

How sexual harassment decreases nurse's quality of care

Nira Keret RN. BA, Head Nurse

Ayelet Yitzhak - Secretary

Nephrology & Hypertension Institute, Emek Medical Center, AFULA

THE HYPOTHESIS

The greater the degree of sexual harassment, the greater the decline in quality of treatment.

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THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Find a link between sexual harassment of nurses by patients, and the extent of damage to the quality of care.

BACKGROUND

As health care workers, we witness the phenomenon of sexual harassment by patients. This issue is neglected and not dealt with by colleagues and senior management. This study is the first of its kind in Israel.

Sexual harassment is defined as sexual behavior that can hurt another person. There are several types of sexual harassment such as: verbal, nonverbal, physical and their combination. Sexual harassment of nurses at work is a prominent phenomenon that affects the morale of the staff and their functioning, as well as their performance, efficiency and productivity at work.

METHOD

We provided 22 questionnaires for nephrology nurses in our unit and analyzed the data using Person analysis.

The questionnaire was anonymous.

19 questions were asked and the answers were ranked on a scale of 1-5.

FINDINGS

The nurses described sexual comments and behavior, some of which were blunt. There was a significant positive correlation between the variables ($P < 0.001$, $r_p = 0.759$)

The more the therapist experienced sexual harassment, the quality of treatment declined.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that the system learns how to measure the scope of sexual harassment, treat and eradicate it in order to prevent a decrease in the quality of treatment. As a consequence of this study, we presented these findings to the senior management and established a task group to deal with this phenomenon. As a result of this study, we updated the contents of the coordination and expectations that are given to patients upon their first visit in the institute – to maintain respectful behavior and conversation between patients and medical staff and amongst each other.