



The Role of Nurses in Treating Persons Exposed to Violence

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ABSTRACT:

Violence is a dangerous phenomenon that has piqued the public's interest. The current review seeks to delve into the literature on nurses' roles in treating victims of violence. There have been few studies on this subject. In general, studies have shown that nurses play critical roles in cases of violence. The primary focus was on women and children. Nurses are involved in the design of intervention programs, the assessment of violent cases, and the patient follow-up. In conclusion, the current study demonstrated that nurses play a variety of roles in health care settings and other settings where individuals exposed to violence, particularly women and children, are assessed. Nurses can play an important role in the implementation of intervention programs.

KEYWORDS: *Nurses, violence, intervention programs*

I. INTRODUCTION

An overview of violence

Workplace violence occurs in a variety of settings, and it is defined as physical assaults and/or threats of physical assault against individuals at work^{1,2}.

Several studies have found that health workers are at a high risk of non-fatal violence³⁻⁶. An American study, the non-fatal annual assault rate was estimated to be 465 per 100,000 hospital workers, compared to 82.5 for all workers³.

According to several epidemiological studies, nurses make up a significant proportion of health workers and are subjected to violence⁷⁻¹⁰.

In addition to physical sequences of exposure to violence, various studies have reported the risk of psychological influences that may result in depression^{11, 12}.

Roles of nursing in handling persons exposed to violence

Sundborget al¹³ conducted a study in light of the high influences of intimate partner violence (IPV) on women's health. The study sought to assess the extent to which nurses are prepared to provide nursing care to IVP-exposed women in health care settings. According to the study findings, nurses require organizational support such as guidelines, collaboration with colleagues, and knowledge about the extent of IPV. The findings also revealed that approximately 50% of nurses questioned women who had been subjected to violence about the incident, particularly when physical injury was involved. Nurses encountered some difficulties in asking about and identifying violence, so they scheduled an appointment with a doctor.

Annually, it is estimated that up to 3.6 million women in the United States are subjected to violence by their intimate partners¹⁴.

II. Intervention programs

Intervention programs to combat violence against women have been developed, with nurses playing critical roles¹⁵.

"Reclaiming Our Spirits (ROS)" is one of the intervention programs. This program is based on a theory-based health promotion intervention (iHEAL), the primary findings of which suggested promising results in feasibility studies. ROS requires a registered nurse to play an important role in all phases of implementation¹⁵.

According to study of McFarlane et al¹⁶, The regular prenatal care nurse was used for a face-to-face oral inquiry, nurses were involved and assessed violence through questioning at each visit, and the Abuse Assessment Screen was used to collect data about violent events.

Waalenet al¹⁷ revealed that similar barriers to screening for IPV exist among health care providers, including nurses. In another study, McFarlane et al¹⁸ conducted a study to assess the efficacy of a violence intervention program for women exposed to violence. According to the findings, nurse case management effectively reduced violence. McFarlane et al¹⁹ conducted a study to test a telephone intervention to increase abused women's "safety-promoting behavior." The inclusion of nurses in this intervention program reduced the overall cost of implementation.

Walton-Mosset al²⁰ reported that nurses can play a critical role in addressing IPV by asking all women about their exposure to violence. The authors emphasize the importance of asking about violence in private, which can occur during prevention-related visits such as, but not limited to, visits for assessing trauma and chronic problems visits for follow-up purposes. If privacy is not an option, nurses can ask questions in the restroom. The frequency of IVP-related questions should occur at least once per year or whenever IVP is suspected. Nurses should focus on behaviors rather than using terms like violence or abuse because different people may interpret them differently.²⁰.

The main questions that a routine assessment by nurses should include information about:

- If the woman feels safe in her relationship.
- If she has been forced to have sex by anyone, if yes, who? And if she has currently any type of contact with him.
- If she has been ever exposed to any violent action by any person such as hit, slap, or kicking. If yes, who? And if she retains current contact with him²⁰.

Following an IPV history, the nurse should assess a woman's experience and fears. The primary concern is determining her safety and whether she will return home safely. Another important role for nurses to play is to be aware of legal frameworks in relation to reporting when it is required or not. Nurses should also assist women

in developing a safety plan²⁰.

Another role of nurses in treating victims of violence, particularly children, has been reported. Nurses can play an important role in recognizing, responding to, and supporting maltreated children in this context. Nurses should be recommended to look at a child's appearance as well as his behavior to look for signs of physical or emotional abuse. If a nurse suspects abuse, an explanation from the child must be sought in an open and sensitive manner, as well as consultation with an expert, such as a community pediatrician. In addition to seeing the child again in the future, nurses should try to gather information from other sources. If nurses discover evidence of child abuse, they must immediately refer the child to social services.

Nurses play a critical role in developing positive relationships with the family, including the mother and other members, in order to provide care for their children. Nurses can assist mothers in reviewing their children's histories and assisting mothers in making appropriate decisions about how to care for their children. School nurses play an important role in identifying children who have been abused or are at risk of being abused.²¹.

Nurses play a role in health organizations that must implement safeguarding children's procedures and designate a safeguarding children's nurse with full contact information. Nurses must be qualified and trained to meet the demands²¹.

III. CONCLUSION:

The current study found that nurses play a variety of roles in health care settings and other settings where individuals who have been subjected to violence are assessed, particularly women and children. Nurses can play an important role in the implementation of intervention programs.

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