Impact of Lateral Violence: Emotional, Physical and Financial

The economic impact of lateral violence is not only costly but directly impacts patient safety. According to Griffin (2004), of the new graduates who leave their first nursing positions, 60% leave because they have experienced some form of lateral violence. It is estimated to cost $92,000 to recruit, hire, and orient a medical surgical nurse and the cost rises to $145,000 to recruit, hire and orient a specialty nurse (Pendry, 2007). Current research identifies the average voluntary nurse turnover rate in hospitals to be around 8.4%, this average increases to 27.1% for first year nurses (Price, Waterhouse, Coopers, 2007). The impact of this turnover not only erodes an organizations budget, but it impacts the organization’s ability to recruit and hire new staff once they develop a reputation for tolerating lateral violence (Bartholomew, 2006). Additional costs come from the emotional and physical symptoms that result from lateral violence. This can cause an increased use of sick leave which impacts staffing patterns and places a strain on the unit. (Rowell, 2007).

Lateral violence behaviors interfere with effective health care communication and therefore impact patient safety. This is costly to health care organization as the rate of medical errors increase with communication failures (Wolf & McCaffrey, 2007).

The current healthcare environment, with nursing shortages looming and the uncertainty of national healthcare reform, demands that leadership in the organization must do everything possible stop the loss of nurses because of lateral violence. The answer is obvious... we must implement strategies that support a healthy work environment. If lateral violence is not addressed, for all involved it is “all pain and no gain”.

References


