
The Issue of Sexual Harassment in the Nurse's Workplace and the Solutions to the Problem

An old saying goes, “money cannot buy happiness”-and nurses can verify this. Even as nursing increasingly becomes a respectable career due to the tireless efforts that the nurses put in place, there are also many nurses voicing greater dissatisfaction with their lives. Others also question their career choice since attrition at nursing is at an extremely high level. This paper is a presentation of sexual harassment at the nurses’ workplace, actions that ought to be taken to prevent such incidences and ways of educating the staff concerning the issue that is of a great concern.

Information from research done indicate that sexual harassment is prevalent in nursing, and there are many environmental factors contributing to the same. The prevalence of sexual harassment is as high as 60 percent for the female nurses and 30 percent of the male nurses. Research indicates that sexual harassment in nursing results from either the physicians or the patients. It has also been revealed in the past that leadership behaviors, an imbalanced occupation sex ratio, and no earlier socialization are absolutely connected with sexual harassment (Isaac MacKusick and Minick, 2010).

Sexual harassment in the nurses’ workplace has significantly impacted the working environment for nurses, some nurses even thinking of quitting their jobs. Sexual abuse at the nurses’ workplace has led to the unfriendly workplace for most nurses in the past, more so the female nurses. Studies carried out indicate that the hostile workplace is the major effect of sexual harassment on nurses. Incidences of belittling confrontations as part of gender abuse by co-workers, and in rare cases by patients have been on the rise in the recent past. It is of concern that new professionals are often abused at the nursing workplace, leading to an impact on their clinical nursing practice and their decisions to leave clinical practice (A. Vessey, DeMarco and DiFazio, 2011).

Such incidences of sexual harassment have led to the nurses viewing the matter as part and parcel of their nursing career, leading to a lot of questions concerning the professional roles of the nurses. Additionally, emotional distress has been an impact of sexual harassment on the nurses as overly aggressive treatment, lack of collaboration between physicians and staff becomes a daily phenomenon in their professional life. Research has it that emotional distress leads to lack of respect for the patients, resulting in a lot of dissatisfaction to the patients.

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nurses who have not become familiar with the idea. Apparently, working in an unfriendly workplace and being exposed to emotionally distressing dilemmas on a daily basis leads to insurmountable fatigue and exhaustion for the nurses. Working with the guilt of being sexually abused and lack of support from colleges has thus been a dilemma to many nurses who in the long run, get frustrated by the working conditions.

There are legal ramifications that have been as a result of sexual harassment for the nurses. A lot of absenteeism has been witnessed among many nurses and the other staff due to the fear of being sexually abused by workmates. Failure to report to work with no apparent reason has always been punished by the authorities through being dismissed from duty. The situation has led to many nurses leaving duty, leading to the shortage of nurses. It is therefore, important to understand the fact that the decision by nurses to leave duty, either voluntary or by being dismissed by the legal authorities has been due to the bullying and issues related to sexual harassment (Summer and Townsend-Rocchiccioli, 2003).

Incidences of sexual harassment could result in poor staff relationship and insecurity for the nurses who report those who sexually harass them at their workplace. A lot of hatreds can be the impact of sexual harassment at the nurses' workplace when an individual breaks what is viewed as the culture of the workplace. Where hatred and jealousy prevails, there is no much team performance that can be witnessed. At the workplace, the work environment and the roles of the nurses become so dispiriting. Nurses often find themselves off-balance and frustrated (Tuckett, Winters-Chang, Bogossian and Wood, 2014).

A lot need to be done in to bring back to normal the mess in the nurses' workplace. Several positive approaches ought to be enacted in the pursuit of excellence in the nursing practice. Such positive approaches will boost not only the satisfaction of nurses, but also the nursing care for the patients. The dialogue can be changed from that of despair to that of accountability so as to plot the course of the nursing future. It is the duty of the legal authorities to demonstrate their professionalism and high standards of practice that they represent a vital perspective that cannot and ought not to be ignored.

In mitigating behaviors that constitute sexual harassment, an action plan that would ensure the safety and security of nurses is a vital necessity. Studies have revealed that lack of support to the nurses at various levels at the health institutions have promoted the incidences of sexual harassment. In ensuring that the nurses on the ground do not have to rely on their bosses for their safety, extremely sensitive cameras should be put at every corner of the working rooms and the images displayed to the public who can then judge from what they see. The images should be displayed on screens that are visible to everyone to avoid incidences where those in charge of the surveillance hide some information from the public.

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In bringing a solution to the crisis at the workplace, there is the need to have canceling programs that would ensure cooperation among the nurses, other health care personnel, patients, and their families. The canceling sessions for the nurses should be driven towards ensuring respectful, collaborative, working relationships and open exchange programs. Such programs would also ensure that patients are not put at the risk of negative health outcomes. It is during the canceling programs that the staff can be urged to be their brother's keeper without fearing anybody at the workplace. Solutions to the problem of sexual harassment for the nurses can be obtained from exchange programs facilitated by experts.

There are several ways through which the staff can be educated in the identification and prevention of inappropriate behaviors. The staff can be informed about the idea of generational differences to learn the right things concerning their generation. The staff can be educated on the new technology used at their workplace so that they understand their working environment accordingly. It is through understanding the new complex technology that the nurses can learn how to react quickly and prevent inappropriate behaviors from taking place.

Nurses also need more education on bullying as well as policies and support mechanism concerning the issue of sexual harassment. In educating the nurses on the prevention and identification of inappropriate behaviors, administrators need to use health surveys that evaluate the workplace climate and ascertain the situation of bullying in the healthcare organization.

The HR can also be partnered with to accomplish the action plans in the healthcare organization. Firstly, in ensuring proper supervision of the healthcare organization, the HR could provide for allowances that are specifically directed towards the supervisors who would work at the organization in shifts throughout the day. The HR can also create a new office as a partnership program in which the cases of sexual harassment are addressed.

Sexual harassment in the nurses' workplace, therefore, results in emotional distress related to patient care and unfriendly workplace. Incidences of bullying and violence can also be part of sexual harassment at the nurses' workplace. Some nurses are often to leave their duty due to the frustrations and the fatigue they get from their places of work.

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