Healing the Hurt: Reframing Violence Against Nurses through an Environmental and Public Health Lens

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Background
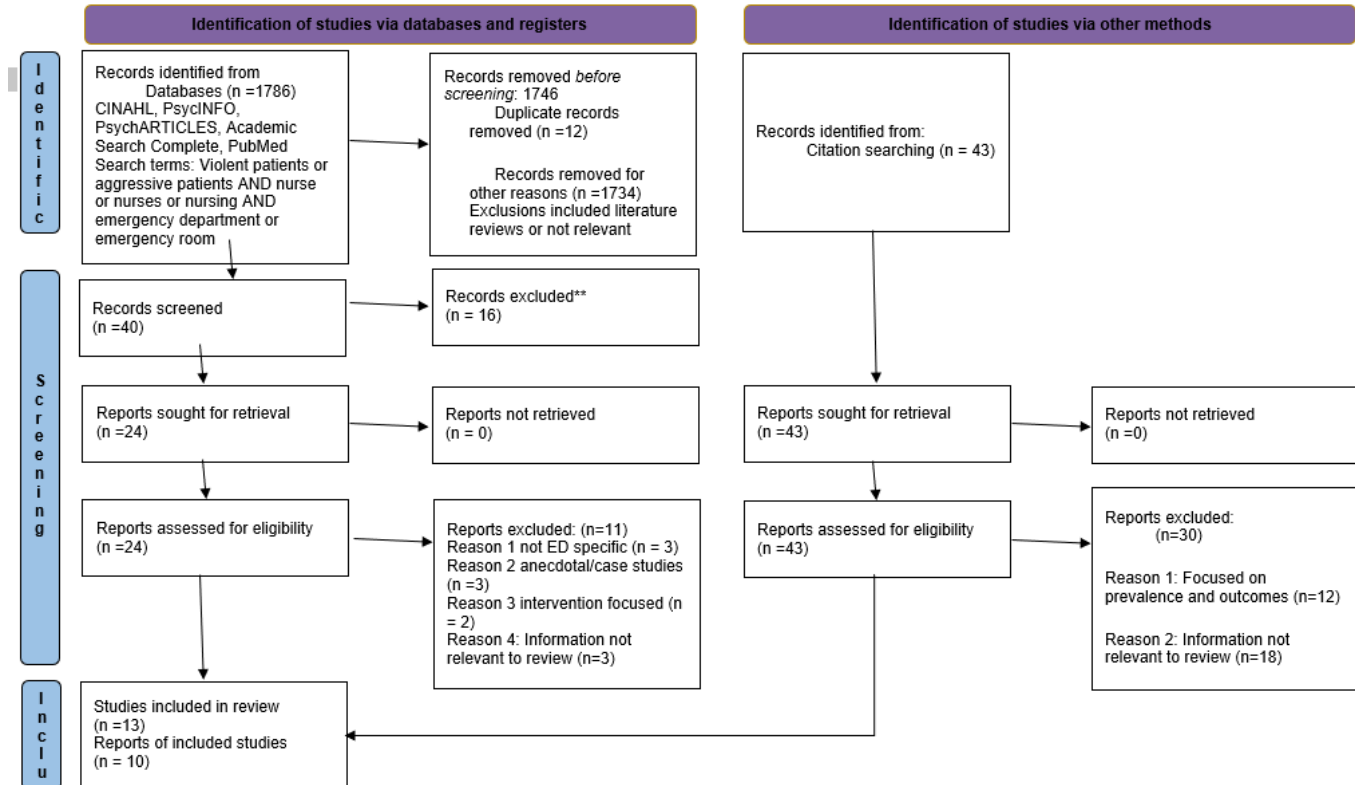
- Over 75% of nurses and approximately 97% of Emergency Department (ED) nurses have experience by a patient or a patient family member.

- Nurses are at a high risk for post-traumatic stress disorder, burnout, and leaving the profession completely

- Nurse wellbeing is a national priority with calls to action from most nursing and medical organizations, yet little progress has been made.

Why is there Violence Against Nurses?

Patients Point of View

Literature Review "Looking for the Answers"

Identification of studies via databases and registers

Identification of studies via other methods

Identific

Records identified from Databases (n =1786) CINAHL, PsycINFO, PsychARTICLES, Academic Search Complete, PubMed Search terms: Violent patients or aggressive patients AND nurse or nurses or nursing AND emergency department or emergency room

Records removed *before screening*: 1746 Duplicate records removed (n =12)

Records removed for other reasons (n =1734) Exclusions included literature reviews or not relevant

Records identified from: Citation searching (n = 43)

Screening

Records screened (n =40)

Records excluded** (n = 16)

Reports sought for retrieval (n =24)

Reports not retrieved (n = 0)

Reports sought for retrieval (n =43)

Reports not retrieved (n =0)

Reports assessed for eligibility (n =24)

Reports excluded: (n=11) Reason 1 not ED specific (n = 3) Reason 2 anecdotal/case studies (n =3) Reason 3 intervention focused (n = 2) Reason 4: Information not relevant to review (n=3)

