

Peer-to-peer aggression threatens patient care and outcomes

February 24 2014

Horizontal violence between nurses at the same level of authority is jeopardising patient outcomes, research has revealed.

A study of the phenomenon in a perinatal department at a US hospital found that staff on labour and delivery wards experience hostile behaviour more frequently than those working elsewhere in the same service.

A relationship between horizontal violence and ineffective communication, as well as between horizontal violence and poor patient outcome or near misses, was demonstrated.

Peer-to-peer abuse has been widely documented in fast-paced healthcare environments in other countries.

The study, published in *Nursing Management*, urges senior nurses and managers to create workplace environments where nurses feel supported to practise their skills without taking out their frustrations or anxieties on colleagues.

The authors recommend developing staffing models that take into account the physically and emotionally demanding aspects of nursing in high-pressured settings, which require advanced critical thinking and specific skillsets.

They conclude that understanding how hostile workplaces can be for

some [nurses](#) and the effect this can have on patient care and outcomes is critical so that problems can be identified and addressed.

More information: *Nursing Management*. 20, 9, 24-30. [DOI: 10.7748/nm2014.02.20.9.24.e1098](#)

Citation: Peer-to-peer aggression threatens patient care and outcomes (2014, February 24) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-02-peer-to-peer-aggression-threatens-patient-outcomes.html>

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