

## Effects of Patient Aggression on Pediatric Healthcare Workers

Healthcare workers are injured at high rates, even those who work in pediatric settings. The source of these injuries may be overexertion, slips/trips/falls, or needle sticks, but one source of injuries that has not been studied as extensively is patient aggression. Our study looked at possible effects of experiencing “patient behavioral events” (or PBEs), which are defined as physical aggression toward an employee, whether or not there was an intention to harm. Surveys of employees at three children’s hospitals across the U.S. showed that increased frequency of PBEs is associated with decreased well-being and worse job/organization attitudes. One key finding from this study is that the same negative effects were shown when the frequency of witnessing or hearing about PBEs was higher, which suggests that one need not be the target of the aggression to experience negative effects. If this causal path holds in future research, it would mean that PBEs have ripple effects in the unit, beyond just the person who is targeted by the patient aggression. Ongoing data analyses will examine whether there are any mitigating factors that might reduce the harm caused by PBEs.