The impacts of organizational factors on horizontal bullying and turnover intentions in the nursing workplace

Aim: To examine the impact of organizational factors on bullying among peers (i.e. horizontal) and its effect on turnover intentions among Canadian registered nurses (RNs).

Background: Bullying among nurses is an international problem. Few studies have examined factors specific to nursing work environments that may increase exposure to bullying.

Methods: An Australian model of nurse bullying was tested among Canadian registered nurse coworkers using a web-based survey (n = 103). Three factors – misuse of organizational processes/procedures, organizational tolerance and reward of bullying, and informal organizational alliances – were examined as predictors of horizontal bullying, which in turn was examined as a predictor of turnover intentions. The construct validity of model measures was explored.

Results: Informal organizational alliances and misuse of organizational processes/procedures predicted increased horizontal bullying that, in turn, predicted increased turnover intentions. Construct validity of model measures was supported.

Conclusion: Negative informal alliances and misuse of organizational processes are antecedents to bullying, which adversely affects employment relationship stability and the implications for nursing management. The results suggest that reforming flawed organizational processes that contribute to registered nurses’ bullying experiences may help to reduce chronically high turnover. Nurse leaders and managers need to create workplace processes that foster positive networks, fairness and respect through more transparent and accountable practices.

Biography
Sheila Blackstock is a Nursing Lecturer at Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada and a Doctoral Student, School of Nursing, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She has over 30 years of nursing experience in rural, acute care, aboriginal and community and occupational health nursing that enriches both her student-centered teaching pedagogy and research interests. She is committed to Aboriginal health and to improve quality of nursing work environments, focusing on the relationship of organizational workplace structures and processes to horizontal workplace bullying among RNs.

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