Coping Strategies of Novice Nurses After Bullying

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Over 70% of novice nurses were exposed to workplace bullying (WPB) within the first 2 years of nursing according to our recent pilot study (Berry, Gillespie, Gates, & Schafer, 2011). Our preliminary findings also indicate that 57.9% (n=114) of novice nurses were the target of WPB and 14.7% (n=29) observed WPB behaviors. The WPB behaviors were primarily perpetrated by their nursing colleagues (59.4%, n=117), leading to decreased work productivity. Novice nurses may be at high risk for developing anxiety and traumatic stress due to WPB exposures at a time when they should be focused on acclimating to the acute care environment of hospitals and increasing their nursing competency.

The purpose of this study is to determine the post-traumatic stress symptoms and/or coping strategies associated with WPB in a cohort of novice nurses. The specific aims of this study are to:

1. **Determine the relationship of nurse characteristics (e.g. post traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], anxiety, perceived stress, age, gender, educational attainment) to continued victimization of workplace bullying.**

2. **Determine the strategies used to manage or stop workplace bullying by novice nurses who remain with their employer.**

A mixed-method design will be utilized using descriptive statistics and Poisson regression (1st phase, quantitative data) and constant comparative analysis (2nd phase, qualitative data). Participants will complete web-based versions of the PTSD civilian survey, Stress Scale, Trait Anxiety scale, and a demographic questionnaire, which will capture date of licensure exam, and other workplace characteristics. A semi-structured telephone interview will be done in the second phase.

The National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA; 2009) identified the need for research focused on psychosocial factors, interpersonal conflict, and work-related violence. Understanding the dynamics surrounding workplace bullying and what strategies the nurse uses to maintain employment will continue to build toward prevention of workplace bullying in the healthcare environment.

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