

Topic: Workplace Violence against Nurses in Uganda's Public Hospitals: A Phenomenological Study

Abstract

This study explored workplace violence (WPV) against nurses in Uganda's public hospitals based on a hermeneutic phenomenological design. It is underpinned by the hermeneutic theoretical framework and used an interpretivist paradigm to understand WPV phenomenon from the participants' perspective. Data was generated using semi-structured audio-taped interviews from participants, were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach. Four major themes which included violence in society reproduced in hospitals, patriarchal dominance and sexism, subordinate and subservient nature of nurses' job, and perception of violence as a normal occupational hazard emerged from participants' WPV experiences. The findings of the study revealed that different forms of WPV namely; verbal, physical, psychological and sexual harassment exist and are detrimental to nurses' physical and psychological well-being. Additionally, WPV engenders counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) that compromises quality of patients' care. Hence, violence against nurses is linked to patriarchal dominance, sexism, gender stereotyping and an entrenched low hierarchical position prevalent in public hospitals that reinforces their submissiveness and subordination. Because violence in hospitals is often sexualized and rooted in unequal power relations, nurses particularly females are more vulnerable. Consequently, violence against nurses is framed within the context of unequal power relations that foments a fertile ground that engenders their victimization. To effectively address WPV, sociocultural competence based skills such as assertiveness and emotional intelligence should be integrated into the nursing curriculum to enable nurses to successfully cope with a hostile and toxic hierarchical work environment they work in. Also, hospital managers should create a conducive work environment that fosters a strong ethics driven work culture to lessen cases of CWB and promote quality of patients' care.

Keywords: Workplace Violence, Nurses, Public hospitals, Hermeneutic theory

