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Title: *Assessment of Workplace Abuse Experienced by Pharmacy Personnel*

Abstract

Purpose

Personal safety in the workplace environment is essential for medical professionals to provide optimal care. This includes the field of pharmacy, where the type of care provided leaves personnel such as pharmacists, technicians, students, and other individuals susceptible to abuse. These mistreatments stem from numerous sources and are of various character ranging from verbal abuse to physical violence, stalking, or harassment at the hands of patients or even other healthcare providers. This project was designed with the intent of uncovering the patterns associated with these abuses, and to observe the effectiveness of current preventative measures in place with the hopes of improving on them to better provide a safe work environment for the individuals at risk.

Methods

Pharmacy personnel were invited to participate in a Qualtrics survey constructed by a fourth-year pharmacy student and two SIUE School of Pharmacy faculty mentors. The survey was addressed to pharmacists, technicians, students, fellows, and residents, and contained questions regarding individuals' experiences before, during, and after several categories of workplace abuse as well as descriptions of training and abuse prevention strategies in place by employers. Other participant demographics obtained included gender identity, years of experience in pharmacy, pharmacy setting, state(s) in which the individual currently practices, and approximate population of the area served by the pharmacy.

Results

There were a total of 296 participants who fully completed the survey, with an additional 90 who submitted partially completed responses. Based on survey results, 70% (270) of the participants were pharmacists with 71% (273) being female. Among all responses, 83% (321) reported that they had received one or more form of abuse, and approximately 91% (351) had witnessed the abuse of another person in the workplace. The most common form this abuse took in both cases was verbal abuse, followed by personal threats, non-sexual intimidation, and sexual harassment (in descending frequency). It was also found that 27% (103) participants had never received any training regarding abuse in the workplace, and 32% (125) indicated that either their employer did not have, or they were not aware of any reporting system in the event of abuse.

Conclusion

The results of our survey indicate that there is a high incidence rate of abuse experienced by pharmacy personnel in the workplace as reported by participants. Similarly, it was found that adequate abuse prevention training and support from employers were not consistently given to pharmacy workers.