

Nurses and Workplace Violence

Background

Violence in the workplace is one of the most dangerous hazards facing nurses (McPhaul and Lipscomb, 2004). Violence against all health care workers presents a special challenge. “Nurses experience the most assaults” (U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation 2004, 54) of health care workers.

In 1999, 2,637 nonfatal assaults on hospital workers occurred in the following settings:

- Hospitals: rate of 8.3 assaults/10,000 workers
- Private sector industries: 2 assaults/10,000 workers (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/NIOSH, 2002, 1)

Hospitals

Canadian Study (Hesketh et al., 2003)

Emergency Nurses

39.9 percent were threatened with assault

21.9 percent were physically assaulted

Medical Surgical Nurses

22.6 percent were threatened with assault

24.2 percent were physically assaulted

Psychiatry Nurses

20.3 percent were threatened with assault

43.3 percent were physically assaulted

Florida Study (May and Grubbs, 2002)

Emergency Nurses

100 percent were verbally assaulted

82 percent were physically assaulted

ICU Nurses

85.2 percent were verbally assaulted

77.8 percent were physically assaulted

Floor Nurses

80.6 percent were verbally assaulted

63.3 percent were physically assaulted

References

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