

NJ-ACEP VIOLENCE IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

OSHA defines workplace violence (WPV) as violence or the threat of violence against workers.

After law enforcement, health care providers experience the most incidents of workplace violence.

WPV decreases morale and productivity, and increases absenteeism and personnel turnover.

NJ-ACEP is an advocate for emergency department staff and therefore wants to develop a culture of safety and education, and institute protocols that promote a safe working environment. Through an ACEP grant, we have begun this process by completing a NJ Emergency Department Violence Survey. We first must acknowledge violence before we can treat it, just like we would with any other medical illness.

Inside of this brochure, we will discuss the results of this survey, and steps to treat the disease of violence in our emergency departments.

Violence should not be a part of the Emergency Department.



...But is it part of the job?

WAYS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN YOUR ED: REPORT AND KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

SURVEY RESULTS

The Results of the NJ ACEP Emergency Department Violence Survey:

- 79% of your colleagues experienced WPV daily or weekly
- 69% felt that WPV is “part of the job”
- 93% of assaults were verbal threats or profane language
- Only 43% had had formal WPV prevent training, 32% had no training offered at all
- Barriers to reporting WPV included unclear reporting policies (45%), a busy ED or inconvenience (64%), or that reporting would change nothing (54%)
- 50% of respondents were unaware of the health care law that protects them against WPV
- No one has ever been found guilty under the health care protection law since its upgrade in 2011

WHY ED ARE AT RISK

- Overcrowded waiting rooms
- Departments are understaffed
- Dealing with emotionally disturbed persons, either psychologically or with drug/alcohol abuse
- Night shift work

KNOW THE LAW AND THE ACT

- Law A-2309/S-911 was upgraded in 2011, making assaults against nurses or other health care professionals an aggravated assault.
- Violence Prevention in Health Care Facilities Act (2011) states that a health care facility must establish a violence prevention committee, and 50% of membership are individuals who have patient contact.
- The committee’s goal is to develop a violence prevention plan for their emergency department.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Acknowledge that WPV exists, and report it.
- Join your current violence prevention committee at your hospital as a representative of your emergency department.
- Contact the NJ-ACEP for a free presentation on WPV and prevention.
- Help establish a Violence Prevention Program in your emergency department!
- Liaison with violence prevention program within your hospital. If there is no program in your hospital, the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) has an excellent violence prevention tool kit. It is a free resource online which you can use to help create and implement your own committee.
- Encourage all staff to participate in violence de-escalation programs.
- Know your rights, and if appropriate prosecute to the full extent of the law.