

# Knowledge and Frequency of Experience of Workplace Incivility among the Staff Nurses

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## Abstract

Now a day's health care setting shows increase in incidences of workplace incivility. Workplace incivility has a greater impact on quality of nursing care by causing stress and dissatisfaction of job among the staff nurses. The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge and frequency of experience of workplace incivility among the staff nurses. Quantitative cross-sectional descriptive survey approach was used to conduct the present study. A total of 34 staff nurses were selected by convenient sampling technique from the wards and ICU of selected Multi-speciality hospital. Structured self-administered knowledge questionnaire was used to collect the data regarding knowledge and frequency of experience of workplace incivility. Findings of the study showed that mean age of the participants was 32 years. Majority (91%) were females and they studied General Nursing and Midwifery. Majority (76%) of the participants had up to 15 years of working experience and 44% of them were temporary employees. Almost 56% of them were working 8 hours per day. Assessment of knowledge regarding workplace incivility revealed that the majority (82%) of the staff nurses had inadequate knowledge regarding workplace incivility and majority (77%) experienced incivility in their workplace.

**Keywords:** Workplace incivility, staff nurse, knowledge, experience.

## Introduction

Nurses are the primary member of the health care team in a hospital setting. Nurses work round the clock to ensure the quality of care and safety of the patients. This may be possible if they live in a healthy and conducive working environment. Advancement in science and technology created a competitive and stressful clinical environment which has also encourages the growth of abusive behaviour among the staff nurses. Workplace incivility is a milder, more nascent form of workplace

aggression.<sup>1</sup> Anderson and Pearson defined the workplace incivility as "low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviours are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying lack of regard for others."<sup>2</sup> Workplace incivility is becoming a formidable force that is threatening the both physical and mental well-being of staff nurses.

At individual levels, a strong link has appeared between healthcare professionals' behaviour, job performance, and patient safety.<sup>3</sup> A study on impact of workplace incivility (WPI) on staff nurses related to cost and productivity was conducted among 659 staff nurses using Nursing Incivility Scale and Work Limitation Questionnaire. Results of the study showed that 85% experienced workplace incivility in the past one year. It also revealed that nurses working in healthy work environment report lower workplace incivility scores compared with nurses working in the standard work environment (P G .001), and scores varied between

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types of unit they were working. Nurses' perception of their manager's ability to handle WPI was negatively associated with WPI scores (P G .001).<sup>4</sup>

**Background of the Study:** Review of literature shows that the incidence of workplace incivility, to be ranging between 11 to 99%.<sup>5-8</sup> The incidence of workplace incivility may be evident as a tip of iceberg but its impact on mental health of the nurses is huge. "Many people experience incivility, but they choose not to speak, because they need the job or worry about retribution," stated Dr. Wang. Uncivil acts of workplace incivility, also termed as micro aggressions, have been cited as a major cause of employee turnover, poor workplace climate and job dissatisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Johnson and colleagues stated that experiencing such rude behaviour reduces employees' self-control and leads them to act in a similar uncivil manner.<sup>5</sup> Consequences of repeated exposure to workplace incivility was well expressed in incivility spiral as started from thoughtless act and it may lead to physical threat.<sup>2</sup>

The sequence of workplace violence can be viewed from low-level nonphysical workplace violence to physical violence.<sup>9</sup> Workplace is flourished with workplace violence; however the more insidious forms of workplace violence, such as workplace incivility (WPI), can have long-lasting effects in an organization.<sup>2</sup> It is very difficult for some of the employee to identify an acceptable behaviour from the unacceptable behaviour of workplace incivility because of lack of knowledge and very limited study available regarding knowledge of staff nurses regarding workplace incivility. Hence the researcher is interested to assess the knowledge and of frequency of workplace incivility among the staff nurses.

**Objectives of the Study:** To assess the knowledge regarding workplace incivility among the staff nurses.

To findoutthe frequency of experience of workplace incivility among the staff nurses.

## Methodology

Formal permission was obtained from the ethical committee and selected setting.