Reports assessed for eligibility (n =43)

Reports excluded: (n=30)

Reason 1: Focused on prevalence and outcomes (n=12)

Reason 2: Information not relevant to review (n=18)

Inclu

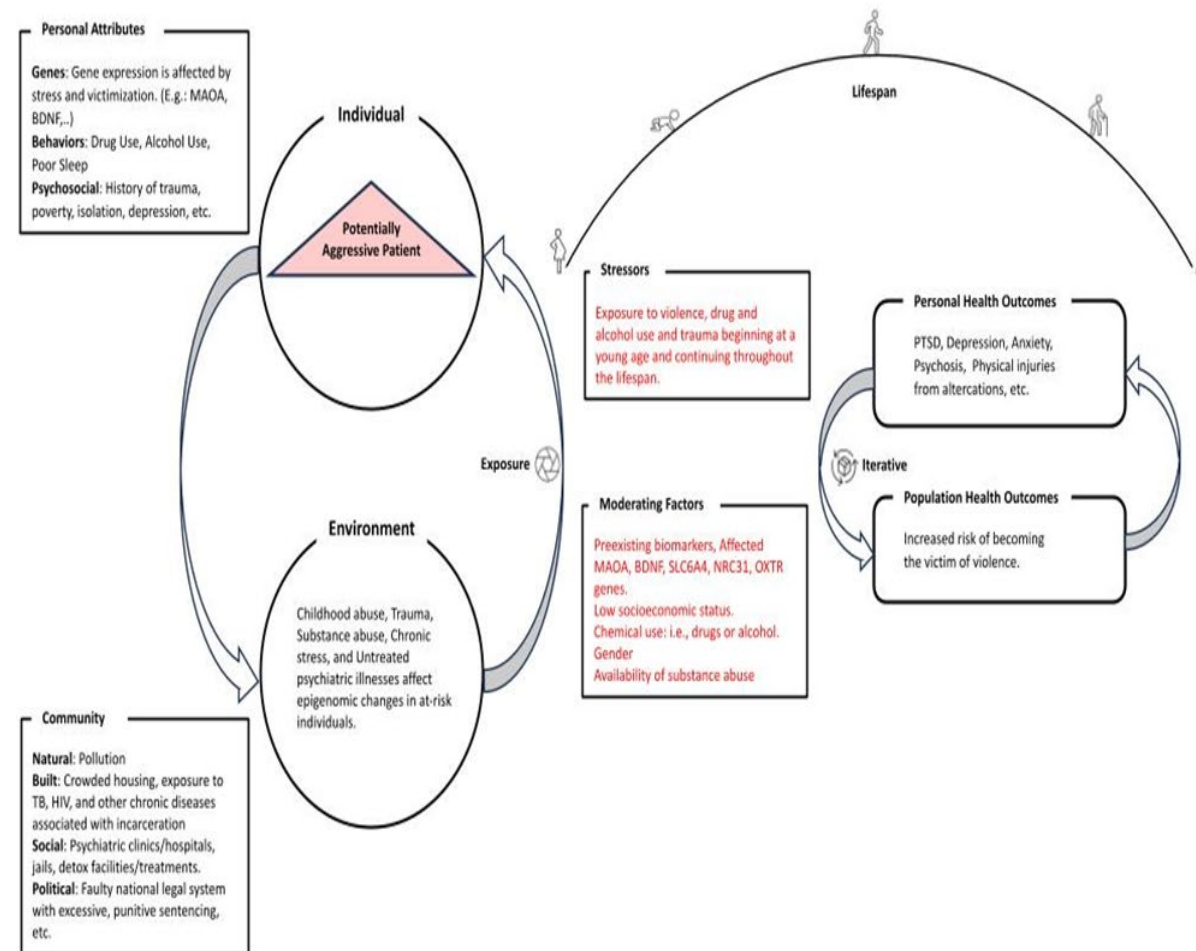Studies included in review (n =13) Reports of included studies (n = 10)

- 23 articles included in the review
- Focused on the Emergency Department related to the higher rates of violence against nurses.

Four Emergent Patterns

1) Environment
2) Substance Use
3) Communication
4) Unexpected attacks

Do Individuals Have an Innate Propensity for Violence Upon Arrival?

