and frequencies were computed.

RESULTS:

A total of 104 nurses working at different intensive care areas including emergencies (Gynecology/obstetrics units) identified from duty roster and found available at their job areas in three different shifts and all were approached and questionnaire were distributed among all 104 nurses, Ninety Four questionnaire were returned, out of them 90 were completed (04 refused) and they were included in this study (response rate was 86.5%)

In the sample of 90 participants 60% were females, of the total sample 20% respondents were less the 25 years of age, 42% participants were younger than 30 years and 15% were older than 39 years of age and an equal proportion of male and female nurses, were included in study. Of the total sample 60% respondents were married followed by 39% un-married, total sample includes 61% staff

nurses, 22% shift in-charge. Only Six percent (6%) of total sample had experience of >1 year in health sector as compared to 39% that had experience between 6 to 10 years and 13% were having experience between 11 to 15 years

Prevalence of WPV:

A total of 46.7% nurses from sample of 90 have reported that they have been physically attacked in last 12 months; Among them who were reported physically attacked 57% were females, 51% were between the age of 25 to 39 years, out of them 59% were nurses and 24% were at managerial level, 57% were married, 40% had experience between 1 to 5 years in health sector. Similarly 52.2% nurses out of 90 were reported that they had been verbally abused in the last 12 months. Among those who were verbally abused 55% were female, 47% were married, 68% were staff nurses, 60% having experience of 6 to 10 years in health sector. Likewise 27.8% nurses out of 90 reported that they were victims of bullying/mobbing in last 12 months. Out of them 60% were female, 40% were between the age of 25 to 34 years, 52% were married, 68% were staff nurses and 57% were having 1 to 5 years of work experience. In the same way 15.6% nurses reported that they were sexually harassed in last 12 months. Out of which 78.5% were female, 70% were less than 25 years of age, 64% were not married, 78% staff nurses and 57% were having 1 to 5 years of experience in the health sector.

Characteristics of WPV:

Out of total sample 46.7% were physically attacked, out of these 55% were having ages between 19 to 35 years, 50% participants were male nurses and 48% were single participants, 66% were having experience of less than one year in health sector.

Fifty two percent who were verbally abused 52% were having ages between 19 to 35 years in which 58% were male participants 54% were single and 59% were nurses and 55% said they were having experience between 1 to 5 years.

Twenty eight percent of participants were either bullied or mobbed in which 36% were having ages between 19 to 35 years and 29% were female participants, 34% were single

respondents, 22% were on managerial level and 38% respondents were having experience between 1 to 5 years. Sixteen percent of the respondents who were

sexually harassed in which 29% were between the age of 19 to 35 years, 21% were female respondents, 26% were single and 26% were having less than one year of experience .

Table .1. Demographic Characteristics of the sample taken from civil hospital Karachi (n=90).

Characteristics	Physical attack (n=42) (46.7%)	Verbal abuse (n=47)(52.2%)	Bullying/mobbing (n=25)(27.8%)	Sexual harassment (n=14)(15.6%)
Gender				
Female	24(57.1)	26(55.3)	15(60)	11(78.5)
Male	18(42.8)	21(44.6)	10(40)	03(21.4)
Age				
19 or under	9(21.4)	7(14.89)	5(20)	6(42.8)
20-24	4(9.5)	6(12.7)	4(16)	4(28.5)
25-29	8(19.04)	7(14.89)	5(20)	1(7.1)
30-34	8(19.04)	12(25.5)	5(20)	3(21.4)
35-39	6(14.2)	8(17.02)	4(16)	0
40-44	4(9.5)	6(8.5)	2(8)	0
45-49	3(7.14)	1(2.12)	0(0)	0
Marital status				
Not married	17(40.4)	19(40.42)	12(48)	9(64)
Married	24(57.1)	27(57.4)	13(52)	4(28.5)
Widow/ widower	1(2.3)	1(2.1)	0	1(7.14)
Designation				
Intern	3(7.1)	1(2.1)	1(4)	1(7.1)
Staff nurse	25(59.5)	32(68)	17(68)	11(78)
Shift in charge	10(23.8)	10(21.2)	4(16)	2(14.2)
Team leader	1(2.3)	2(4.2)	1(4)	0
Head- nurse	2(4.7)	2(4.2)	1(4)	0
Manager	1(2.3)	0	1(4)	0
Year of experience in health				
<1 year	4(9.5)	2(4.2)	1(4)	1(7.1)
1-5 years	17(40)	17(36.1)	12(48)	8(57.1)
6-10 years	14(33.3)	19(40.4)	10(40)	5(35.7)
11-15 years	4(9.5)	8(17)	2(8)	0
16-20 years	1(2.3)	1(2.1)	0	0
Over 20 years	1(2.3)	0	0	0

Table. 2. Characteristics of physical violence/attack reported by nurses (n=90).

