

Nurse Harassment: A Forgotten Issue

Viroj Wiwanitkit^{1,*}

¹Public Health Curriculum, Surin Rajabhat University, Surin, Thailand

*Corresponding author: Viroj Wiwanitkit, Public Health Curriculum, Surin Rajabhat University, Surin, Thailand. Tel: +66-24132436, Fax: +66-24132436, E-mail: wviroj@yahoo.com

Received 2015 August 13; Revised 2015 September 9; Accepted 2015 September 12.

Keywords: Nursing, Harassment, Practice

Dear Editor,

In the clinical setting of nursing, nurses play a specific role. Most nurses are female and as a part of their duty, perform hard work and face stressful situations, problems, and risks. An important problem worth mentioning is the harassment of nurses, an expected problem as most nurses are female. However, unfortunately, this has become a forgotten issue. In developing countries such as Thailand, newspapers often report cases of nurse harassment. Many of these are cases of serious harassment and even murder (for example, the famous Nuanchawee case of nurse harassment and murder in Thailand, which is documented at Mahidol University, medical museum in Bangkok, Thailand). Nevertheless, there are only a few scientific reports on this issue. Fute et al. recently reported a prevalence of as high as 13.02% of sexual harassment of nurses in Ethiopia (1). In another report from Malaysia, Suhaila and Rampal stated that, "the prevalence of sexual harassment among registered nurses in the workplace was high and self-perception profile of the victims of sexual harassment was the main contributing factor to the problem" (2). Fallahi Khoshknab et al. have also reported a high prevalence of violence against Iranian healthcare workers, including nurses (3). Noteworthy is the fact that although several guidelines are available for working in a clinical settings, there is scarcity of specific instructions pertain-

ing to the protection of the workforce (4). To be specific, there is no clear protocol for prevention of sexual harassment of nurses, an important issue for the nursing society to combat! To address this problem, the author suggests the following solutions: (a) a good security system in hospitals, such as closed circuit television, must be established; (b) nurses should be trained on self-protection against any harassment; (c) an instruction should be enforced that forbids the traveling of nurses on duty to a secluded place, especially at night; and (d) legal control and penalty for cases of harassment must be strengthened.

References

1. Fute M, Mengesha ZB, Wakgari N, Tessema GA. High prevalence of workplace violence among nurses working at public health facilities in Southern Ethiopia. *BMC Nurs*. 2015;**14**:9. doi: 10.1186/s12912-015-0062-1. [PubMed: 25767412]
2. Suhaila O, Rampal KG. Prevalence of Sexual Harassment and its Associated Factors among Registered Nurses Working in Government Hospitals in Melaka State, Malaysia. *Med J Malaysia*. 2012;**67**(5):506-17. [PubMed: 23770869]
3. Fallahi Khoshknab M, Oskouie F, Najafi F, Ghazanfari N, Tamizi Z, Ahmadvand H. Psychological Violence in the Health Care Settings in Iran: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Nurs Midwifery Stud*. 2015; **4**(1): e24320.
4. Hibino Y, Ogino K, Inagaki M. Sexual harassment of female nurses by patients in Japan. *J Nurs Scholarsh*. 2006;**38**(4):400-5. [PubMed: 17181091]