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The emergency nurse's perception of incivility the workplace

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Abstract

Workplace incivility experienced by nurses is a growing problem. Uncivil behavior can cause nurses to experience post-traumatic stress disorder and symptoms such as low self-esteem, anxiety, sleep disturbance, recurrent nightmares, and depression. This descriptive study used the Nursing Incivility Scale to identify incivility experienced by emergency department (ED) nurses from several institutions.

Results revealed that 62.6% (n=80) of the 129 participating ED nurses reported that they had experienced uncivil behavior in the workplace. Twenty-one percent (n=27) of the nurses left a job as a result of uncivil behavior. Over 50% (n=50) indicated that they had reported uncivil behavior to a supervisor with 33.9% (n=22) stating they were not taken seriously. Over half of those surveyed reported that hospital employees raise their voices when frustrated and blame others for their mistakes. The most commonly reported uncivil behavior displayed by nurses was gossiping about others. Physicians and families were identified as the two non-nurse groups most likely to take their frustrations out on nurses in an uncivil manner.

A better understanding of the experience of workplace incivility is the first step in solving the problem of workplace incivility. Examining these perceptions will allow for the creation of interventions aimed at reversing this problem. Effective communication between nurses, physicians, and family members appears to be the second step in reducing uncivil behavior and ultimately improving job satisfaction which in turn will improve health outcomes.

Biography

Katy Garth, Ph.D., FNP-BC is a faculty member at Murray State University and coordinator of the Family Nurse Practitioner specialty. She completed her undergraduate work at Murray State University, her MSN at Vanderbilt University, and Ph.D. at the University of TN Health Science Center, Memphis, TN.

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