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Risk factors and prevalence of disagreement and aggressive behavior among healthcare workers in operating theatres in Greek settings

Athina E Patelarou¹, Chrysoula Tsiou², Konstantinos Giakoumidakis³, Aggelos Laliotis⁴ and Evridiki Patelarou⁵¹University Hospital of Heraklion, Greece²Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece³Evangelismos Athens General Hospital, Greece⁴Addenbrooke's Hospital, UK⁵King's College London, UK

Statement of the Problem: The operating theatre has been described as the most typical example of an interdisciplinary team working in healthcare. Effective multidisciplinary communication secures cohesive teamwork and links to patient's safety and quality of care.

Aim: The purpose of the study is to assess the prevalence aggressive behavior among healthcare professionals in operating theatres in Greece and to identify the underlying risk factors.

Method:

Findings: High percentages of both physicians and nurses reported to be aware of an aggressive behavior (92.0% and 96.0%) and have experienced a disagreement during the last six months (83.0% and 90.0%). Nurses were found to be witnesses of a conflict between different professions with a total personal experience of an aggressive behavior in higher percentages when compared to the physicians. Working in a university hospital and total years of experience were listed among the two major risk factors for aggressive behavior in the operating theatre. In specific, witnesses were more frequent among healthcare professionals working in the university hospital compared to the regional hospital and the majority of the physicians reported that they had been witnessed of an aggressive behavior or had a personal experience of an aggressive behavior during their early stages of work. In contrast, nurses reported higher percentages of being aware and having a personal experience of a disagreement during the later stages of work (comparison between <14.7 vs. ≥14.7 years of experience provided with a p-value equal to 0.01 and 0.03, respectively).

Conclusion & Significance: Professional group, type of hospital and years of experience were found to affect the frequency of both awareness and personal experience of an aggressive behavior between healthcare professionals. Specific interventions should be adopted from stakeholders and policy-making authorities with the aim to cultivate respect and peaceful collaboration between healthcare professionals and to foster high standards of patient safety and quality of care

athina.patelarou@gmail.com

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