

Abstract

Background and Purpose: Workplace violence (WPV) against emergency department (ED) nurses is a growing problem. Nurse attitudes towards WPV are linked to workplace safety, but many nurses tolerate WPV as part of the job due to the unpredictability of emergency situations. Preliminary studies revealed that a violence risk assessment and prevention protocol can reduce the incidence and severity of WPV in the ED. This project sought to evaluate the effects of a learning module, violence risk assessment, and prevention protocol on ED nurses' attitudes towards WPV and their perceptions on sustainability capacity.

Methods: This project utilized a pre-post survey design. Nurses from one ED in Baltimore, Maryland participated in an online learning module in which they were taught how to use a risk assessment and intervention checklist prior the 3-month intervention. The Management of Aggression and Violence Attitude Scale (MAVAS) was used to measure nurses' attitudes towards WPV before and after the intervention, and the Clinical Sustainability Assessment Tool (CSAT) was used to measure nurses' perceptions on sustainability capacity for the practice after the intervention. Statistical analyses were not conducted.

Results: All 48 ED nurses completed the learning module. The pre-survey and post-surveys were completed by 26 and 17 nurses, respectively. Nursing staff was comprised of majority White females with about 8.5 years of work experience. Results revealed a trend towards improved attitudes on internal and situational causes of WPV, and a moderate sustainability capacity for the practice change.

Conclusions: The practice of routine screening and de-escalation of WPV with a risk assessment and intervention checklist was moderately sustainable in the ED, and had the tendency to positively influence nurses' attitudes towards WPV.

Implications: This project emphasized areas for improvement to sustain the practice change, and the need for more robust studies to examine the significance of this issue.

Keywords: emergency nursing, workplace violence, occupational violence, type II violence, risk assessment, de-escalation