

**ORIGINAL PAPER****Mobbing Experienced by Nurses Working in Hospitals: An Example of Turkey****Esra Akin Korhan, RN, PhD**

Assistant Professor, Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, Health Science Faculty, İzmir Katip Çelebi University İzmir, Turkey

**Elem Kocacal Guler, RN, MSc**

Research Assistant, Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, School of Nursing, Ege University İzmir, Turkey

**Leyla Khorshid, RN, PhD**

Professor, Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, School of Nursing, Ege University, İzmir, Turkey

**Ismet Eser, RN, PhD**

Professor, Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, School of Nursing, Ege University, İzmir, Turkey

**Correspondence:** Esra Akin Korhan, İzmir Katip Çelebi University, İzmir, Turkey  
E-mail address: akinesra80@hotmail.com**Abstract****Aim:** This study was carried out to describe the levels of mobbing and causative factors experienced by nurses in 5 hospitals in Turkey.**Methods:** A descriptive study was conducted. The research sample was consisted of nurses (n= 282) working in five public and two university hospitals with over 500 beds of İzmir province. A questionnaire consisting of seven demographic, questions based on nurses' opinions related to mobbing, and Mobbing Scale were used to collect data. Validity and reliability of Mobbing Scale has been made by Öztürk et al. (2007).**Results:** Most of nurses (53.2%) have been stated that they experienced mobbing. The mean total mobbing score of nurses in our study was found to be 161.98±45.04. Clinical nurses experienced more violence than nursing managers. The mean total mobbing score was found to be higher in nurses worked in internal departments than nurses worked in surgical departments.**Conclusions:** Nurses should be educated about preventing of mobbing in their educational period and in-service education.**Keywords:** mobbing, mobbing scale, nursing, workplace violence.**Introduction**

Violence which gradually have increased in the world (Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2007), is an important public health problem (Arın, 1996) and can take place in our life at any time with each form. An inseparable and undeniable part of business life is workplace violence which is a form of violence. Mobbing is an emotional assault. The target is to force to quit, by creating a systematical constraint on a person or people in a workplace and by destroying their performance and resistance with amoral approaches. Mobbing is applying systematic and malevolent unjust

accusations, humiliations, general harassment, with the aim of forcing people to quit their work (Anderson, 2002; Anderson & Parish, 2003).

Mobbing is a social phenomenon. It is determined that mobbing, which becomes prevalent in all world, is increased the time and productivity. For example this cost is 180 million dolar for United States of America, 100 million euro for Germany, 260 000 pound for England (Çobanoğlu, 2005; Kennedy, 2005). There are staff who encourage the mobbing, permitted of mobbing and victim of mobbing in an institution. Workers in the institution are included in

mobbing by supporting the victim or molester person (Danesh, Malvey & Fottler, 2008).

Typical reaction of person, who experiences mobbing, is isolation from society. Because he/she can not understand what and why is happening to herself (himself). Also, they reflect the experienced conflict to her/his family and society (Davenport, Distler & Pursell, 2003; Bağ, 2004; Çobanoğlu, 2005). The most common mobbing behaviours are; to be criticised of committed things, being unheeded of a person, ridiculing with a person's religious and political vision, to being rumored untrue, travesty by imitate of behaviours, dislocation of self-confidence by retrieving the giving things, giving things which are off site of ability to damage the career and esteem of person, employing with physically and psychologically hard works (Leymann, 1990; Davenport, Distler & Pursell 2003; Yüçeturk, 2003; Çobanoğlu, 2005).

### Background

International Council Of Nurses (ICN) accepted that professional violence is an important problem and in 2002 ICN defined that professional violence reached to serious dimension in workplaces which presented health care in all around the world ya da in every corner of the world and in all communities which violence is becoming an epidemic (Delbel, 2003). Healthcare workers are 16 times more likely to experience violence at work than any other workers. Among health workers especially nurses experience mobbing at the most. Nurses are at the highest risk for workplace violence even compared with police officers and prison guards. Violence has long been considered a part of the job for nurses. For many being physically and verbally abused by patients, their relatives or frustrated members of the community has been accepted as just another occupational hazard-a burden which nurses should shoulder silently (McKinnon & Cross, 2008). Perpetrators of workplace violence include clients and/or their relatives, physicians, nursing peers, clinical nurse specialists and nurse managers (St-Pierre & Holmes, 2008).