**Research Design:** Cross- sectional quantitative descriptive research design was adopted to conduct the present study.

**Study Population:** Using non-probability purposive sampling technique 34 registered nurses, having minimum one year of experience and working in the staff nurse's cadre at selected setting were included in the study.

**Research Tool:** Validated structured self-administered knowledge questionnaire was used to collect the data. The developed tool consisted of two sections, socio demographic variables and structured knowledge questionnaire. Socio demographic variables included age, education, experience, hours of work per day, type of employment and category of employment. Test retest method was used to test the reliability of the structured knowledge questionnaire. It was  $r = 0.9$ . Validity index of the knowledge questionnaire was 0.9. Structured knowledge questionnaire consisted of 20 multiple choice questions which include meaning, causes, effect, prevention and management of workplace incivility.

It also assessed one item regarding frequency of experience of workplace incivility, gender and types of the perpetrator, and how much nurses worried about the prevalence of workplace incivility.

**Method of data Collection:** Formal permission was obtained from the selected setting and ethical committee. Explanation regarding the purpose of the study and questionnaire was given to the subjects. Once obtaining the written consent the questionnaire was distributed and they were given 45 minutes to fill the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

**Score Key:** Correct response was given score of one and incorrect answers was awarded zero. The maximum score for the knowledge questionnaire was 20 with the minimum possible score being zero.

**Data management and analysis:** The collected data was analysed using SPSS for Windows 23 and presented below.

## Results

The survey was completed by 34 staff nurses. Their characteristics were shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Characteristics of staff nurses (n = 34)**

Sl.No.	Socio demographic variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	
1	Age in years	20-35	24	70
		36- 50	7	21
		>50	3	9
2	Gender	Male	3	9
		Female	31	91
3	Educational level	GNM	31	91
		B.Sc	2	6
		PcB.Sc	1	3
4	Work experience	1- 15 years	26	76
		16- 30 years	5	15
		>30 Years	3	9
5	Type of employment	Permanent	12	35
		Temporary	15	44
		Contract	7	21
6	Working Hours / Day	6	12	35
		7	3	9
		8	19	56

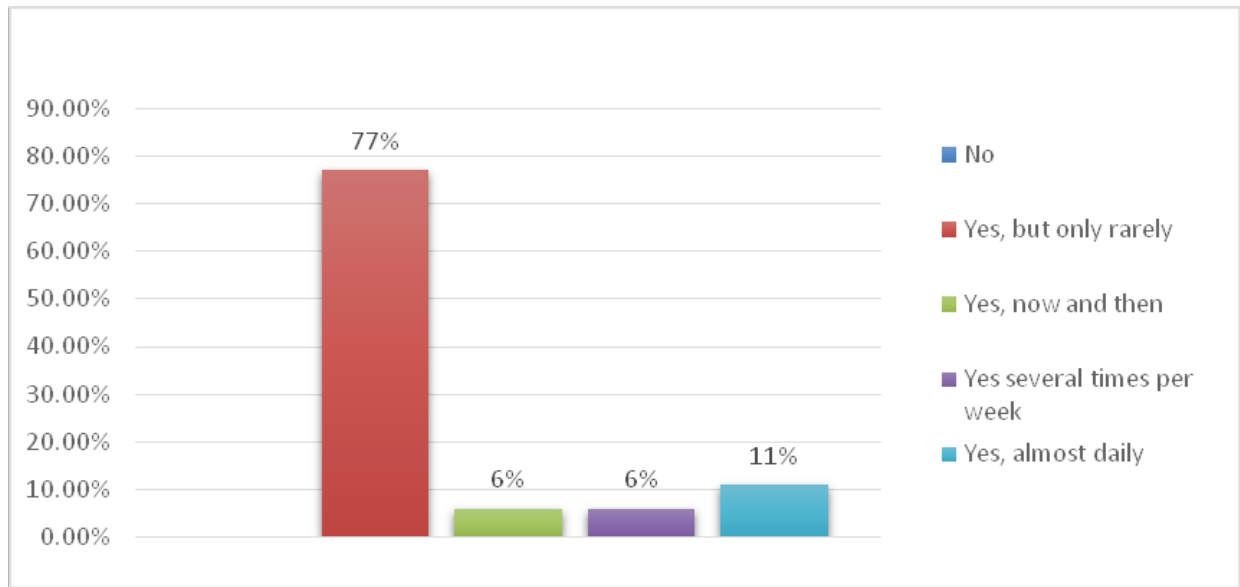
Table 1 depicts the frequency and percentage distribution of socio demographic characteristics of the staff nurses. Majority (70%) of the staff nurses were aged between 20 – 35 years, 21% of them belonged to 36 – 50 years of age group and only 9% were aged above 50 years. The mean age group of the staff nurses was 32 years. Majority (91%) of them were females. Majority (91%) of the staff nurses undergone General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM) course and 9% of the staff

