

## Workplace violence against nurses: a narrative review

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17-Jun-2022

Ref.: Ms. No. JCTRes-D-22-00060

Workplace violence against nurses: A review

Journal of Clinical and Translational Research

Dear Ms. Kafle,

Reviewers have now commented on your paper. You will see that they are advising that you revise your manuscript. If you are prepared to undertake the work required, I would be pleased to reconsider my decision.

For your guidance, reviewers' comments are appended below.

Please take particular note of the comments by reviewers 2 and 3. The board generally agrees with their appraisal regarding the superficial and disorganized nature of your work, which seems to be predicated on a preconceived stance for which suitable evidence was collected. The manuscript requires a significant overhaul, not only structurally but also linguistically. The depth to which the authors manage to revise the manuscript will determine our final verdict.

If you decide to revise the work, please submit a list of changes or a rebuttal against each point which is being raised when you submit the revised manuscript. Also, please ensure that the track changes function is switched on when implementing the revisions. This enables the reviewers to rapidly verify all changes made.

Your revision is due by Jul 17, 2022.

To submit a revision, go to <https://www.editorialmanager.com/jctres/> and log in as an Author. You will see a menu item call Submission Needing Revision. You will find your submission record there.

Yours sincerely

Michal Heger  
Editor-in-Chief  
Journal of Clinical and Translational Research

Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #1: The article is well written.

Reviewer #2: Thank you for the opportunity to review this article. In general, violence in the work environment is a vitally important issue, and it is of special interest to investigate it. Unfortunately, I feel that this article is not a relevant contribution. In general terms, it is brief, disorganized and superficial, without a substantial contribution to the literature to justify its publication. I will now detail some points for improvement:

1. In the abstract I miss some mention of the type of review. It is quite common to find in the bibliography a title that includes "review" and then in the "method" section, you find out that it is a systematic review, bibliographic review, scoping, etc. In this case it is a narrative review, and I think that should be reflected in the abstract. It can naturally be included in the objectives "The aim of this article is to explore, through a narrative review, the concept of VPM, its prevalence, its consequences, its influence on nursing and the strategies developed to prevent these incidences". My advice would also be that the term "narrative" should appear in the title.

2. The introduction is excessively short (I understand it to be "background"). While the authors do a good job developing some of the problematic issues, there remain some other questions of importance, especially "what is this publication intended to add to the existing evidence?" A search of the existing literature yields the following publications:

Liu, J., Gan, Y., Jiang, H., Li, L., Dwyer, R., Lu, K., Yan, S., Sampson, O., Xu, H., Wang, C., Zhu, Y., Chang, Y., Yang, Y., Yang, T., Chen, Y., Song, F., & Lu, Z. (2019). Prevalence of workplace violence against healthcare workers: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 76(12), 927-937. <https://doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2019-105849>

Nowrouzi-Kia, B., Isidro, R., Chai, E., Usuba, K., & Chen, A. (2019). Antecedent factors in different types of workplace violence against nurses: A systematic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 44, 1-7. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2018.11.002.

Chakraborty, S., Mashreky, S. R., & Dalal, K. (2022). Violence against physicians and nurses: a systematic literature review. *Zeitschrift fur Gesundheitswissenschaften = Journal of Public Health*, 1-19. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-021-01689-6>

What is new and useful in this publication that has not already been addressed in recent studies such as the ones I have included, specially Chakraborty et al.? This question should be very well defended in the introduction.

3. I find the structure of the article very, very confusing, and I think this is one of the main problems that can be identified. In the objectives it talks about "concept of WPV, its prevalence, consequences, influence on nursing, and strategies developed to prevent such incidences" These points seem to me adequate to organize the information, but the authors include "discussion" and, just below it, they include "issue, current trends, significance of issue, influence, controversies, strategies, a nurses position". As a reader I have to keep trying to figure out if, "issues and current trends" is what the authors intend to expose as "concept of wpv", and I think it should not be so. In my view, the structure of the publication should be the same as that identified in the objectives, with subsections where necessary.

4. The other major problem with the publication is the excessive brevity of the contents. The authors provide evidence of great interest, but it does not reach the necessary level of depth sought in a narrative review. A review cannot be so superficial. For example:

4.1. Only one "concept" on WPV is offered, in the background. Then this topic is not addressed again, no further "concept" on the subject is offered. In theory it is one of the objectives of the study and it is implied that it is going to talk about what is meant by the issue.

