Patient-Visitor Violence: What Makes Nurses Feel Safe?

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**Background**

Patient-Visitor Violence (PVV) against hospital nursing staff members is a growing problem in the US and worldwide.

Research has identified:
- Common types, frequency, & severity
- Risk factors for assailants, victims, & organization
- Relationship between PVV and quality of care
- Psychological & professional consequences for nurse-victims
- Factors that mitigate frequency, severity, & effects on nurse-victims and hospital staff
- Underreporting of PVV is common
- Acceptance of some level of PVV as part of the job

**Study Aim**

Determine factors that make nurses feel safe from Patient-Visitor Violence

**Method**

- Prospective, descriptive, multicenter sub-study using data from psychometric testing of the Personal Workplace Safety Instrument for Emergency Nurses (PWSI-EN)
- IRB approval by expedited review with waiver of signed inform consent

**Sample**

16 hospitals across US distributed link to online survey to clinical ED RNs via workplace email
- 8 with Magnet® recognition/ 8 non-Magnet
- 4 academic medical centers, 3 teaching hospitals, 9 community hospitals

**Results**

Survey Respondent Characteristics (N=305)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n(%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20-29 54(37.1), 30-39 100(64.9), 40-49 77(50.5), 50+ 73(47.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male 51(17), Female 254(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Shift</td>
<td>Days 141(46.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>Evenings/Nights 164(53.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered nurse experience</td>
<td>13.7[1.0, 44.0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current institution experience</td>
<td>7.0[1.0, 37.0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency nursing experience</td>
<td>7.0[1.0, 44.0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*in year [min, max]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Fearful for personal safety at work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Almost always</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
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**Confidence in organization to create a safe workplace**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low Confidence</th>
<th>High Confidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69%</td>
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**Unit and Organizational Leadership Support is primary factor influencing perceptions of safety**

**Conclusions**

- Clinical nurses feel less supported by senior nurse leaders and hospital administrators compared to their unit managers and administrators
- Nurse managers have great influence over many of the factors that make nurses feel safe from PVV
- Perceptions of personal safety are also influenced by perceptions of belongingness, security personnel, trust, understanding processes, and training related to PVV

**Recommendations**

- Senior nurse leaders and hospital administrators need to take an active and visible role around issues related to PVV
- Nurse managers & other unit administrators need to continue demonstrating support around issues related to PVV
- Use of a valid & reliable tool by nurse managers and hospital leaders, such as the PWSI-EN, to assess & improve perceptions of workplace safety among nursing staff members
- Confirmation of the validity & reliability of PWSI-EN in all nursing specialty areas

**Funding**

This study was partially funded by a grant jointly sponsored by the Emergency Nurses Association and Sigma Theta Tau International.

**Reference**