Interventions for preventing and solve bullying in nursing: a scoping review

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Background: Incivility, bullying and lateral violence in the workplace are serious problems in nursing (American Nurses Association, 2021), as well as in other contexts. These phenomena are described as a continuum related to their intensity, frequency, and presence of intent to harm the target (Bambi et al., 2018) and are often used as synonyms. Considering how widespread the problem is in nursing, that has led to their being considered an epidemic (Kroning, 2019), and its impact on the well-being of nursing staff, patients and the organisation (Bambi et al., 2019; Kroning, 2019), it is of great importance to explore the existence of interventions that would enable its prevention or resolution.

Aim: The aim of this scoping review is to summarise different research evidence and to understand whether there are interventions that enable the prevention and resolution of bullying in nursing in health care settings and to collate a synthesis of knowledge on this topic.

Method: A scoping review of primary research was undertaken, using Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework. The reviewers defined the criteria for inclusion and/or exclusion of articles: (1) published between January 2011 and December 2021; (2) related to the health care context and the nursing field; (3) published in English and Italian; (4) all types of study design; (5) excluding conference proceedings, editorials and grey literature. The process of identifying relevant studies was conducted in Cochrane Collaboration, Pubmed, CINAHL Complete and PsychInfo. The researchers individually conducted the selection process of the articles to determine their eligibility.

Results: From a total of 1066 articles initially identified, after removing duplicates and studies considered irrelevant, 88 articles were selected for the full-text review and 14 papers met the review eligibility criteria. The objectives common to the studies were aimed at increasing awareness of the phenomenon among nurses, reducing bullying and acquiring knowledge to deal with. Their analysis evidenced four main themes: educational interventions, cognitive rehearsal, team building and nursing leaders’ experiences. The findings show the different interventions designed to address incivility, bullying, and lateral violence, implementing both formative and cognitive approaches and strengthening interaction among team members.

Conclusion: The research results showed the effectiveness of interventions concerning nurses' recognition of the phenomenon and increased skills in addressing it with assertive communication.
However, a slight and not always significant reduction in the occurrence of these phenomena was observed and, from the different studies, the need for further research emerged in order to demonstrate the interventions' effectiveness and to understand if their effects result in a significant decrease in the short and long-term frequency of these issues. International opinion underlines the importance of an active engagement of nurses at all levels, the relevance of the support from nursing leaders and organisations, and policy-making to reduce and eradicate these phenomena from healthcare settings.

**Keywords:** bullying, lateral violence, incivility, nursing, interventions

**References:**