Response		
In the last 12 months, have you been physically attacked in your workplace?	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	42	46.7
No	48	53.3
Is there any weapon involved?		
Yes	9	21.4
No	33	78.5
Identity of the attacker/who attacked you?		
Patient	14	33.3
Relative of patient	22	52.3
Staff member	4	9.5
Manager/supervisor	1	2.3
How did you respond to the physical violence?		
Took no action	9	10.0
Tried to pretend it never happened	7	7.8
Told the person to stop	3	3.3
Try to defend myself physically	9	10.0
Told friends/family	2	2.2
Sought counseling	1	1.1
Reported it to a senior staff member/management	6	6.7
Transferred to another position	2	2.2
Sought help from association	1	1.1
Fill the incidence form	2	2.2
Any action taken to investigate the cause of the incident?		
Yes	15	35.7
No	19	45.2
Don't know	8	19
What were the Consequences for the attacker/abuser?		
None	3	7.1
Verbal warning issued	22	52.3
Care discontinued	5	11.9
Reported to police	2	4.7
Don't know	10	23.8
Other	00	00

Table.3. characteristics of verbal abuse faced by nurses at civil hospital Karachi (n=90)

Response		
In the last 12 months, have you been verbally abused in your workplace?	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	47	52.2
No	43	57.8
How often have you been verbally abused in the last 12 months?		
All the time	1	1.1
Sometimes	38	42.2
Once	8	8.9

Identity of the attacker/who attacked you?		
Patient	16	34
Relative of patient	24	51
Staff member	4	8.5
Manager/supervision	2	4.2
How did you respond to the verbal abuse?		
Took no action	13	14.4
Tried to pretend it never happened	6	6.7
Told the person to stop	10	11.1
Told friends/family	1	1.1
Sought counseling	4	4.4
Reported it to a senior staff member/management	11	12.2
Transferred to another position	1	1.1
Fill the incidence form	1	1.1
Was any action taken to investigate the cause?		
Yes	30	63.8
No	9	19.1
Don't know	8	17
What were the Consequences for the attacker/abuser?		
None	5	10.6
Verbal warning issued	33	70.2
Care discontinued	2	4.2
Reported to police	1	2.1
Don't know	5	10.6
Other	1	2.1

Table.4. Characteristics of bullying/mobbing faced by nurses at civil hospital Karachi (n=90).

Response		
In the last 12 months, have you been bullied / mobbed at your duty?	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	25	27.8
No	65	72.2
How often have you been bullied / mobbed in the last 12 months?		
Some time		
Once	22	24.4
	3	3.3
Who bullied / mobbed you?		
Patient	9	10.0
Relative of patient	12	13.3
Staff member	1	1-1
Manager/supervisor	1	1.1
External colleague/worker	2	2.2
How did you respond to the bullying/mobbing		

Took no action	5	5.6
Tried to pretend it never happened	1	1.1
Told the person to stop	5	5.6
Told friends/family	2	2.2
Sought counseling	2	2.2
Told a colleague	1	1.1
Reported it to a senior staff member/management	4	4.4
Transferred to another position	4	4.4
Fill the incidence form	1	1.1
Was any action taken to investigate the cause?		
Yes	18	20.0
No	3	3.3
Don't know	4	4.4
What were the Consequences for the attacker/abuser?		
None	1	1.1
Verbal warning issued	15	16.7
Care discontinued	2	2.2
Reported to police	5	5.6
Don't know	2	2.2

Table.5. Characteristics of sexual harassment faced by nurses at civil hospital Karachi (n=90).

Questions	Frequencies	Percentages
In the last 12 months, have you been sexually harassed in your workplace?		
Yes	14	15.6
No	76	84.4
How often have you been sexually harassed in the last 12 months?		
Once	14	100
Sometimes	00	00
Who sexually harassed you?		
Relative of patient	5	5.6
Staff member	8	8.9
External colleague/worker	1	1.1
How did you respond to the sexual harassment?		
Tried to pretend it never happened	1	1.1
Tried to defend myself physically	5	5.6
Told friends/family	1	1.1
Told a colleague	1	1.1
Reported it to a senior staff member/management	6	6.7
Was any action taken to investigate the causes of the sexual harassment?		
Yes	11	12.2
No	2	2.2
Don't know	1	1.1
What were the consequences for the person who harassed you?		
None	3	3.3
Verbal warning issued	3	3.3
Care discontinued	2	2.2
Reported to police	6	6.7

Table 6. Association between general characteristics and workplace violence Karachi.

