

# Workplace Violence and Nursing Job Performance at Pediatric Emergency Departments: A Comparative Study

Mohammed Ibrahim Hindi<sup>1</sup>, Adraa Hussein Shawq<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Academic Nurse, Medical City Complex, Ministry of Health, Iraq.

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D., Pediatric Nursing Department, College of Nursing, University of Baghdad, Iraq

<sup>1</sup>Email: [Mohammed.hindi2104m@conursing.uobaghdad.edu.iq](mailto:Mohammed.hindi2104m@conursing.uobaghdad.edu.iq)

<sup>2</sup>Email: [Adraa.hussein@conursing.uobaghdad.edu.iq](mailto:Adraa.hussein@conursing.uobaghdad.edu.iq)

## Abstract

Workplace Violence is a global issue that impacts healthcare workers' abilities and has consequences on their physical and emotional health. Furthermore, it may have a negative impact on their job performance and quality of care. The purpose of the current study is to investigate the relationship between workplace violence and job performance among nurses in pediatric emergency departments. A descriptive correlational study was conducted. Using a self-report method to collect data by assessing types and frequencies of workplace violence through the previous 12 months, and assessing nursing job performance based on the Schwirian Six Dimension Scale of Nursing Job Performance. A purposive sample with a total number of 135 nurses from pediatric hospitals in Baghdad city. Data were analyzed by the application of descriptive and inferential statistical data analysis approach by SPSS version 26. The results of the study indicated that (53.3%) of the nurses experienced various types of workplace violence throughout the last 12 months. Nurses who experienced violence exhibited a moderate level of job performance while nurses who had not experienced violence exhibited a good level of job performance. There was a negative significant correlation between workplace violence and nursing job performance ( $r = -0.694$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). Nursing job performance is inversely connected with workplace violence "High incidence of workplace violence lower nursing job performance". Verbal abuse was most widespread among nurses at EDs than other types. Enacting the Nurses Protection Law, which would provide protection and support for the nursing profession's individuals.

**Keywords:** Workplace Violence, Nursing Job Performance, Nurses, Emergency Department.

## INTRODUCTION

Emergency department (ED) is reported as most vulnerable to workplace violence (WPV) than other hospital departments [1,2]. Violence against emergency department staff is not a new problem, but it has acquired more consideration in recent years [3]. World health organization defined WPV as "any situation in which the healthcare worker can expose to abuse, threats or attacks in circumstances related to their work or professional activity" [4], it is classified into main forms; physical and non-physical violence [5]. Both types are common but the psychological is more reported and widespread [6].

Nursing job described as a stressful profession [7] they were more vulnerable to experience violence three times more than other healthcare workers [8]. Perhaps the nature of nurses' work in the frontline and availability throughout the day [9,10].

Several factors in the emergency department are associated with the increased prevalence of violence like workload, shortage of healthcare providers [11], waiting for a long time [4], younger nurses, less experience, and male gender [12]. Each of these factors

can contribute to increasing the frequency of experience violence toward nurses than other healthcare workers (HCWs) whether from patients or their families [13].

Workplace violence results in physical and psychological consequences [14] among HCWs such; low caregivers' morale, increased absence of coming to work [15], or even make them think to leave their profession, which negatively affects care outcomes and safety of patients [16]. It may also affect the quality of practice and job performance [17].

For that, job environment is regarded as a basic factor that influence quality of care that provided by nurses [18], and experience of violence not only affects the emotional and physical health of nurses but also reduces their productivity and performance [19].

Data are scarce because there are no uniform procedures for reporting violence in healthcare facilities [20]. In addition, workplace violence toward EDs workers has seldom been studied at hospitals in Iraq [2]. Therefore, few people are aware of the problem currently prevalent in emergency departments of Iraq's hospitals [20].

This study will shed light on the problem of workplace violence against nurses working in pediatric emergency departments and its impact on their nursing job performance. Whereas widespread workplace violence is a concern because of its serious consequences. Politicians and decision-makers are required to adopt the research findings to create safe work environments that increase nurse productivity and retention [21].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive correlational study was conducted via a purposive sample consisting of 135 nurses, to identify the types and frequency of workplace violence and to assess their nursing job performance among nurses at pediatric emergency departments in Baghdad City hospitals.

A self-report method was used to collect the data by describing the types and frequency of workplace violence through last 12 months, whereas nursing job performance assessment was achieved by Six Dimension Scale for job performance [22]. The approval of scale was obtained from the original researcher. The validity and reliability of the instrument was determined by the pilot study that carried out on 16 nurses who were excluded from the original research.

