A REPORT DUE NEXT MONTH IS LIKELY TO CALL FOR MANAGERS TO TAKE ACTION ON TRAINING STAFF IN HIGH RISK A&E UNITS

Mandatory training urged to tackle violence

By Nick Lipley

Trust managers have been urged to consider mandatory training of A&E staff faced with a high incidence of patient violence.

The call for managers in high-risk trusts to take action is likely to form part of a report due to go before health department officials next month.

It will follow the government relaunch last month of its ‘zero tolerance’ publicity campaign aimed at reducing levels of violence against staff (see right).

The report by A&E researchers at Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull NHS Trust has been drawn up after a nationwide survey of trusts to find out how staff report violent incidents and what training is available.

It also draws on how health care staff tackle patient violence abroad and the experiences of other organisations, such as the police force, in the UK.

Researcher Tony Bleetman, an A&E consultant, said: ‘One lesson we can learn is from what is happening in certain high-risk American A&E departments. Staff are trained in physical skills and it becomes a mandatory part of the training.’

Early results of the trust survey has shown a ‘whole spectrum of responses’, he said, with the worst trusts blaming patient violence on poor staff communication or ‘pretending it doesn’t happen’.

Some trusts, however, have made training in A&E departments mandatory already.

The survey also confirms that nurses working in A&E face the highest risk of assault.

Dr Bleetman stressed that staff training should not be seen as aiming to produce ‘kung fu nurses’, expert in the art of self-defence. ‘It’s about getting out of trouble,’ he said.

Scheme to avert industrial action fails to win over staff sceptics

A £9.5 MILLION A&E modernisation programme starts at The John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, this month in a move to ease staff concerns over patient safety.

Confirmation of the scheme, due for completion by 2004, came last month as nurses at the unit prepared to ballot on industrial action.

It formed part of a raft of measures proposed by management at the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust in a bid to avert action by RCN members, who make up most of the estimated 70 nurses at the unit.

But RCN regional officer Patricia Marquis suggested that staff remained cynical of the scheme, given the failure of management to implement recommendations put forward last year.

Referring to the new building, she said: ‘Nurses will be pleased when it’s on site but this has been on the cards for the last five years and there’s a degree of scepticism.’

Management has also agreed to draft in external emergency care consultants Brian Dolan and Lynda Holt to support the review of A&E services.

A&E lecturer practitioner Rob Way has been promoted to the post of consultant nurse in emergency care and new lecturer practitioners and a new lead nurse are to be recruited.

Other management pledges include reviewing the admissions and discharge policies, increasing staffing numbers by using general agency nurses, and improving security, cleanliness and staff food.

Welcome addition

Deputy news editor of Nursing Standard, Nick Lipley, joins the editorial team of Emergency Nurse this month as managing editor. Nick has worked in health journalism for almost ten years and joined RCN Publishing Company Limited in 1998. He will be focusing initially on compiling the Emergency Nurse news section. Readers can contact him with stories or comments on 020 8872 3146 or by email on nick.lipley@rcn.org.uk

Web focus

By Damien van Carrapiet

This regular feature highlights websites with useful information on clinical subjects. This edition focuses on cannulation:

http://www.enw.org/IVStarts.htm
http://gasbone.herston.uq.edu.au/teach/su602/docs/g44_0ic.html
http://www.jr2.ox.ac.uk/bandolier/band14/b14-1.html

To suggest a topic for the next Web Focus, e-mail your suggestions to: damien@emergency-nurse.com

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