

Bullying among nursing students during clinical practice

Acoso en estudiantes de enfermería durante la práctica clínica

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SUMMARY

Objective: *Bullying behavior that occurs in the educational environment, such as insulting, giving a bad nickname, slandering, terrorizing, and others. Bullying is disturbing behavior that causes mental damage to its victims. This study aims to describe the occurrences of bullying among nursing students in Pekanbaru, Indonesia.*

Methods: *This study was a quantitative study with a descriptive method. There were 83 respondents from four different colleges selected by accidental sampling. Bullying measurement using a questionnaire from Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale and modified by the researcher based on forms of bullying behavior such as verbal, physical, and nonverbal forms. The validity and reliability of the content of the questionnaire were determined with 20 respondents. Bullying measurement is declared valid if r results $> r$ table (0.444), and is obtained (0.894 $>$ 0.444).*

Result: *The results showed that more than half of them, namely 56 (67.5%) nursing students get bullied. It was found that most respondents are insulted about 94%.*

Conclusion: *Bullying in nursing education still happens, need further research to solve bullying in nursing school.*

Keywords: *Bullying, nurse, students.*

RESUMEN

Objetivo: *Las conductas de acoso se dan en el ámbito educativo, como insultar, poner un mal apodo, calumniar, aterrorizar, entre otras. El bullying es un comportamiento perturbador que causa daño mental a sus víctimas. Este estudio tiene como objetivo describir las ocurrencias de acoso entre estudiantes de enfermería en Pekanbaru.*

Métodos: *Este estudio fue un estudio cuantitativo con un método descriptivo. Hubo 83 encuestados de cuatro universidades diferentes seleccionados por muestreo accidental. Se hizo la medición de la intimidación utilizando un cuestionario de la Escala Multidimensional de Victimización entre Pares y*

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modificado por el investigador en función de las formas de comportamiento de intimidación, como formas verbales, físicas y no verbales. La prueba de validez y confiabilidad del contenido del cuestionario fue determinada con 20 encuestados. La medida de bullying se declara válida si r resultados $> r$ tabla (0,444), y se obtiene (0,894 $>$ 0,444).

Resultado: *Los resultados mostraron que más de la mitad de ellos, es decir, 56 (67,5 %) estudiantes de enfermería son acosados. Se encontró que la mayoría de los encuestados son insultados alrededor del 94 %.*

Conclusión: *La intimidación en la educación de enfermería aún ocurre, se necesita más investigación para resolver la intimidación en la escuela de enfermería.*

Palabras clave: *Intimidación, enfermera, estudiantes.*

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is one of the violent behaviors that still happens now. The effects found on individuals who are victims of bullying can be seen as psychological effects such as shock, depression, low self-esteem, stress, anxiety, and helplessness and physical impacts such as chest pain, physical injuries, and attempting to commit suicide (1). Bullying was found in the education environment, especially in nursing school (2). The bullying can impact nursing students' performance in clinical areas (3).

In Indonesia, the number of bullying for nursing students during clinical practice cannot be found specifically yet. Based on the interview results, it was found that out of 10 nursing students during clinical practice at the Hospital, 9 of them claimed to have experienced one of the bullying behaviors by their peers. When interviewed about the type of bullying that was experienced, 8 people said they often experienced verbal bullying, both in the form of harsh words, and criticism, and often received negative comments about the desire to become a nurse and becoming a matter of gossip. At the same time, 4 out of 10 people claimed to have been ostracized or ignored.

This study aimed to assess the bullying cases in nursing students during clinical practice and what kind the bullying happens among nursing students.

METHODS

The type of this research was quantitative by using descriptive design. This research was conducted in July 2019 at Arifin Achmad Regional Hospital. The samples of this research were nursing students and the number of samples was 83 respondents by accidental sampling. Bullying measurement used the Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale and modified by the researcher based on theories developed based on forms of bullying behavior such as verbal, physical, and nonverbal forms (4). This questionnaire consisted of 10 question items with dichotomous questions. The validity and reliability of the content of the questionnaire were determined. The Cronbach's α coefficient of the total scale was 0.444 and was obtained at 0.894 $>$ 0.444. It is found that this scale has good internal consistency reliability. Bullying variables were measured using dichotomies questions, with occurring and not occurring interpretations.

The collected data were organized, tabulated, and statistically analyzed using SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 15). For general demographic data of nursing students, the frequency and percentage were calculated. For the determination between bullying and not bullying, using the median score if the score ≥ 17 , meant bullying happen. And if the median score < 17 it was mean not bullying happen.

This study has passed the ethical test at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Riau with Ethical approval number: 127/UN.19.5.1.1.8/UEPKK/2019. All respondents have been given information related to the purpose and design of the research to be conducted.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents aged 23 years were 49 respondents (59.0 %) and respondents aged 24 years were 23 respondents (27.7 %), and respondents aged 25 years were 11 respondents (13.3 %). It can be seen that female

respondents were 45 nursing students (54.2 %) and the male respondents are 38 nursing students

(45.8 %). In addition, it was found that the majority of respondents bullied was 56 (67.5%).

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age Group

No	Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Ages	23 years old	49	59.0
		24 years old	23	27.7
		25 years old	11	13.3
2	Gender	Male	38	45.8
		Female	45	54.2
3	Bullying	Bullied	56	67.5
		Not Bullied	27	32.5
		Total	83	100.0

Table 2 indicates that most of the bullied students were insulted about 94 % of them. The second place for the type of student of nursing bullying in Pekanbaru was Gossip when they

were not around about 81.9 %. And the type of bullying that occurs the least in nursing students was to be threatened by about 47 %.

