

Violence Towards Doctors in the Emergency Department in Khartoum State

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Background

Violence and aggression experienced by doctors in the emergency department has been the focus of international concern. Workplace violence against healthcare workers and especially doctors are now clearly taken as a rapidly rising health problem in Sudan with great political and legal concerns. The current study was aimed at exploring the prevalence of verbal and physical workplace violence, the major factors associated with it, and its consequences reported by doctors in the emergency departments of governmental hospitals in Khartoum state 2019.

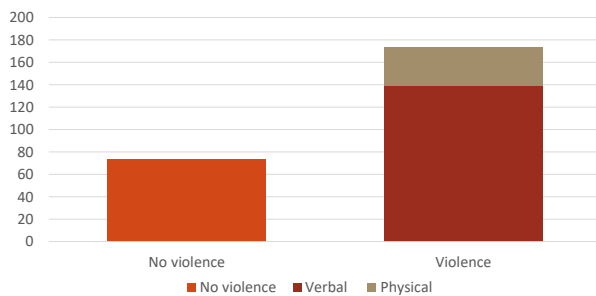
Objectives

To assess the prevalence of violence, to determine factors leading to violence, and to identify whether there are measures to prevent violence in hospital's setting and their effect.

Methodology

This cross-sectional study utilized self-administered questionnaires to collect data on aspects of workplace violence against doctors working in 9 governmental hospitals in Khartoum state. The WHO's Workplace Violence in the Health Sector - Country Case Study Research Instruments - Survey Questionnaire on verbal and physical violence. In total, 231 doctors completed the questionnaire in 2019. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

Prevalence of violence



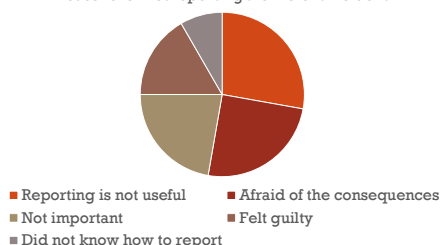
Physical violence preparator	Percent
Patient	10.3
Co-patient	51.3
Lay person	28.2
Other	10.3

Table 1: Physical violence preparator

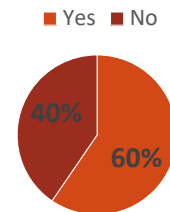
Results

Results showed that 72.7% of doctors experienced at least one violent act. Factors associated with an increased risk of experiencing physical violence included male gender ($p=0.030$). The most common type of violence is verbal violence at 71.4% and physical violence at 17.6%. Only 10.3% of doctors reported the violent incident. Out of the 17.6% ($n=33$) who were physically attacked, 10.3% were by patients, 51.3% by patients' relative and 38% by others including hospital staff or security. A 5-point Likert-type scale 37.2% of physicians were found to be always felt worried about violence in the workplace, 21.2% often felt worried, 25.5% occasionally felt worried and only 16% . . . seldom or never felt worried

Reasons for not reporting the violent incident



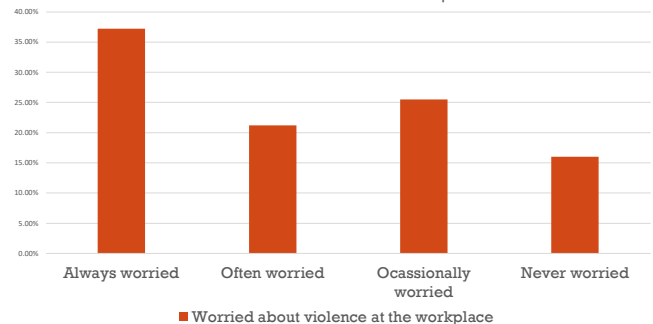
Policy against violence set by hospital



Conclusion

Approximately one in every two doctors had experienced some degree of violence, either physical or nonphysical or both, and it was negatively reflected on their psychological status as well as their work performance. Violence towards physicians is highly prevalent in Khartoum state. The lack of security measures and the lack of basic tools and medications in the emergency department are main risk factors leading to violence. Lack of proper health policies ranging from training health workers on violence to, reporting and penalties for attacking physicians

Worried about violence at the workplace



Recommendations

- Conduction of more systemic research covering all hospitals regarding the prevalence of violence
- Implementing a "Zero-tolerance policy" to end violence in the emergency department setting
- Providing training for physicians on how to prevent and deal with violence
- Detailed study of each individual case of violence
- Improving the health policies in the country, and improving the environment in all Emergency departments

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