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Mobbing against nurses: a serious problem that has to be solved

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EDITORIAL ARTICLE

MOBBING AGAINST NURSES: A SERIOUS PROBLEM THAT HAS TO BE SOLVED

There has recently been an increase in reports of Nurses being attacked, verbally or physically, in various departments of the Health Care Services. These attacks come from patients and their caregivers, doctors or even other Nurses. Unfortunately, these reports are informal and are limited to either discussions among colleagues, or to posts on Social Networks and rarely take the form of a formal reference to the Administration of the Institution where the incident was conducted.

Mobbing against nurses is a common phenomenon in Healthcare facilities that affects not only nurses, but also patients, the quality of the services provided by health care institutions, even patient mortality.¹⁻⁴ The main effect of mobbing on nurses is that it makes them try to change their workplace in the institution, try to find another institution to work for, or even try to change their profession if an opportunity arises.⁵

For a problem to be solved it has to be firstly reported. It seems that incidents of mobbing against nurses are underreported, which is why many institutions cannot estimate the size of the problem in order to take serious measures against it.⁵ It may come as a surprise, but even nurses themselves do not report incidents of mobbing against them, mostly because they believe that no one will care to provide a solution.⁶ Therefore, it is highly important that nurses that come against mobbing refer the incident, so that they reduce the chances of coming against similar behaviors in the future.

The best way to fight mobbing against nurses is to prevent it. One of the most important elements of any prevention program is a "no tolerance" policy for threats, harassment, assault and intimidation at work. At the same time the effectiveness of prevention programs includes the training of all employees in recognizing any signs of mobbing, before it is presented, to prevent it.⁷

The psychological support of the nurse who has suffered mobbing can be achieved through vocational rehabilitation, psychotherapy and medical treatment. The victim in these situations cannot overcome the problem alone and needs to consult a psychiatrist or a psychotherapist to get the energy needed in order to be able to defend itself. Psychiatrists can be called upon to take care of the nurse, someone from the Administration office can be called upon to resolve occupational problems and a lawyer may provide solutions according to legislation.⁸

In conclusion, Mobbing is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It is important to find and implement appropriate solutions to address this. Literature research has highlighted several abstracts studying Mobbing against healthcare professionals. However, not enough studies have been found to study Mobbing against nurses. In Greece the number of similar studies is much smaller. Therefore, more studies need to be carried out to raise the awareness of the Health Services Administration in order to take appropriate measures. This kind of studies will also raise the awareness of Nurses in order to report incidents of Mobbing and deal with the phenomenon.

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