

"Patient Verbal Aggression and Emotion Work among Nurses: The Buffering Role of Job and Personal Resources. A Moderated Mediation Model"

C.Guglielmetti, S.Gilardi, S.Viotti

Background. Client aggression is considered a growing stressor in several workplaces. This study aims to analyse how and why these experiences may trigger burnout. Focusing on healthcare workers, we tested a moderated mediation model of the relationship between exposure to patient verbal aggression and burnout with the goal of assessing the mediation effects of emotion work and the moderating effects of personal resources (i.e. perceived self-efficacy in communication with patients) and job resources (job control, role clarity, social support by colleagues and by supervisors) on this relationship.

Methods A purposive sample of 356 nurses was recruited from four hospitals in northern Italy. A structured, self-report questionnaire was used to collect data. Mediated and moderated mediation regression models with PROCESS were used to test the hypotheses.

Results: Emotion work mediates the relationship between patient verbal aggression and nurses' burnout. Role clarity and social support were found to reduce the harmful effects of emotion work triggered by patient aggression. The perceived self-efficacy in communication with patients does not have a buffering effect in the tested model.

Conclusion. These results offer a novel approach to design preventive actions aimed at cultivating resources against the impact of perceived exposure to client aggression on well-being.