nurses were graduates. Experiences of the staff nurses shows that majority (76%) of them had upto 15 years of experience, 15% of the participants had 16 – 30 years of experience and 9% of the staff nurses had more than 30 years of experience. Regarding the type of employment, majority (44%) were working as temporary staffs, 35% were permanent staffs and remaining 21% of the staff nurses were employed on contract basis. Majority (56%) of the staff nurses were working for eight hours per day.

**Table 2: Staff nurses' knowledge regarding workplace incivility (n = 34)**

Sl.No.	Knowledge Scores	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Inadequate knowledge (<= 9)	28	82
2	Moderately Adequate knowledge (10 – 15)	6	18
3	Adequate knowledge (> 15)	-	-

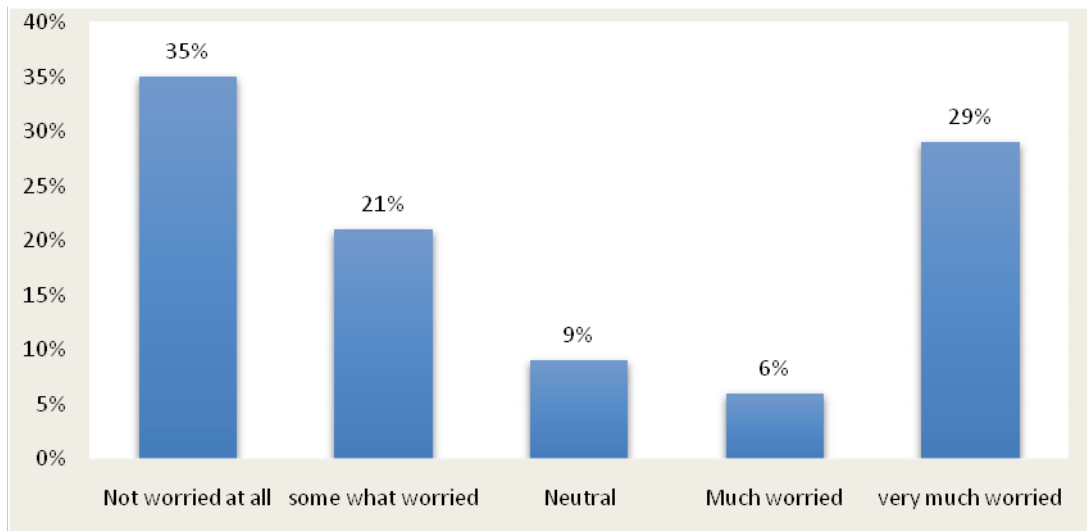
Maximum score = 20 Minimum score = 0



**Fig. 1: Frequency of experience of workplace incivility by staff nurses**

Response to the knowledge questions by the staff nurses were depicted in table 2. It shows that majority (82%) of the subjects had inadequate knowledge and 16% of the staff nurses had moderately adequate knowledge regarding workplace incivility. It also shows that none of the staff nurses had adequate knowledge regarding the workplace incivility. The mean knowledge score obtained was 7.

Figure 1 represents that 77% of the staff nurses experienced workplace incivility rarely and 6% of them experienced several times per week, now and then. There were 11% of them experience incivility almost daily at their workplace.



**Fig. 2: Staff nurses' worries about experience of workplace incivility**

Figure 2 represent that there were 35% of the staff nurses not worried about the prevalence of incivility and

29% of the staff nurses very much worried about the prevalence of incivility in their workplace.