### Type of violence and its prevalence

In a study by authorities of Health and Safety Executive it is stated that 34% of nurses has been experienced physical violence in workplace.

It is estimated that between 35% and 80% of hospital staff have been physically assaulted at least once and between 65% and 82% of nursing staff have experienced verbal abuse. Emotional abuse at work is also wide-spread with nursing staff experiencing this form of ill-treatment most often from patients (44%) followed by visitors (16%), nurse co-workers (12%) and physicians (8%) (Sofield & Salmond, 2003; St-Pierre & Holmes, 2008).

Violence in the workplace including institutional violence, has been shown to be a factor impeding the recruitment and retention of nurses (St-Pierre & Holmes, 2008). It is determined that professional violence is the most encountered problem in nursing and is experienced three times more than other professions. It is determined that 25.7% of nurses have been experienced in intensive care units, and have been experienced in emergency department, and 33.5% of them experienced two times (Delbel, 2003).

In a study with the aim to describe the epidemiology of violence in Turkish emergency departments, by Ayrancı (2005), most of the respondents stated that they had experienced verbal /emotional abuse (69.5%), most of the aggressors (89%) were patients' relatives (52%) as compared with patients' themselves (Ayrancı, 2005). In a study by Bilgin (2009) it is determined that 88% of nurses were exposed to verbal abuse and 73% of them experienced violence from the patients (Bilgin, 2009).

In a study by Duxbury and Whittington (2005), nurses viewed the patients' mental illness to be the main reason for aggression (Duxbury & Whittington, 2005). In a study with an wide sample (6300) implemented in Minesota, was determined that 96.8% of nurses experienced mobbing as a result of communication with patients, patient visitors, colleagues and physicians (Sofield & Salmond, 2003). In another study by McKinnon and Cross (2008), it is determined that although all of nurses are opposed to violence in workplace, in the past years they were not informed such cases adequately and experienced high level of fear (McKinnon & Cross, 2008). According to state of Gates; when evaluated 357 data of research it can be concluded that the majority of nurses have experienced violence in workplace in forms intimidation, assault, and damage in last one

years (Gates, 1996). In a study in Taiwan is declared that 62% of nurses have experienced violence in workplace (Whitley, Jacobson & Gawrys, 1996). In a study in Toronto is determine that 33% of nurses has been experienced verbal and physical violence in workplace (Graydon, Kasta & Khan, 1994). Researchs conducted in Spain were exposed that majority of nurses experienced workplace violence, 94% of nurses has been experienced verbal violence, 60% of sexual violence and, 43% of physical violence in workplace (Anderson, 2002; Anderson & Panish, 2003). In a research conducted in Illinois 57% of nurses stated that they experienced verbal violence, 57% of sexual violence and, 26% of physical violence in the workplace (Williams, 1996; Williams & Robertson, 1997). In another study it was determined that 13.2% of nurses experienced physical violence, 82-90% of them experienced verbal violence in the workplace (Carroll, 2003). In a study by Anderson (2002) it is stated that the majority of nurses experienced emotional and verbal violence (Anderson, 2002; Anderson & Panish, 2003). In a similar research was found that 61% of nurses experienced verbal violence, and 16% of them experienced physical violence (Crilly, Chaboyer & Creedy, 2004). In a study by Kisa (2008) was determined that 79.4% of nurses experienced verbal violence, and most of these victims were exposed violence by hospitalized patients (Crilly, Chaboyer & Creedy, 2004). Uzun et al. (1999) were found that 91.1% of nurses experienced verbal violence, and 8.1% of them experienced physical violence. In another study Uzun et al. (2003) reported that 86.6% of nurses experienced verbal violence (Uzun, Kurnaz & Ertin, 2003). In a study by Yıldırım & Yıldırım (2007) is determined that 86.5% of nurses experienced mobbing in the last 12 months in the workplace, and those nurses working in private hospitals experienced more violence than nurses working in the state hospitals (Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2007).

In a study by Camerino et al. (2008), 22.7% of nurses were abused from patients, 8.1% of them by managers, and 5.7% of them by colleagues (Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2007). In a study was determined that 29.4% of nurses experienced mobbing from their managers, 25.8% of them from physicians, 16.7% of them from co-workers, also it was pointed out that the

frequency and rigour of experienced workplace violence changes in terms of employment position (Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2007).

Mobbing in nursing is an important issue which should be faced. There is little scientific proof studing mobbing in nursing in our country.

### **Objective**

This descriptive study was conducted for the aim of determining the mobbing and causitive factors experienced by nurses who work in 5 hospitals in Turkey.

### **Methods**

#### **Design and ethical considerations**

The study was conducted as a descriptive design. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee of the schhol of nursing. The study was conducted after obtaining written consent from hospitals, and informad consent from the nurses.

#### **Settings and participants**

The research population was composed of the nurses working in five public and two university hospitals with over 500 beds of İzmir province ( $n=1500$ ). A stratified sampling method was used to include the nurses working in tree public and two university hospitals into the sample ( $n=282$ ).

A questionnaire, developed by the researchers, and Mobbing Scale developed by Öztürk et al. (2007) were used to collect data (Öztürk, Yılmaz & Hindistan, 2007). Questionnaires were given to the nurses in the sample and 282 staff nurses answered and returned the forms. Data were collected between January and May 2010 by the researchers. During the data collection, nurses were informed that the data would be kept confidential and anonymous. Also, nurses were requested to place the completed form in the envelope provided and seal it before returning it to the researcher.

#### **Data collection**

A questionnaire consisted of seven demographical characteristics (age, marital status, having a child, number of possessed children, lenght of time employed in nursing, studied hospital, position, studied clinic) and asked question about opinions of nurses related to mobbing (if is experienced mobbing herself,

who applied mobbing herself, length of time applying mobbing, the time when experiencing mobbing, gender of person who applying mobbing, the cause for experiencing mobbing, if is observed mobbing to another person, behaviours experienced in reaction to mobbing, what the participants did to escape from mobbing) developed by the researchers and Mobbing Scale which validity and reliability study has been made by Öztürk et al. (2007) which consisted of 68 items were used to collect data (Öztürk, Yılmaz & Hindistan, 2007).

The Mobbing Scale consists of 68 questions and each question has 5 options. The total score acquired from the scale ranged between 68 and 340. A higher score indicated higher mobbing. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the Mobbing Scale in this study was  $r = 0.97$ , CVI: %88, item-total score correlation values for internal consistency 0.30- 0.73, the result of KMO-Bartlett test for structure validity consisted with factor analyse was 0.90 -  $p = 0.000$ .

#### Data analysis

Statistical analyses were undertaken using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows Version 15.0. Frequency was calculated for all the variables. Independent-Sample T test, One-Way ANOVA, Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis test were used to analyse the differences in mean mobbing score in the nurses.

#### Results

The mean age of the nurses was  $32,65 \pm 6,52$  years (min= 22, max= 60). Thirty-one point two percent (31.2%) of the nurses who participated in the research has been working for a period 1-5 year. Of the nurses who participated in the research 53.5% worked in public hospitals. The most of them (55.3%) were working in internal clinics. The larger percentage (92.2) of nurses were ward nurses. The most of the nurses (53.2%) stated that they have been experienced mobbing, and 46.7% of them have been experienced mobbing in the first years of their profession life.

The percent of nurses which have been observed that mobbing is performed to others was

determined as 59.6% and 28.6% of nurses were stated that they have been observed that mobbing is performed to others "very often". When asked from whom they experienced mobbing, 36% of the nurses which participated to the study, reported that it was from their administrators, 48% from their coworkers, and 16% from their subordinates. 12.7% of nurses which are victim from mobbing, stated that they respond to mobbing by disregarding this person, 16% of nurses by speaking this status with this person.

Mean mobbing score of nurses who participated to the study was found to be  $161.98 \pm 45.04$ . There was a statistically significant difference between the mean mobbing score in nurses according to employment position (Table 1).

There was a statistically significant difference between the mean mobbing score in nurses according to observing that mobbing is performing to another person in hospital or not observing. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean mobbing score in nurses according to situations which they have not be satisfied in professional life (Table 2). There was a statistically significant difference between the mean mobbing score in nurses according to time in which have been experienced mobbing in professional life (Table 3).

#### Discussion

When literature is examined, it is seen that nurses are more encountered with mobbing than other health care team members. When research in recent years has been examined, it is obvious seen that the most of nurses are injured from mobbing.

In our study was found that the most of nurses (53.2%) have been experienced mobbing. Yıldırım & Yıldırım (2007) were report in their research, that most of nurses (86.5%) are been exposed to mobbing in recent 12 months in the same workplace (Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2007). In a study made by Öztürk et al. (2007), is point out that 40% of nurses (329) are are been exposed to mobbing (Öztürk, Yılmaz & Hindistan, 2007).

**Table 1. Distribution of Mean Mobbing Scores of Nurses According to Employment Position**

<b>Employment position</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sd</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P</b>
Nurse	260	163.78	45.23	2.323	0.021
Manager Nurse	22	140.72	37.42		

**Table 2. Distribution of Mean Mobbings Scores of Nurses According to Situations with Which They were not Satisfied**

Situations with which they were not satisfied	N	Mean	K.w. X <sup>2</sup>	DF	p
Profession	40	154.30	15.3	4	0.004
Institution where they worked	61	166.67			
Tasks performed	21	199.28			
Co-workers	33	166.24			
Other team members	22	161.09			
Manager	20	171.00			

**Table 3. Distribution of Mean Mobbing Scores of Nurses According to the Time in Their Professional Life When They Experienced Mobbing**

Time when they experienced mobbing	N	Mean	K.w. $\chi^2$	DF	P
Presently experienced	35	190.88	9.661	4	0.047
In the last 6 months	17	175.76			
In the last 3 years	19	166.15			
In most productive years of their professional life	9	180.88			
In first years of their professional life	70	165.72			

In a result of a study with the aim to examine mobbing among nurses by Stanley et al. and conducted with 663 nurse, it is reported that 46% of nurses are described (specified) the mobbing as a “deadly serious” or “partly serious” problem; 65% of nurses have been observed mobbing frequently (Stanley et al., 2007). In a study made in Taiwan, nurses have been reported that they are experienced mobbing at the rate of 62% (Hutchinson et al., 2006). These results which are according to the mobbing rate, are consistent with results of our research.

The mean total mobbing score of nurses in our study was found to be  $161.98 \pm 45.04$ . The mean total mobbing score of nurses in a study by Öztürk et al. (2007) was found to be  $247,17 \pm 31,75$  (Öztürk, Yılmaz & Hindistan, 2007). There is a significant difference in mean total score between researchs. This status may be explained with implementing of researchs in different province.

There was a statistically significant difference between the mean mobbing score in nurses according to employment position. According to this result, it was found that clinical nurse experienced more mobbing than nursing managers. In a study by Camerino et al. (2008) it was found that 5.7% of nurses experienced mobbing from their colleagues, and 22.7% of

them from their managements (Camerino et al., 2008). In our study it was found that most of nurses experienced mobbing along one year in the first years of their professional life, and because of jealousy. These results are consistent with literature.

Experts states that mobbing continues for 3 months – 3 years period, and also the percentage of nurses which who experienced mobbing more period than 2 years is little. Our results are paralleling with literature knowledge (Bağ, 2004; Çobanoğlu, 2005; Danesh, Malvey & Fottler, 2008).

In our study there was no statistical difference in mean mobbing scores among nurses working in public and university hospitals. Farrell (1999) was found that 41% of nurses are worked in public hospitals and 62% of nurses worked in private hospitals are experiencing mobbing (Farrell & Cubit, 2005). Also Yıldırım and Yıldırım (2007) were found that nurses worked in private hospitals are experiencing more mobbing than nurses worked in public hospitals (Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2007). In a study by Öztürk et al. (2007) was determine that 70% of nurses who experienced mobbing are working in public hospital, and 30% of them are working in university hospital (Öztürk, Yılmaz & Hindistan, 2007). Our results are show difference from other

results of researchs. This may be due to difference in sample depend to implementing our study in multiple public hospitals.

In literature, is stated that nurses worked in emergency, psychiatric and surgical departments are experienced more mobbing than nurses in other departments (Lyneham, 2001; Sofield & Salmond, 2003; Lau & Magarey, 2006; Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2007). In a study conducted in nurses worked in emergency department, by Crilly et al (2004), was stated that 70% of nurses have been experienced mobbing (Crilly, Chaboyer & Creedy, 2004). In another study, by Şenuzun and Karadakovan (2005), was stated that 98.5% of nurses worked in emergency department have been experienced verbal violence and 19.7% of them have been experienced physical violence (Ergün & Karadakovan, 2005). At the end of our study, the mean total mobbing score was found to be higher in nurses worked in internal departments than nurses worked in surgical departments.

In a study by Öztürk et al. (2007), was stated that 54% of mobbing enforcer are manager (Öztürk, Yılmaz & Hindistan, 2007). In our study, it was found that 36% of nurses were experienced mobbing from their manager. In a study made in Toronto, was found that 41% of nurses have been experienced mobbing from their supervisor nurses (Whitley, Jacobson & Gawrys, 1996). Also, in a study by Çobanoğlu (2005) was stated that mobbing is performing mostly by top level managers (Çobanoğlu, 2005). Our results supported the results in literature. Another our result that supported this status is, being statistically significant difference in mean mobbing score according to employment position of nurses. It is determined that manager nurses are experienced less mobbing.

Patients, relatives of patients, physicians, other health professions, managers, visitors and coworkers are consist the sources for professional violence (Williams, 1996; Williams & Robertson, 1997). In our study, it is determined that 25.5% of nurses are experienced mobbing. Professional violence from their coworkers. In a study made in Kuwait, is stated that the source is coworkers in 4-7% of nurses who experienced mobbing (Çam, 2005). Our results are consistent with literature. In a study by Yıldırım & Yıldırım (2007) is determined that 29.4% of nurses have

been experienced mobbing from their managers, 25.8% of them from physicians, 16.7% of them from coworkers, also that the frequency and rigour of experienced workplace violence is change according to employment position.

In a different research, the cause of experiencing mobbing is determined as being a nurse as a profession which is suppressed, general and hierarchial abuse, violate of the rights of nurses in working life, low self –respect in nurses, and considering that mobbing is a naturel part of working life and should be accepted. In this study, the cause for experiencing mobbing is determined as physical appearance, lifestyle, marital status, success in busy life, educational level, opinions about world and life, political vision, and jealousy. The results contain consistent results with literature.

As a result of the research, it is determined that nurses which are victim from mobbing were been responded to mobbing by keep silent, keep to oneself and self blame, disregarding this person, by speaking this status with this person, sharing this status with their friends, complaining this person to managers, and receiving support from psychologist. In a study by Doğan et al, 40 % (n: 28) of staff have been complained this person to hospital direction Doğan et al., (2009). In a study by Yıldırım & Yıldırım (2007) was seen that the person who experienced mobbing are give different psychological, emotiolal and social response to this status. Also, it is found that the behaviours to avoid from mobbing are “working more strict and regular” and “for avoiding from criticism working more careful”.

In our study it is determined that nurses experienced moderate level of mobbing. This may be related with the place where research was implemented.

### Conclusions

As a result, it could be said that nurses experienced moderate level of mobbing. Nurses should be educated about preventing of mobbing in their educational period and in-service education. Manager nurse should be educated about recognize of behaviours of nurses. Further research is needed to examine the effect of mobbing on nurses' psychologic status and their response to mobbing.



### Limitations of the study

Before the study initiation 1500 nurses was planned to be sample of the research. But unfortunately, the study team could not reach all of the nurses. Some of the respondents did not complete all of the questionnaire, because there were too many questions, and it took a long time to answer all of the them. Some of the nurses were off duty at the time of study. Therefore, the sample size was small.

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