The analysis of data was performed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS-26). Means and standard deviation were used to describe data, Mann-Whitney U Test used to compare the nursing job performance between groups, and a correlational analysis conducted to investigate the relationship between workplace violence and nursing job performance.

## RESULTS

**Table 1 Distribution of Nurses` Socio-demographic Data**

Characteristics	f	%	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	56	41.5%
	Female	79	58.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b> (M±SD = 28.64 ± 5.71)	20-29 years	97	71.9%
	30-39 years	29	21.5%
	40-49 years	8	5.9%
	50-59 years	1	0.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Educational level</b>	Nursing school	37	27.4%
	Diploma	82	60.7%
	Bachelor	15	11.1%
	Postgraduate	1	0.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Years of experience</b> (M±SD = 3.54 ± 2.19)	1-5 years	113	83.7%
	6-10 years	20	14.8%
	11-15 years	2	1.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Work shift</b>	Morning	47	34.8%
	Night	88	65.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>

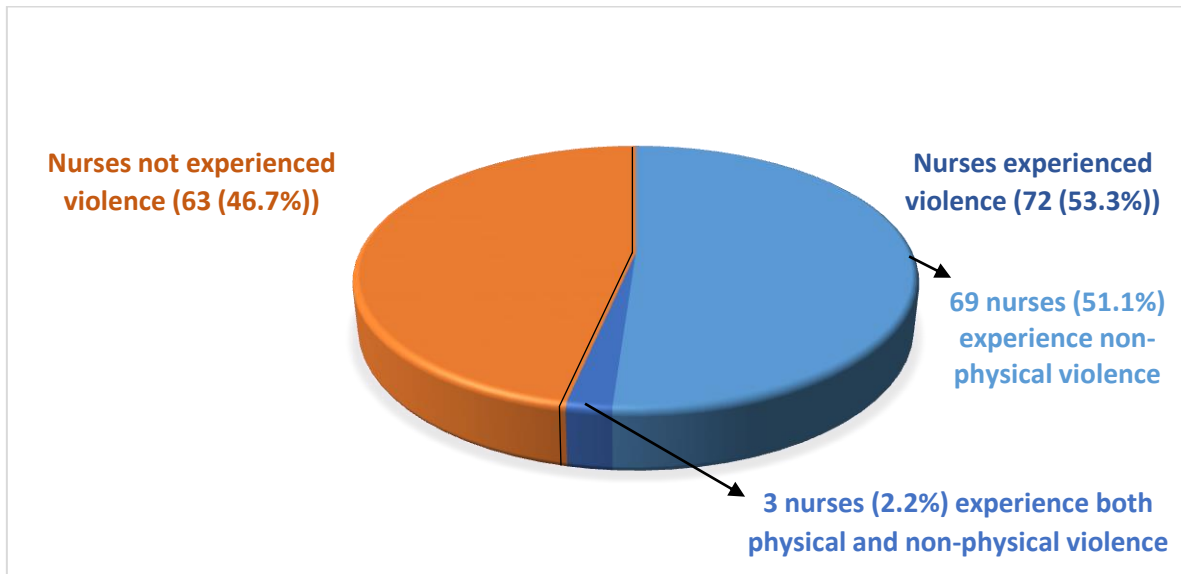
f: frequency, %: percentages, M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation

The descriptive analysis in (Table 1) showed that more than half of nurses were males (58.5%) while the remaining were males (41.5%). The average age of

the participants is (28.64 ± 5.71), in which (71.9%) of them were in the age group (20-29 years). As for the educational level, the highest percentage of nurses with

a diploma degree (60.7%). While nurses had (1-5 years) of experience in pediatric emergency departments as seen among the highest percentage of

(83.7%). Regarding the work shift in the pediatric emergency department, two third of them were work on the night shift (65.2%).



**Fig 1: Prevalence of workplace violence among nurses at emergency departments in pediatric hospitals (n=135)**

This figure showed that of 135 nurse who working at pediatric emergency departments, (53.3%) of them experienced violence, (51.1% of them

experienced non-physical violence, while 2.2% of them experienced both physical and non-physical violence), however (46.7%) of them not experienced violence.

**Table 2 Overall Assessment of Nursing Job Performance among Nurses Experience Violence (Study Group) by Six-Dimensions Scale (n=72)**

Nursing Job Performance	f	%	M	SD	Assess.
Poor	9	12.5	105.05	13.657	Moderate
Moderate	58	80.6			
Good	5	6.9			
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>			

f: frequency, %: percentage, M: Mean for total score, SD: standard deviation

Poor= 1.98 – 2.28, Moderate= 2.29 – 2.59, Good= 2.6 – 2.9

Regarding this table results indicated that high percentage (80.6%) of nurses who experience violence showed a moderate level of job performance with average mean (105.05±13.657).