4.2. Prevalence is hardly addressed, being another of the main objectives. What percentage of WPV is identified in the literature in general? How is it divided by country? In which country is it more frequent? What are the reasons for it being more prevalent in one place or another? How does it differ from the prevalence in other healthcare personnel? Is it more frequent in nurses in any specific service? These questions need to be addressed. You have included the Li et al. paper, which addresses some of these questions, and you have hardly used it.

4.3. Influence on nursing is quite well detailed, although spread over several sections. It should all be in one section.

4.4 In the "strategies" section, content is included that would be much more coherent in other sections (the first paragraph is not a strategy...). For example "Sixty-three percentage of violence in the hospital occurs in a waiting room". Why does this information appear for the first time in this section, which has nothing to do with it? On the other hand, there is hardly any bibliography or information on the strategies themselves. In addition to the D'Ettorre et al. citation, many more references could have been incorporated such as:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3928/08910162-20081101-04>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/j.2048-7940.2010.tb00045.x>

While these strategies are for "workplace" in general, they include guidelines for nurses that could be useful. The authors should answer: What strategies exist internationally? What is their approach? How effective are they? What is wrong with these strategies? What are the gaps? What approach could be used for new proposals? These questions should be answered.

5. Finally, I understand what the authors intend to denounce, but I am afraid that their

publication does not provide enough evidence to be able to do so properly. Personally, I find the point about strategies tremendously interesting, and I think the authors could defend their position much better with a proper PRISMA systematic (not narrative) review of available strategies to prevent WPV against nurses. In the case of finding few and inefficient ones, one would have robust evidence to denounce the current situation and the lack of efforts or support. In the case of not wanting to do a systematic review, I recommend that the authors organize the publication well, following my proposal if they consider it, and do a much more in-depth review of the subject.

Reviewer #3: The review article successfully dissects the issue, significance, trends, and negative influence on nursing practice in the context of workplace violence (WPV). As an internist, I witness such incidents daily, and unfortunately, a majority of nurses are not even aware of violence being occurred. There is a lack of publications on this topic. We need to inform, educate and protect the nurses from such incidents. The authors did a commendable job writing this review which will contribute to the academic void in this topic.

My comments/suggestions:

Abstract: add a line pertinent to a conclusion.

Issue: Please combine the second last, and last paragraph for better flow of the narration. The break on paragraphs is not necessary.

Current trends: In the hierarchy of the healthcare setting, nurses are below the doctors, which is another reason for the incivility of the patient toward the nurses. I recommend changing the statement to "In the healthcare setting, nurses follow orders from doctors, which is perceived by many as low hierarchy job, which is another reason for the incivility of the patient toward the nurses." or similar.

Significance of Issue: Likewise, insecurity and antisocial fall under the social category, hamper coworkers' relations, and create a toxic working environment. Add "which" after "coworkers' relations,".

Strategies: I recommend rephrasing the first and second lines. For example: Patients with dementia, schizophrenia, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and anxiety are some of the major delinquents of WPV against the nurses [8]. But the culprits of WPV are not limited to the above medical conditions only but also patients in a lucid and normal state of consciousness.

Please add page numbers with the revision submission.

Reviewer #4: The authors have touched on a very important topic which needs to be actively taken into account as an individual as well as within a Societal thought process.

I was wondering whether a perspective towards,

1) Is the WPV remotely associated with the disease severity or disease compromising the

quality of life? It may help to explore the possibility of the patients themselves or the family members and the attendants, who may be emotionally challenged as well at that point of time.

2) Is there anything about the age perspective and the social/economic status of the patients themselves or the family members and the attendants?

Best wishes,

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Authors' response

**Reviewer #1: The article is well written.**

--- Thank you so much for the review.

**Reviewer #2: Thank you for the opportunity to review this article. In general, violence in the work environment is a vitally important issue, and it is of special interest to investigate it. Unfortunately, I feel that this article is not a relevant contribution. In general terms, it is brief, disorganized and superficial, without a substantial contribution to the literature to justify its publication. I will now detail some points for improvement:**

--- Thank you so much for the review. We attempted to edit and revise the manuscript to best of our abilities.

**1. In the abstract I miss some mention of the type of review. It is quite common to find in the bibliography a title that includes "review" and then in the "method" section, you find out that it is a systematic review, bibliographic review, scoping, etc. In this case it is a narrative review, and I think that should be reflected in the abstract. It can naturally be included in the objectives "The aim of this article is to explore, through a narrative review, the concept of VPM, its prevalence, its consequences, its influence on nursing and the strategies developed to prevent these incidences". My advice would also be that the term "narrative" should appear in the title.**

--- The title is changed to: Workplace violence against nurses: A narrative review.

