



# The Management of Workplace Violence against Healthcare Workers: A Multidisciplinary Approach in an Italian Hospital

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## Abstract

**Objective:** The risk of aggression against healthcare workers (HCWs) is a globally well-known topic. However, many HCWs consider workplace violence (WV) as part of their job and this misconception leads to a broad underreporting. This cross-sectional study aims at providing a descriptive analysis of aggressive acts against HCWs registered in a 34-month period in a paediatric general hospital. We also suggest a model for the assessment of contributing factors related to the development of overt aggression.

**Methods:** A descriptive study was conducted in a paediatric general hospital in Milan, Italy, over a 34-month period. Data were collected through a questionnaire and interviews with HCWs and managers. The process of WV is led by multidisciplinary teams which include occupational physicians and a psychologist following a multidisciplinary approach. The study was divided into three domains: 1) individual factors, 2) organizational factors, and 3) environmental context. Contributing factors related to each domain are outlined and univariate analyses are performed to investigate their role in determining overt aggression. Then a multiple linear regression was set using the following variables: age, gender, years of experience, type of contract, and organizational factors.

**Results:** A total of 100 HCWs were included in the study. The most common type of aggression was verbal abuse (70%), followed by physical aggression (10%), and psychological aggression (15%). The most common contributing factors were organizational factors (70%), individual factors (10%), and environmental factors (15%).

**Conclusion:** Raising awareness on the aggression risk and contributing factors may lead to a relevant reduction of workplace violence against HCWs.

## Keywords:

## Introduction

Workplace violence (WV) is a global phenomenon that affects healthcare workers (HCWs) worldwide. It is a complex phenomenon that involves multiple factors, including individual, organizational, and environmental factors. The management of WV requires a multidisciplinary approach that involves occupational physicians, psychologists, and managers. This study aims to provide a descriptive analysis of aggressive acts against HCWs registered in a 34-month period in a paediatric general hospital. We also suggest a model for the assessment of contributing factors related to the development of overt aggression.

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## Statistical Analyses

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 22.0 software package. The statistical significance was determined by the chi-square test. The results are presented in the following tables.

## Results

### Descriptive Analyses of Aggressive acts Registered in the Hospital

#### Form of Aggressive acts and their Evaluation

The most frequent form of aggressive acts was verbal abuse (55.5%), followed by physical assault (37.1%) and sexual harassment (7.4%). The mean score for the evaluation of aggressive acts was 3.71 (SD, 4.0). The results are presented in the following table.

#### Assaulted HCWs' Perspective in WV Management

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**Conflict of Interest**

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**Author Contributions**

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