**Table 3: Assessment of Nursing Job Performance Subscale for Nurses (Study Group) at Pediatric Emergency Departments (n= 72)**

Subscales		f	%	M.	SD.	Ass.
<b>Leadership</b>	Poor	21	29.2	9.33	1.501	M
	Moderate	46	63.9			
	Good	5	6.9			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Critical Care</b>	Poor	0	0	16.75	1.798	G
	Moderate	31	43.1			

	Good	41	56.9			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Teaching/ Collaboration</b>	Poor	18	25	21.75	3.906	M
	Moderate	36	50			
	Good	18	25			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Planning Evaluation</b>	Poor	10	13.9	14.28	2.457	M
	Moderate	47	65.3			
	Good	15	20.8			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Interpersonal Relations/ Communication</b>	Poor	13	18.1	26.19	4.941	G
	Moderate	27	37.5			
	Good	32	44.4			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Professional Development</b>	Poor	14	19.4	18.33	2.177	M
	Moderate	56	77.8			
	Good	2	2.8			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>			

f: frequency, %: percentage, M: Mean for total score, SD: standard deviation, Ass: assessment

Poor= 1.22 – 1.71, Moderate= 1.72 – 2.21, Good= 2.22 – 2.72

This table showed the assessment level of nursing job performance subscales among nurses who experienced violence at pediatric emergency department was range from moderate to good level. For Leadership, Teaching/ Collaboration, Planning

Evaluation, and Professional Development the nursing job performance assessment was moderate, while the Critical Care and Interpersonal Relations/ Communication was good.

**Table 4 Overall assessment of nursing job performance among nurses (control group) at pediatric emergency department (n=63)**

Nursing Job Performance	f	%	M	SD	Assess.
Poor	0	0	135.3	17.02	Good
Moderate	11	17.5			
Good	52	82.5			
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>			

f: frequency, %: percentage, M: Mean for total score, SD: standard deviation

Poor= 1.98 – 2.28, Moderate= 2.29 – 2.59, Good= 2.6 – 2.9

Results in this table revealed the nursing job performance of nurses who did not experience violence (82.5%) of them showed a good level of job performance with average mean (135.3±17.02).

**Table 5 Assessment of Nursing Job Performance subscale for Nurses (Control Group) at Pediatric Emergency Departments (n= 63)**

Subscales		f	%	M.	SD.	Ass.
<b>Leadership</b>	Poor	0	0	13.11	1.657	G
	Moderate	12	19			
	Good	51	81			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Critical Care</b>	Poor	0	0	18.52	1.813	G
	Moderate	9	14.3			
	Good	54	85.7			

	<i>Total</i>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Teaching/ Collaboration</b>	Poor	0	0	28.4	4.199	G
	Moderate	13	20.6			
	Good	50	79.4			
	<i>Total</i>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Planning Evaluation</b>	Poor	0	0	18.7	2.115	G
	Moderate	8	12.7			
	Good	55	87.3			
	<i>Total</i>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Interpersonal Relations/ Communication</b>	Poor	0	0	31.65	3.465	G
	Moderate	11	17.5			
	Good	52	82.5			
	<i>Total</i>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>			
<b>Professional Development</b>	Poor	0	0	27.25	3.137	G
	Moderate	7	11.1			
	Good	56	88.9			
	<i>Total</i>	<b>63</b>	<b>100</b>			

f: frequency, %: percentage, M: Mean for total score, SD: standard deviation, Ass: assessment

Poor= 1.98 – 2.28, Moderate= 2.29 – 2.59, Good= 2.6 – 2.9

This table showed the assessment level of nursing job performance subscales among nurses who did not experience violence was good.

**Table 6 Correlation between workplace violence and nursing job performance**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Spearman correlation</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Workplace Violence	- 0.694**	0.000
Nursing Job Performance		

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The finding revealed that there was a significant correlation reverse between workplace violence and nursing job performance ( $r = -0.694$  at  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The results in (Table 1) showed that most of the participants were at the age group (20-29) years with a percentage of (71.9%), and the mean of nurses' age was ( $28.64 \pm 5.71$ ) as seen in table (4.1). This is due to the fact that the nature of working in the emergency department which requires a high level of physical activity, and new nurses were employed in critical area in order to acquire new skills. This result agreed with the results of a previous studies conducted by [23] and [24].

