

Physician Assistant : Violence in the Workplace

Group 5

Violence

- **Definition:** According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, workplace violence is any physical attack or assault that results in physical or mental injury or death of an employee in a workplace setting.

Different Types of Violence

- **Sexual Abuse**
 - Sexual Harassment by patient to PA or PA to patient.
- **Mental Abuse**
 - Discrimination against gender, race, ethnicity, culture
 - Disregarding a member of the family due to age or physical condition (elder abuse)
 - Feeling of uselessness or unworthiness (self abuse)
- **Physical Abuse**
 - Violent family member or uncooperative patient
 - Abused patient

Effect of Violent Patient on Clinician-Patient Relationship

- The clinician can become less enthusiastic or possibly terminate patient care.
- Difficulty in maintaining a sense of fairness and objectivity.
- Interferes with exercise of clinical judgment and effective treatment.
- Behavior clashes with machinery of ordinary health care operation.

Effect of Violent Patient on Office- Medical Staff Relationship

- Staff lose respect for uncooperative patient which leads to patient's loss of respect for medical staff.
- Less people want to help those who are obligated to care for violent or abusive patient, which may further lead to relationship problems between colleagues.
- May cause lost of interest or fear to treat any patient that reminds them of the violent/uncooperative patient.

Violence Identified

- Violence usually unreported
- In 1999 Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated 2,637 nonfatal assaults on hospital workers-a rate of 8.3 assaults per 10,000 workers.
- Private sector- rate of nonfatal assaults estimated at 2 per 10,000 workers.

Violence, Occupational Hazards in Hospitals, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2002-101, April 2002.
www.cdc.gov/niosh/2002-101.html

Triggers for violence between co-workers

- Fellow worker is suffering from family stress
- Feeling underappreciated
- Refusal to accept criticism about job performance
- Anger from a layoff
- Blaming of others for personal problems
- Humiliated after being rejected by someone they have developed an obsession for
- Inability to control feelings, outbursts of rage, swearing, slamming doors, etc.

Identifying patient populations at risk

- Screening tools
- Routine assessments
- Physical examination
- Labs and other diagnostic procedures
- Documentation of relevant history (eg: injuries, chronic pain- pelvic, insomnia, depression)

Risk Factors

- **Child Abuse**
 - Community/Society
 - Parental
 - Child Related
- **Elder Abuse**
 - Caregiver
 - Society (including culture)

Risk Factors

- **Self Abuse**
 - Psychological
 - Social
- **Partner Abuse**
 - Community/Social
 - Individual factors
- **Patient/ Colleague Abuse**
 - Psychological
 - Emotional
 - Social

Instances of Violence or Abuse in the Hospital/Clinic

1. **Disruptive Medical Professional**
 - Medical professional is not in the proper mindset and is not willing to work with colleagues and patient.
2. **Sexual/Seductive Patient or Medical Professional**
 - Patient or clinician crosses the professional medical boundary.

Instances of Violence or Abuse in the Hospital/Clinic cont.

3. **Angry/Overly Demanding Patient**
 - The patient was distraught prior to going to the hospital and when the things do not go their way, they get angry and their clinician.
4. **Silent Patient**
 - The patient can be silent for a variety of reasons, but it causes frustration for the clinician who is trying to diagnose his/her overall health status.

Role of PA in Violent Prevention

➤ Know your rights and duties as a PA.

- Have a personal plan and more importantly a pre-plan in case of any display of violence or aggression from anyone at the workplace.
- Avoid stereotypes when dealing with patient.
- Always have a GOOD psychological attitude when dealing with anyone at the workplace.
- Do not hesitate to point out unfamiliar or potentially dangerous strangers to security or supervisor.

Role of PA in Violent Prevention cont.

- Always have a plan in case violence does occur.
 - Plan out with colleagues the steps to take in case of an emergency.
 - Know the steps in calming people down to prevent any further escalation
 - Learning body language and ways to approach mentally stressed aggressors.