--- Also, on line 28, we added: "narrative review" per suggestion.

**2. The introduction is excessively short (I understand it to be "background"). While the authors do a good job developing some of the problematic issues, there remain some other questions of importance, especially "what is this publication intended to add to the existing evidence?" A search of the existing literature yields the following publications:**

Liu, J., Gan, Y., Jiang, H., Li, L., Dwyer, R., Lu, K., Yan, S., Sampson, O., Xu, H., Wang, C., Zhu, Y., Chang, Y., Yang, Y., Yang, T., Chen, Y., Song, F., & Lu, Z. (2019). Prevalence of workplace violence against healthcare workers: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 76(12), 927-937. <https://doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2019-105849>

Nowrouzi-Kia, B., Isidro, R., Chai, E., Usuba, K., & Chen, A. (2019). Antecedent factors in different types of workplace violence against nurses: A systematic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 44, 1-7. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2018.11.002.

Chakraborty, S., Mashreky, S. R., & Dalal, K. (2022). Violence against physicians and

**nurses: a systematic literature review. Zeitschrift für Gesundheitswissenschaften = Journal of Public Health, 1-19. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-021-01689-6>**

**What is new and useful in this publication that has not already been addressed in recent studies such as the ones I have included, specially Chakraborty et al.? This question should be very well defended in the introduction.**

--- Thank you for the suggestion. We added the usefulness of this article on page 4, lines 58-64. "There is a paucity of information regarding WPV against nurses in the literature. A few publications available discuss WPV aggregately in the healthcare profession. A recent systematic literature review on WPV against nurses discussed the antecedent factors surrounding WPV. However, articles discussing the perspective of a nurse discussing WPV exclusively against nurses and the mental and professional implications of such WPV incidents are very rare to none. In this narrative review, we intend to exclusively discuss WPV against nurses and its implications."

**3. I find the structure of the article very, very confusing, and I think this is one of the main problems that can be identified. In the objectives it talks about "concept of WPV, its prevalence, consequences, influence on nursing, and strategies developed to prevent such incidences" These points seem to me adequate to organize the information, but the authors include "discussion" and, just below it, they include "issue, current trends, significance of issue, influence, controversies, strategies, a nurses position". As a reader I have to keep trying to figure out if, "issues and current trends" is what the authors intend to expose as "concept of wpv", and I think it should not be so. In my view, the structure of the publication should be the same as that identified in the objectives, with subsections where necessary.**

--- Thank you for the comment. We realize the issue with the flow of the manuscript. We changed the language of the purpose of study in Lines 70-71. We also numbered the headings and subheadings so that it is easier for the readers to keep the flow.

**4. The other major problem with the publication is the excessive brevity of the contents. The authors provide evidence of great interest, but it does not reach the necessary level of depth sought in a narrative review. A review cannot be so superficial. For example:**

**4.1. Only one "concept" on WPV is offered, in the background. Then this topic is not addressed again, no further "concept" on the subject is offered. In theory it is one of the objectives of the study and it is implied that it is going to talk about what is meant by the issue.**

--- Thank you so much for the comment. We have written the "Discussion" portion such that the concept of WPV is incorporated with each subheading.

**4.2. Prevalence is hardly addressed, being another of the main objectives. What percentage of WPV is identified in the literature in general? How is it divided by country? In which country is it more frequent? What are the reasons for it being more prevalent in one place or another? How does it differ from the prevalence in other healthcare personnel? Is it more frequent in nurses in any specific service? These questions need to be addressed. You have included the Li et al. paper, which addresses some of these questions, and you have hardly used it.**

---Thank you for the comment. Since the prevalence is variable and is reported likewise in the literature, we are reporting it as such. We added data on lines 94-96, and 143-146.

**4.3. Influence on nursing is quite well detailed, although spread over several sections. It should all be in one section.**

---Thank you for the valuable suggestion. We tried to focus an issue under a heading, but since the topics are so overlapping, it was not possible to segregate the heading totally. Some portions of the subheadings are interlaced to emphasize the gravity of the issues.

