

Nurses Research On Exposure to Stress

N-RES Newsletter

Department of Psychology
Sunshine Education and Research Center
University of South Florida

What is N-RES?

The Nurses Research on Exposure to Stress Project is headquartered at the University of South Florida Tampa campus. The director of the project is Professor Paul Spector in the Department of Psychology who is director of the USF Occupational Health Psychology Program that is part of the Sunshine Education and Research Center. The Sunshine ERC is funded by NIOSH to promote workplace health and safety. Doctoral student Zhiqing Zhou is the research associate. N-RES is a collaboration with Professor Liu-Qin Yang's Nursing Study of Aggression Prevention (N-SAP) at Portland State University's Psychology Department.

N-RES began in 2004 with research concerning how hospital policies and procedures might contribute to nurses' being exposed to both physical and nonphysical violence at work, and on the potential stress effects of that exposure. The research has expanded from the initial focus on violence to include injuries and musculoskeletal disorders. To date we have completed several studies and are working to publish and disseminate the results. This newsletter is one means of doing that.

We are currently conducting a prospective study of the stressful experiences encountered by newly graduated BA-level nurses. In collaboration with the USF College of Nursing, we began the study in 2010 and to date have recruited 5 cohorts of graduating seniors into the study. The plan is to take a baseline survey measure during the final week before graduation, and then to conduct follow-up surveys at 6, 12, and 24 months after graduation.

Nurse Violence Exposure in A VHA Hospital

The purpose of this study was to see if the workplace climate of a hospital, as seen by nurses, was related to their exposure to workplace violence. We surveyed 198 nurses of a Veteran's Health Administration hospital. Nurses reported that 28% experienced physical violence and 58% experienced nonphysical violence. Patients accounted for almost all physical violence, with coworkers accounting for about a third of nonphysical violence.

We developed an instrument to measure nurses' perceptions of violence prevention climate in the hospital. This climate reflects the extent to which the hospital has policies and practices designed to minimize violence. Results showed that the better the climate, the less likely it was that nurses would be assaulted. Not surprisingly, being assaulted, both physically and nonphysically, was associated with poor emotional well-being (negative emotional experiences at work) and physical symptoms such as digestive disorder and headaches. This study formed the basis for a series of investigations into the role of climate in exposure to workplace violence. Source: Spector, P. E., Coulter, M. L., Stockwell, H. G., & Matz, M. W. (2007). Perceived violence climate: A new construct and its relationship to workplace physical violence and verbal aggression, and their potential consequences. *Work & Stress, 21*, 117-130.

Welcome to the N-RES Newsletter

This is the first newsletter of the N-RES project, designed to keep our research community and participants in our research informed about our research, as well as research by others concerning stressful working conditions of nurses, including workplace violence. In future issues we will provide updates to our research on nursing graduates. To contact us, either e-mail or phone Professor Paul Spector pspector@usf.edu, 813-974-0357.