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Violence against nurses: A serious issue in Indonesia  
Ramadhan Tosepu, Hasanuddin Nuru, Tri Hari Irfani



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# Violence against nurses: A serious issue in Indonesia

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Unfortunately, violence against nurses has just gone viral today in Indonesia. The violence occurred at Siloam Hospital Sriwijaya, Palembang City, on 15 April 2021, experienced by a nurse named Christina Ramauli Simatupang. Although violence against nurses or healthcare workers is not a new problem, it has always been a serious issue and should never be accepted as a part of the job. This letter prompts a discussion about the violence against the hospital nurse, and solutions to prevent and stop it are suggested.

## Violence and Its Effects

Healthcare worker violence in the hospital setting is a growing issue worldwide (Ramacciati et al., 2018). It is like a silent epidemic that leads to the influence of productivity, job performance, and depression, or other health problems. The most healthcare worker suffered from this phenomena was nurses, and the main perpetrator is patients or their family and event nurses colleagues (Chang & Cho, 2016). Approximately 95.5% of the nurses, in a time frame of 12 months, were reported violence in the workplace (Ramacciati et al., 2018). In Indonesia, work-related violence among nurses is reported as physical assault, verbal violence, sexual harassment, intimidation, and the threat of a lawsuit perpetrated mostly by the patients and their families (Yosep et al., 2019).

Having seriousness of abusing to the nurse in Palembang city, Indonesia, lately is facing several problems. Physical assaults and verbal violence perpetrated by the patient's family towards the nurse affect mental health problems (Yosep et al., 2019). Mental health is the common stressor that leads to work-associated stress, which can convert into physiological distress among nurses, especially in the hospital (Yosep et al., 2021). In hospital-based collaboration, nurses need to maintain their

professional ability to work, maintain standards and continuously improve their standards of care. Physiological distress may have debilitating effects that reduce work output, increase absenteeism, and decrease professional ability (Gunawan et al., 2020). These problems require continuous monitoring and evaluation. Hospital management should have an intention to developing protections and mental health programs for the nurses.

## Preventing and Stopping the Violence

Numerous studies postulated the factors why the violence remains to happen in the hospital setting, including environmental risk factors, low staffing levels, inadequate security personnel, and inappropriate policy and law (Hassankhani et al., 2018; Manton, 2017). The question is how to respond to this reality and minimize the problem.

Annual education or course is one of the best solutions to increase the knowledge of the nurses to prevent violence. However, it is not sufficient to resolve the issue, and this way should not be addressed to the nurse solely (Manton, 2017). Security guards, hospital staff, managers, and other health professionals should be involved (Hassankhani et al., 2018). Moreover, the personnel should promote the development of supportive and helpful strategies to improve communication and adaptive skills (Hassankhani et al., 2018).

In addition, in carrying out nursing service activities, nursing competency standards should be used, with the fundamental responsibility of the nurses, namely improving health, preventing disease, restoring, and reducing suffering (Ministry of Health, 2020). Furthermore, in the hospital services, all administrators should refer to Law Number 44 of 2009 concerning hospitals, which focuses on legal certainty and protection to improve, direct and provide

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a basis for hospital management ([Government of Indonesia, 2009](#)).

State policy in the form of laws in the health sector is a juridical basis that can serve as guidelines for the general public and healthcare workers. Legal protection, legal certainty, and legal justice for the community and healthcare workers are essential. With the existence of regulations in the health sector, the rights and obligations of healthcare workers and the community are protected, and there is legal certainty ([Koswara, 2018](#)). Legal protection and legal certainty for healthcare workers as health service providers is an opportunity and an encouragement to provide the best health services for people in every territory of the Republic of Indonesia. At this point, a nurse who becomes a victim deserves legal protection. Legal protection protects human rights that are harmed by others, and that protection is given to the community. This case can be included in Article 351, paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code concerning persecution ([Handoko, 2018](#)).

In conclusion, the acts of violence against nurses must be according to the prevailing laws and regulations. The perpetrators of the violence must be given the appropriate punishment, which can be a lesson for the community. Furthermore, the victims of the violence must be protected by legal and health protections.

#### Keywords

physical abuse; verbal abuse; violence; nurses; hospitals; criminals; mental health; Indonesia

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