Regarding nurses' gender, the finding showed that more than half of nurses who work in pediatric emergency departments were females (58.52%). Many females flock to this profession because of their inherent capacity to care for another human being. Nurses are often seen as more caring, compassionate, empathic, and understanding in dealing with children.

This result consistented with the finding of [25] and [26], which indicated more than half of nurses were female.

Regarding the educational level, the finding showed that more than half of nurses had a diploma degree in nursing qualification (60.7%). This is due to a high proportion of nurses who desire to get a diploma degree where learning is more flexible, can get it in less time, and can be employed faster. This result consistented with a studies conducted in Iraq by [27] and [28], they found a majority of nurses had a diploma degree.

Regarding years of experience, most of nursing staff reported they have (1-5) years of experience in pediatric emergency departments (83.70%). This may be attributed to the stressful work environment in at emergency department, which provoked nurses to change their workplace. This result

was in accordance with the results of a previous studies conducted in Iraq by [29] and [30], which showed that most nurses had (1-5) years of experience in their current work unit.

Regarding the work shift, the result revealed that more than half of nurses worked on the night shift (65.2%). This is due to the nurses who worked on the night shift being distributed throughout weekdays to provide continuous care for children for 24 hours. This finding supported by a previous studies conducted by [31] in Iraq and a study in Egypt by [32], they found more than half of nursing staff were work on the night shift.

Concerning prevalence of workplace violence, the findings in (Figure 1) showed that more than half of the nurses experienced various types of violence at emergency departments in Baghdad's pediatric hospitals (53.3%). This is due to the concern and tension of the patient's family regarding their child's health problem and delays in providing care. This finding is in accordance with the findings of previous study in Egypt by [33] and a study in Jordan by [34], they found that more than half of nurses had experienced workplace violence, non-physical violence was commonly experienced among nurses working in pediatric emergency departments (53.3%), while the lowest type of violence was physically (2.2%). This finding agreed by a previous study in Egypt by [35] and a study in Indonesia carried by [36], revealed that more than half of emergency nurses reported experiencing non-physical violence.

Regarding the types of violence, verbal abuse was the most widespread type of non-physical workplace violence (53.3%), followed by threats type (8.9%). While pushing or pulling accounted for about (2.2%). This is due to the fact that any assault incident begins with verbal abuse which can develop into a physical assault depending on the response of the victim. Our findings consistent with the results of a previous studies conducted by [19] and by [37], they found the verbal abuse was mostly prevalence among nurses than other types.

The findings in (Table 2) revealed most of the nurses who experienced workplace violence (80.6%) their nursing job performance was assessed at a moderate level with mean score (105.05±13.657). They scored in their categories of nursing job performance in the Leadership, Teaching/ Collaboration, Planning Evaluation, and Professional Development subscales with a moderate level of performance, while in the

Critical Care and Interpersonal Relations/ Communication subscales were assessed at a good level as seen in the table (Table 3). This is due to the consequences that result from exposure to violence, as the nurses' morale and job satisfaction decline as a result of the lack of procedures and penalties against the perpetrators, which generates frustration among them, thus its' repercussions are reflected on their performance.

On the other hand, the finding in (Table 4) revealed most of nurses who not experienced workplace violence (82.5%) their nursing job performance was assessed at a good level with mean score (135.3±17.02). They showed a good scoring in all subscales of their job performance, as seen in the table (Table 5). This is attributed to the newly appointed nurses are full of vitality and activity and still have not faced violent situations in their work.

The result in (Table 6) demonstrated a significant (moderate inverse) relationship between workplace violence and nursing job performance at ( $r=-0.694$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), which indicated that the great frequency of experiencing violence leads to a lowering the level of nursing job performance among nursing staff. This may result, when nurses experience violence, especially by other health personnel, and they are noticed there are no measures to deter such actions, they become frustrated and feel insecurity and lack of respect from the administration, which makes them hate their workplace and profession, all these effects and others are reflected on their desire to work and interact with others. This finding agreed with the finding of [38] that conducted in Jordan the researchers found there was a significant inverse relationship between occupational stress and job performance. Another study in China by [39]. In addition, a study in China by [17] It was shown that workplace violence was negatively related to job performance at ( $r= -0.205$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there was most than half of nurses experienced violence in emergency department (53.3%), and their job performance was at a moderate level, while the job performance among nurses who had not experienced violence was at a good level, thus indicate there was impact of nurses' experience violence on their job performance and quality of care. Therefore, it is the time enacting the nurses' protection law, which would provide protection

and support, and a safe environment for the nursing profession's individuals.

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