QUESTIONS	Physical Attack (%)		Verbal abuse (%)		Bullying/mobbing (%)		Sexual harassment (%)	
	yes	p-value	yes	p-value	yes	p-value	yes	p-value
Age in years								
19-35 years	55.2	.162	52.6	.947	36.8	.101	28.9	.003
35 and above years	40.3		52		21.1		5.8	
Gender								
Female	44.44	.605	48.1	.343	27.8	1.000	20.4	.123
Male	50		58.3		27.7		8.3	
Marital status								
Single	48.5	.522	54.2	.582	34.3	.474	25.8	.004
Married	44.44		50		24.1		7.4	
Widow/widower	100%		100		00		100	
Designation/present job								
Intern/nurse	48.2	.680	56.9	.232	31.1	.353	20.7	.070
Shift in charge/team leader/head nurse/manager/ CNS	43.7		43.8		21.9		6.2	
Year of experience								
Under 1 year	66.7	.402	33.3	.394	16.7	.383	16.7	.322
1-5 years	54.8		54.8		38.7		25.8	
6-10 years	40		54.3		28.6		14.3	
11-15 years	41.6		66.7		16.7		00	
16-20 years	20		25		00		00	
Over 20 years	100		00		00		00	

DISCUSSION:

It is obvious from result shows that younger are more prone to violence (all four types) as compared to those who are 36 years or above age. Male nurses are more victims of physical attacks, verbal abuse and bullying/mobbing as compare to female nurses and female nurses are more prone to sexual harassment). Majority of female nurses who were the victims of sexual harassment were unmarried. In all four types of violence (physical attacks, verbal abuse, bullying/mobbing and sexual harassment) most of the victims were staff nurses which showed that violence among lower level staff is greater as compared to managerial level nurses and of

majority of physical attacks were faced by nurses who were having experience under one year, but nurses experienced verbal abuse to words and bullying/mobbing and sexual harassment having experience between 1 to 5 years which shows that violence toward un-experienced nurses is greater . Similar results were found in study which showed that 85.2% of participants had been subjected to at least one kind of violence: 41.1% to physical assault, 79.6% to verbal abuse, 55.5% to verbal threats and 15.9% to sexual harassment. ^[11] Another study results showed that 42.5% of nurses and 34.1% nursing students had experienced the physical or non physical

violence at their work place and 88% victims of sexual harassment were female nurses. External violence was 94% from patients and 71% either by relatives or friends.^[5]

Our study results revealed that 46.7% nurses were physically attacked, 52.2% were verbally abused, 27.8% were the victims of bullying/mobbing and 15.6% were sexually harassed in last 12 months.

A similar study having objectives to explore the prevalence of WPV committed either by patients or their family members against health care staff and results found that nearly two-third of the nurses reported that they were experiencing the WPV including verbal (53.9%) and (12.7%) violence and that 38% was from patients and 29.6% were committed by the families of patients and 39% nurses reported that they were experienced more than one event of WPV.^[12]

Another study conducted in one of the major hospital of Tehran Iran and results found that respondents were reported verbal abuse (64%), bullying-mobbing (29%), and physical violence (12%) respectively at least one time in their earlier year.^[13]

Another study was conducted at four tertiary care hospitals of Karachi Pakistan and result shows that 16.5% of respondents were physically attacked and 72.5% were verbally abused in the last 12 months. Work place violence is a major challenge for all four hospitals and some time physical attacks were also reported which has negative effects on physical and mental health of nurses and prevalence of work place violence is very high in Pakistan (Karachi) as compared to other countries.^[14]

A study was conducted at public health care facility at Lahore Pakistan suggests that nurses and doctors are at high risk of work place violence because of nature of their job and this violence may results in severe stress. There is need of preventive measures including occupational support to make safer and health environment of such hospital on urgent basis.^[7]

CONCLUSION:

Workplace violence towards nurses is increasing day by day and organizations fail to provide the satisfactory preventive measures

to protect the nurses from violence which include verbal abuse, physical violence with/without weapon, bullying/mobbing and sexual harassment. Nurses are physically and verbally abused by patients and their family members but most cases of the sexual harassment were committed by co-workers. WPV has negative emotional and physical impact on nurses and majority of nurses are unable to report the incidents. Nurses are considered as back bone of any health care system globally because without nursing staff a health facility cannot perform its functions properly. Working in safe, sound and healthy environment is the fundamental right of nurses to take autonomous decisions to provide quality patient care so policy makers needs to take preventive measures to protect nurses from violent patients and their relatives .