**4.4 In the "strategies" section, content is included that would be much more coherent in other sections (the first paragraph is not a strategy...). For example "Sixty-three percentage of violence in the hospital occurs in a waiting room". Why does this information appear for the first time in this section, which has nothing to do with it? On the other hand, there is hardly any bibliography or information on the strategies themselves. In addition to the D'Ettorre et al. citation, many more references could have been incorporated such as:**

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**While these strategies are for "workplace" in general, they include guidelines for nurses that could be useful. The authors should answer: What strategies exist internationally? What is their approach? How effective are they? What is wrong with these strategies? What are the gaps? What approach could be used for new proposals? These questions should be answered.**

--- Thank you for the suggestion. We rephrased the "sixty-three percentage..." line in lines 198-202 for better clarity.

We added other available strategies at the beginning of the "Strategies", in lines 182-187.

**5. Finally, I understand what the authors intend to denounce, but I am afraid that their publication does not provide enough evidence to be able to do so properly. Personally, I find the point about strategies tremendously interesting, and I think the authors could defend their position much better with a proper PRISMA systematic (not narrative) review of available strategies to prevent WPV against nurses. In the case of finding few and inefficient ones, one would have robust evidence to denounce the current situation and the lack of efforts or support. In the case of not wanting to do a systematic review, I recommend that the authors organize the publication well, following my proposal if they consider it, and do a much more in-depth review of the subject.**

---We appreciate the suggestion. This narrative review was written from a primary working nurse's perspective. Hence, we did not discuss about the impact on healthcare costs, loss of workdays, and so on in this article. This type of narration is lacking in the literature currently. We will definitely keep this in mind and will work on a systematic review next.

**Reviewer #3: The review article successfully dissects the issue, significance, trends, and negative influence on nursing practice in the context of workplace violence (WPV). As an internist, I witness such incidents daily, and unfortunately, a majority of nurses are not even aware of violence being occurred. There is a lack of publications on this topic.**

**We need to inform, educate and protect the nurses from such incidents. The authors did a commendable job writing this review which will contribute to the academic void in this topic.**

**My comments/suggestions:**

**Abstract: add a line pertinent to a conclusion.**

---Thank you for the comment. We added lines 31-32: Nurses should be educated appropriately on hospital policies against WPV and be encouraged to report any incidence.

**Issue: Please combine the second last, and last paragraph for better flow of the narration. The break on paragraphs is not necessary.**

--- Thank you for the suggestion. We merged the paragraphs.

**Current trends: In the hierarchy of the healthcare setting, nurses are below the doctors, which is another reason for the incivility of the patient toward the nurses. I recommend changing the statement to "In the healthcare setting, nurses follow orders from doctors, which is perceived by many as low hierarchy job, which is another reason for the incivility of the patient toward the nurses." or similar.**

--- Thank you for the comment. We changed the statement per suggestion on lines 125-127.

**Significance of Issue: Likewise, insecurity and antisocial fall under the social category, hamper coworkers' relations, and create a toxic working environment. Add "which" after "coworkers' relations,".**

---Thank you for the suggestion. We changed per suggestion on line 155-156.

**Strategies: I recommend rephrasing the first and second lines. For example: Patients with dementia, schizophrenia, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and anxiety are some of the major delinquents of WPV against the nurses [8]. But the culprits of WPV are not limited to the above medical conditions only but also patients in a lucid and normal state of consciousness.**

--- Thank you for the suggestion. We changed per suggestion on lines 188-191.

**Please add page numbers with the revision submission.**

--- Thank you for the suggestion.

**Reviewer #4: The authors have touched on a very important topic which needs to be actively taken into account as an individual as well as within a Societal thought process.**

**I was wondering whether a perspective towards,**

**1) Is the WPV remotely associated with the disease severity or disease compromising the quality of life? It may help to explore the possibility of the patients themselves or the family members and the attendants, who may be emotionally challenged as well at that point of time.**

---Thank you so much for the comment. We discussed some circumstantial conditions relating to WPV in which we discussed the patient-related causes. There is very less evidence related



to this topic hence we are not able to discuss it further.

**2) Is there anything about the age perspective and the social/economic status of the patients themselves or the family members and the attendants?**

---Thank you so much for the comment. It is similar to the above, which is related to the limited literature on this subject.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Editorial decision  
27-Jul-2022

Ref.: Ms. No. JCTRes-D-22-00060R1  
Workplace violence against nurses: A narrative review  
Journal of Clinical and Translational Research

Dear authors,

I am pleased to inform you that your manuscript has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Clinical and Translational Research.

You will receive the proofs of your article shortly, which we kindly ask you to thoroughly review for any errors.

Thank you for submitting your work to JCTR.

Kindest regards,

Michal Heger  
Editor-in-Chief  
Journal of Clinical and Translational Research

Comments from the editors and reviewers: