THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON GENERAL PSYCHIATRY PRACTICE

Ryan C. Wagoner, MD
University of South Florida
March 8th, 2012
ROADMAP

- Discuss what workplace violence is and learn how it applies to healthcare
- Effects of workplace violence
- Ways to prevent it in general psychiatric practice
- What to do after violence has occurred
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

• Any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or threatening behavior that occurs at a work site
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMPLOYEES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PATIENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HEALTHCARE STATISTICS

• Healthcare workers suffer 50% of all workplace assaults
• Mass shootings occur 4 times more at workplaces than schools
• Highest rate of workplace violence in health is reported in Emergency and Psychiatry wards.
WORST OUTCOME?
DEATH
PSYCHIATRIC EFFECTS

• Long-term exposure
• Major events
LONG-TERM EXPOSURE

• 88% of psych ward nurses experienced verbal violence
• 56% experienced physical
• Job stress, not the violence itself, impacted professional quality of life
LONG-TERM EXPOSURE

- Anger
- Frustration
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Hyper-vigilance
- Development of PTSD, anxiety disorders, or major depressive disorder
- Leave the profession
DECREASING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- Individual
- System
- Society
INDIVIDUAL

- Awareness
  - Clothing, setting, patient themselves
- Seek assistance immediately...or at least get out of the area
- Follow the rules
STAMP

- Staring and eye contact
- Tone and volume of voice
- Anxiety
- Mumbling
- Pacing
SYSTEM

• Strict policies against violence
  – Let people know what the policies are!
• If there is a problem that is known, fix it
  – You don’t have to conceive of every possible eventuality
• Identify people who are struggling and get the necessary resources
  – If still persists, may need to discharge or terminate
SOCIETY

• Much more complex
• Identifying people in advance
  – Danger of overidentifying
• Limiting access to weapons
  – Switch to different types of weapons
• Quit making it an incentive
  – Decrease in ratings...who will give in first?
ADDRESSING AN ASSAULT

• Seek immediate care
• Remove the patient from your care
• Ease back into the environment
• Find long-term support
SEEK IMMEDIATE CARE

• Go get checked out!
  – Physical or mental
• Debriefings are not uniformly recommended
• WHO recommends Psychological First Aid:
  – Safe and supportive environment
  – Listening to needs
  – Information sharing
  – Promoting self-care
  – Connecting with others
REMOVE THE PATIENT FROM YOUR CARE

• Violence is not okay!!!

• In an ideal world, removal from care is preferred
  – Alternatives if you must

• Consider if filing charges is appropriate
EASE BACK INTO THE ENVIRONMENT

• When?
• Provide empowerment to the employee
• Perceived organizational support
FIND LONG-TERM SUPPORT

• Access to tangible resources
• Accommodations for time off or other temporary reassignments
• Follow-up to make sure an employee is receiving sufficient support
• Fostering the overall culture
SUMMARY

• Different emotions can develop for different people undergoing a workplace violence incident

• Interventions for reducing workplace violence can take place at the individual, system, and societal level
SUMMARY

• Practical ways to address an assault:
  – Seek immediate care
  – Remove the patient from your care
  – Ease back into the environment
  – Find long term support
CITATIONS


QUESTIONS?

• Ryan C. Wagoner, MD
• ryanwagoner@usf.edu
• (813) 974-3968