

## Nurses Research On Exposure to Stress

**N-RES Newsletter**

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**N-RES Progress**

The Nurses Research on Exposure to Stress Project has been ongoing since 2004. In 2010 we began the USF Nurse Alumni Stress Study that recruits nursing BA-level students during their final week in school (Information Day), and then tracks them after graduation as they begin their careers. To date 347 nursing students completed baseline measures while still in school. We have been surveying them at 6, 12, and 24 months after graduation. There has been attrition from the study of about 38% at 6 months and another 10% at 12 months. Data collection from 3 graduating cohorts is ongoing at the current time.

Preliminary results from this study will be presented at the Academy of Management conference in Boston in August of this year. Additional results will be presented at the Southern Management Association in Ft. Lauderdale in October. By the end of this summer we should have sufficient response to address the major questions from the study about the individual and organizational factors that predict violence exposure.

What we have seen so far is that by 6 months after graduation, the majority of our USF nursing alumni are employed in nursing. About 95% of those are working in hospital settings. Based on a small sample of 55 followed up for a year, their rate of exposure to physical violence is 19%, nonphysical violence is 48%, needle sticks 13%, and back injury on the job is 19%. This group's exposure to physical violence is similar to the Campbell et al. study described in the next article. On the positive side, the vast majority, 84%, say they are committed to a career in nursing after a year, and 84% are satisfied with their current jobs.

**Violence and Work Setting**

In this U.S. study 2166 nurses and nursing assistants from 3 hospitals and a geriatric care facility were surveyed about their personal characteristics, work setting, and violence exposure. The study found that 1/3 of nurses experienced violence within the prior year, with 19.4% physical and 19.9% nonphysical. Males and whites were more likely to report being physically assaulted than females or nonwhites, although reasons could not be determined. In terms of type of setting, the geriatric care facility had an overall violence rate that was higher than hospitals for both physical and nonphysical violence. For example, 39.3% of nurses in geriatric care reported nonphysical violence versus 18% to 25.3% in hospitals. Specific units within facilities varied in violence rates. For physical violence on nurses, the highest rates were for Emergency Departments (53.5%), Psychiatry (54.5%), and Neurology (34.8%). The lowest rates were Obstetrics (5.1%), Surgery (8.5%) and Outpatient (9.2%). Although this study does not provide insights into prevention strategies, it does show where most attention should be directed.

Source: Campbell, J. C., Messing, J. T., Kub, J., Agnew, J., Fitzgerald, S., Fowler, B., et al. (2011). Workplace violence: prevalence and risk factors in the safe at work study. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*, 53, 82-89.

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The N-RES newsletter is 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](mailto:pspector@usf.edu), 813-974-0357.