REFERENCES:

1. Abbas MAF, Fiala LA, Ge A, Rahman A, Fahim AE. Epidemiology of Workplace Violence against Nursing Staff in Ismailia Governorate, Egypt. 2010;85.
2. Gacki-smith J. Violence Against Nurses Working in US Emergency Departments. 2009;39(7):3409.
3. Zafar W, Siddiqui E, Ejaz K, Shehzad MU, Khan UR, Jamali S, Razzak JA. Health care personnel and workplace violence in the emergency departments of a volatile metropolis: results from Karachi, Pakistan. The Journal of emergency medicine. 2013 Nov 30;45(5):761-72.
4. Hegney D, Plank A, Parker V. Workplace violence in nursing in Queensland, Australia: a self-reported study. Int J Nurs Pract 2003 Aug;9(4):261-8.
5. Magnavita N, Heponiemi T. Workplace Violence Against Nursing Students and Nurses : An Italian Experience. 2011;20310.
6. Teymourzadeh E, Rashidian A, Arab M, Akbari-sari A, Hakimzadeh SM. Original Article Nurses exposure to workplace violence in a large teaching hospital in Iran. 2014;3(6):3015.
7. Imran N, Pervez MH, Farooq R, Asghar AR. Aggression and violence towards medical doctors and nurses in a public health care

- facility in Lahore, Pakistan: A preliminary investigation. Khyber Medical University Journal. 2013 Nov 20;5(4):179-84
8. Ahmad M, Al-rimawi R, Masadeh A, Atoum M. Workplace Violence by Patients and Their Families Against Nurses : Literature Review. 2015;2(4):4655.
 9. The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO). Violence against nurses:zero tolerance for violence against nurses and nursing students: position statement. Ontario: The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO). Revised 2008.
 10. Jiao M, Ning N, Li Y, Gao L, Cui Y, Sun H, et al. Workplace violence against nurses in Chinese hospitals : a cross-sectional survey. 2015;19.
 11. Talas MS, Kocaöz S, Akgüç S. A Survey of Violence Against Staff Working in the Emergency Department in. Asian Nurs Res (Korean Soc Nurs Sci) [Internet]. 2011;5(4):197203.
 12. Lin Y, Liu H. The impact of workplace violence on nurses in South Taiwan. 2005;42:7738.
 13. Teymourzadeh E, Rashidian A, Arab M, Akbari-sari A, Hakimzadeh SM. Original Article Nurses exposure to workplace violence in a large teaching hospital in Iran. 2014;3(6):3015.
 14. Zafar W, Siddiqui E, Ejaz K, Shehzad MU, Khan UR, Jamali S, Razzak JA. Health care personnel and workplace violence in the emergency departments of a volatile metropolis: results from Karachi, Pakistan. The Journal of emergency medicine. 2013 Nov 30;45(5):761-72.

Submitted for publication: 29.03.2017
 Accepted for publication: 13.10.2017
 After Revision

S.NO	NAME OF AUTHOR	DATE	CONTRIBUTION	SIGNATURE
1	Hussain MAAARI (Corresponding Author)	29.03.2017	Conceptualization, Design, Data Collection, Analysis, Writing	
2	Dr. Shehzad MUHAMMAD	13.10.2017	Review of the manuscript, Implication, and approval	
3	Muhammad Tahirul QADIR	13.10.2017	Review of the manuscript, Implication, and approval	
4	Dr. Farhat ISHAK	13.10.2017	Review of the manuscript, Implication, and approval	
5	Muhammad NAEEM	13.10.2017	Review of the manuscript, Implication, and approval	

GENEROSITY IS TO HELP A DESERVING PERSON WITHOUT HIS REQUEST, AND IF YOU HELP HIM AFTER HIS REQUEST, THEN IT IS EITHER OUT OF SELF-RESPECT OR TO AVOID REBUKE

Hazrat Ali (Karmulha Wajhay)