Table 2
Type of Bullies

No	Statements	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	I was insulted	78	94.0
2.	Gossip when I was not around	68	81.9
3.	I was kicked	40	48.2
4.	They made a bad nickname for me	67	80.7
5.	I was threatened	39	47.0
6.	I was humiliated	51	61.4
7.	I was locked in the darkroom	54	65.1
8.	I was blamed	57	68.7
9.	I was accused	57	68.7
10.	They spread bad news about me to Senior Nurse	60	72.3

DISCUSSION

In the present study, it was shown that the majority of respondents, among 83 respondents are 23 years old age. This age is adolescent age which is reported to be the bullying victims and can cause high suicide cases (5). This study's results contradict another study that states that

the youngest children more easily become victims (6). It is possible that bullying occurs in all age ranges. It was concluded that the range of 23-24 years old is the youngest age in the clinical area in which students have a high risk of getting bullying.

Based on the characteristics of respondent, female is the majority gender in this study. It

means that mainly the bullying victims are female. The evidence indicates that females are weaker than males (7). Men naturally tend to be aggressive, keep themselves to compete, and desire to be better than females (8). Thus, females are the most vulnerable people to be bullied. However, this study has a bias in that the majority of respondents are female nursing students.

Bullying was defined as “aggressive behavior towards another person, or object of that person, finding expression in physical assault, sexual harassment, and non-physical violence, such as verbal abuse, incivility, and intimidation” (16). Bullying happens also in nursing education during clinical practice. The main type of bullying is “I was insulted”. It was shown that most nursing students get insulted by their friends and they are seniors in nursing (9). Bullying, known as “oppression or bullies” in Indonesian, is any form of oppression or violence that is done intentionally by one or a group of people continuously and in this case, their perpetrator is their nursing friends (10).

The less type of bullying from this study is “I was threatened”. Bullying almost always happens in schools with grades 9-12 (11,12). In this study, the threat is not dominant for a perpetrator. A recent study reported that the threat is not Asian culture (13). There is no specific study about Indonesian nursing culture as having a threat against the weaker ones.

Based on all the behavior above, bullying can implicate a negative impact on the student’s performance to apply their knowledge to practice in a hospital (2). Bullying is a repetitive physical or psychological repression, by stronger people or groups against weaker ones (14). Bullying is a form of behavior in the form of verbal or attempts to hurt physically and psychologically someone or a group that prepares them as a stronger group (15).

Bullying harms perpetrators and victims. This is consistent with research that states that students who are victims and perpetrators have a higher level of stress than students who have never received and committed acts of bullying. The victims of bullying are very bad in several aspects such as academic achievement, socializing, and emotional atmosphere. Bullying victims tend to

have no support from others, feel unable to resist bullying, and often experience stress. They often think of moving away or moving from a place where they always want to be alone to avoid verbal abuse or bullying. Victims of bullying are also overwhelmed with feelings of shame and stress so that tasks are neglected and, in the end, they are left behind in academics (16). Based on another research students who get bullied reported anxiety, panic attacks, physical symptoms of distress, and loss of confidence and self-esteem from their experience of bullying during clinical placement (17).

The hospital as a place to carry out nursing practices, of course, has its impact when bullying occurs. One of the impacts is a decrease in the nurse’s function when caring for patients and of course, it will become a burden for the nursing manager because the work environment is no longer healthy (18).

According to the researchers’ assumptions, bullying is an action aimed to hurt others verbally and physically. Bullying occurs when the victim has no strength or has difficulty defending himself or is also weaker physiologically and psychologically. Besides this power imbalance can be either individuals or groups. The most frequent acts of bullying are such as being ridiculed, insulted, sneered at, viewed cynically, ostracized, encouraged, or even avoided or shunned by people around the victims which occurs continuously without realizing that it will have negative impacts, especially on the victims. Bullying behaviors shown to students during clinical placement are becoming incessant and detrimental. The damage to nursing students may be irreparable and result in a chain of repetitive behavior whereby they become bullies in the not-so-distant future. Bullying victims tend to have high levels of stress, and shame and victims tend to be passive. Victims of bullying have negative self-concepts which will negatively impact their life. Thus, awareness of bullying behavior would enable nursing students to recognize when they are being bullied so that appropriate solutions can be found. Nursing students deserve to be mentored in a caring and accepting environment where they would be supported to achieve their learning goals, build their confidence and develop their personal and professional identities. Bullying in nursing is unacceptable, and the

profession should not tolerate bullying of any individual. In accordance with the International Council of Nurses guidelines, there should be respectful mentorship of nursing students (19).

The limitation of this study is the fact it does not provide information regarding the perpetrators of workplace bullying, or patient-related bullying.

CONCLUSIONS

Most kinds of bullying among nursing students during clinical practice are insulting by the perpetrators and the lowest was threatened. Thus, it is clear that changes must be made in clinical nursing education. Preceptors must be trained, enumerated, and present in the clinical area to perform their guiding and supervisory roles. Bullying should be dealt with at an individual and institutional level. Individuals should be assertive and insist on their rights and seek redress when they are bullied. Hospitals should have policies in place outlining what constitutes bullying and the consequences of bullying.

Further research is still needed regarding research methods such as a qualitative method to explore the experience of bullying victims, and studies in other settings can examine the reasons for bullying and examine how those bullied cope with the situation.

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Authors' contributions

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Conflict interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

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