## Discussion

The present study identified the knowledge, frequency of experience and worries of the staff nurses regarding workplace incivility. The result of the study showed that majority (82%) of the staff nurses lack knowledge about workplace incivility. Regarding the different aspects of workplace incivility, 38% of the staff nurses knew the meaning of workplace incivility and only 26% of them had knowledge regarding the causes of workplace incivility. Among 34 respondents, 39% of the staff nurses understand the impact of workplace incivility and 40% of the staff nurses know the strategies to overcome the workplace incivility. Only 42% of the staff nurses learned prevention of incivility in their workplace. The response to workplace incivility differs from one staff nurse to another, depends upon how much they aware and perceive the act of incivility. Abdollahzadeh F and his colleague stated that good knowledge regarding workplace incivility is necessary for the staff nurses to prevent incivility at workplace.<sup>10</sup>

The present study also found that 77% of the staff nurses experienced workplace incivility out of which 11% experienced it almost daily. This shows the higher prevalence of workplace incivility in the selected health care settings. A study conducted on incidence and impact incivility in the workplace by Cortina et al reported that majority (71%) of the employees' experience workplace incivility.<sup>11</sup> An another study conducted by Heydari A, Mojtaba R, Mostafa R showed that 24.6% of nurses had been victims of incivility by their matrons for one or two instances. whereas, 7.8% of nurses reported one or two instances of incivility per month. More than 66.5% of nurses had not seen any incivility from their matrons. Although the frequency is reported to be one or two times, nonetheless, such behaviours do exist between nurses and matrons.<sup>13</sup> A study conducted in India with an objective of creating awareness on workplace incivility among restaurant employee's shows that, 32.86 percent reported that their employers and co-workers directed rude and derogatory remarks to them at least once a week.<sup>14</sup>

In the present study 65% of the staff nurses worried about the prevalence and frequency of experiencing workplace incivility in the working environment. Many of their productive time were spent to find the way to escape from the workplace incivility. This notion was supported by Andersson, L. M., & Pearson, C. M. in his study that the destructive spiral of workplace

incivility may be a building block in a negative work environment.<sup>15</sup> Many studies demonstrated that prevalence of workplace incivility is associated with job dissatisfaction and high level of turn over intention.<sup>16-17</sup>

The present study also identified that majority of the perpetrators and victims of workplace incivility were females. Majority of the staff nurses experience incivility from the supervisor, co-nurses and patients. Study by Keashley et al, identified that the supervisor were the perpetrators.<sup>12</sup>

### Implication to Nursing:

**Nursing Practice:** The present study shows the prevalence of workplace incivility irrespective of their area (unit) of work. Nursing administrators has the responsibility to create awareness regarding workplace incivility, understand the consequences and take measures to prevent workplace incivility.

**Nursing Education:** The present study demonstrated that nurses had poor knowledge regarding workplace incivility. Hence it is the responsibility of nurse educator to organizing workshop, conferences and CNE programme regarding workplace incivility.

**Nursing Administration:** Nurse administrator has the responsibility to create safe, healthy working environment for the staff nurses so that it will improve the quality of nursing care. It is also her responsibility to develop the systematic reporting system in case of workplace incivility.

**Nursing Research:** Finding of the study shows that there were limited research studies in India regarding the workplace incivility. Further research is needed to assess the prevalence and severity of workplace incivility in India.

## Conclusion

Understanding the construct of workplace incivility and its underlying determinants are necessary for developing effective interventions to stop workplace incivility among the staff nurses. Nurses must be aware about the workplace incivility and the resulting negative consequences in order to change the inappropriate behaviour. Nurse administrator has the responsibility to create awareness and sustain a healthy working environment for the staff nurses in order to keep the staff morale high.

**Limitations:** The study was carried out in one setting with limited number of staff nurses selected purposefully. Hence the generalizability of the study findings is limited.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Financial support and Sponsorship:** Self

**Ethical Clearance:** Study was approved by Ethical committee and written informed consent was obtained from the study participants.

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