- Genetics
- Substance Use
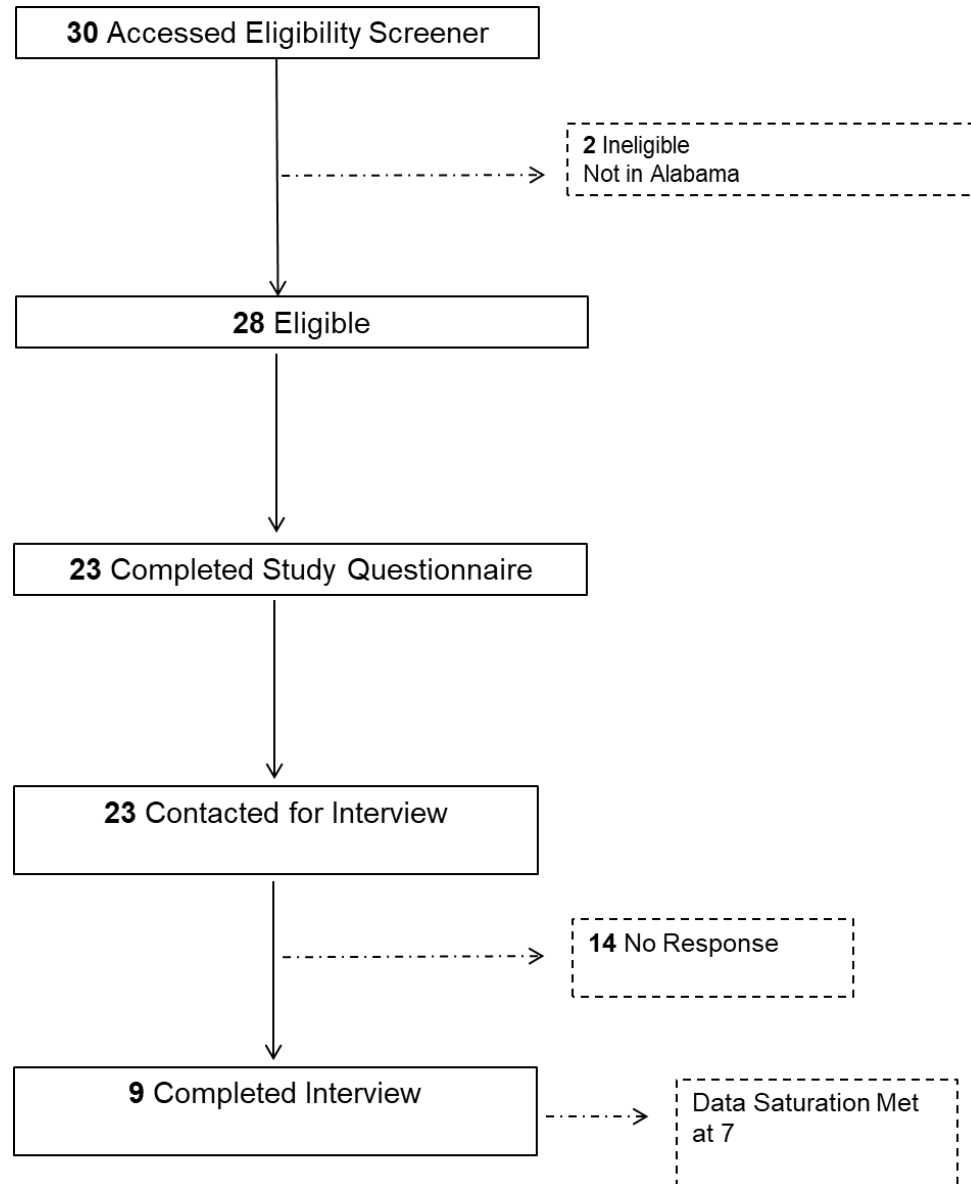- Trauma, Poverty
- Psychiatric Illness

An individual's innate propensity for violence can be exacerbated or mitigated by the environment

Research Question

- What are the perceptions of the ED environment and its potential role in patient violence among nurses in Alabama?

- To have participated in this study, individuals must have been: (1) be a nurse working in an Alabama ED; (2) have experienced or witnessed an episode where a patient or patient family member physically or verbally assaulted ED staff within the last 12 months; (3) willing to participate in a one-time individual interview; and (4) English-Speaking.

Consort Diagram

Emergent Themes

Theme	Subtheme	Codes
1. The physical environment increases violence risk	a. Patient location increases risk	1) Ambulance bay 2) Hall 3) Isolation 4) Privacy 5) Waiting 6) Holding
	b. The presence of or lack of resources increases risk	1) Dangerous objects 2) Lack of resources 3) Isolation 4) Shift
2. Perception is as important as reality	a. Nurses' perception of the ED environment	1) Hectic 2) Interdisciplinary 3) Lack of resources 4) Security 5) Greeting 6) Overwhelmed 7) Protocols 8) Shift 9) Unaware
	b. Patient perception of the ED environment	1) Communication 2) Comfort 3) Greeting 4) Inappropriate conversation 5) Noise 6) Crowding 7) Overwhelmed 8) Privacy
3. Patient characteristics inform the response to the environment	a. Patient diagnosis	1) Cancer 2) Dementia 3) Mental Health 4) Substance Use
	b. Patient attributes	1) Frequent flier 2) Homeless 3) Healthcare literacy 4) Communication

"there have been incidents where there's an agitated patient in the hallway and there's a lot going on and it tends just to escalate the patient"

"sometimes we don't have pillows, that's such a bare comfort item"

"We get a lot of complaints by patient families or patients just complaining about inappropriate language. I think a lot of the staff there just get very comfortable and are very laid back, so they'll say things to cope or just to make a joke or whatever and it's overheard by patients and they'll kind of complain like, oh, their language was inappropriate"

" if it's a psychiatric patient, we need to deal with them and we do know that they are aggressive"

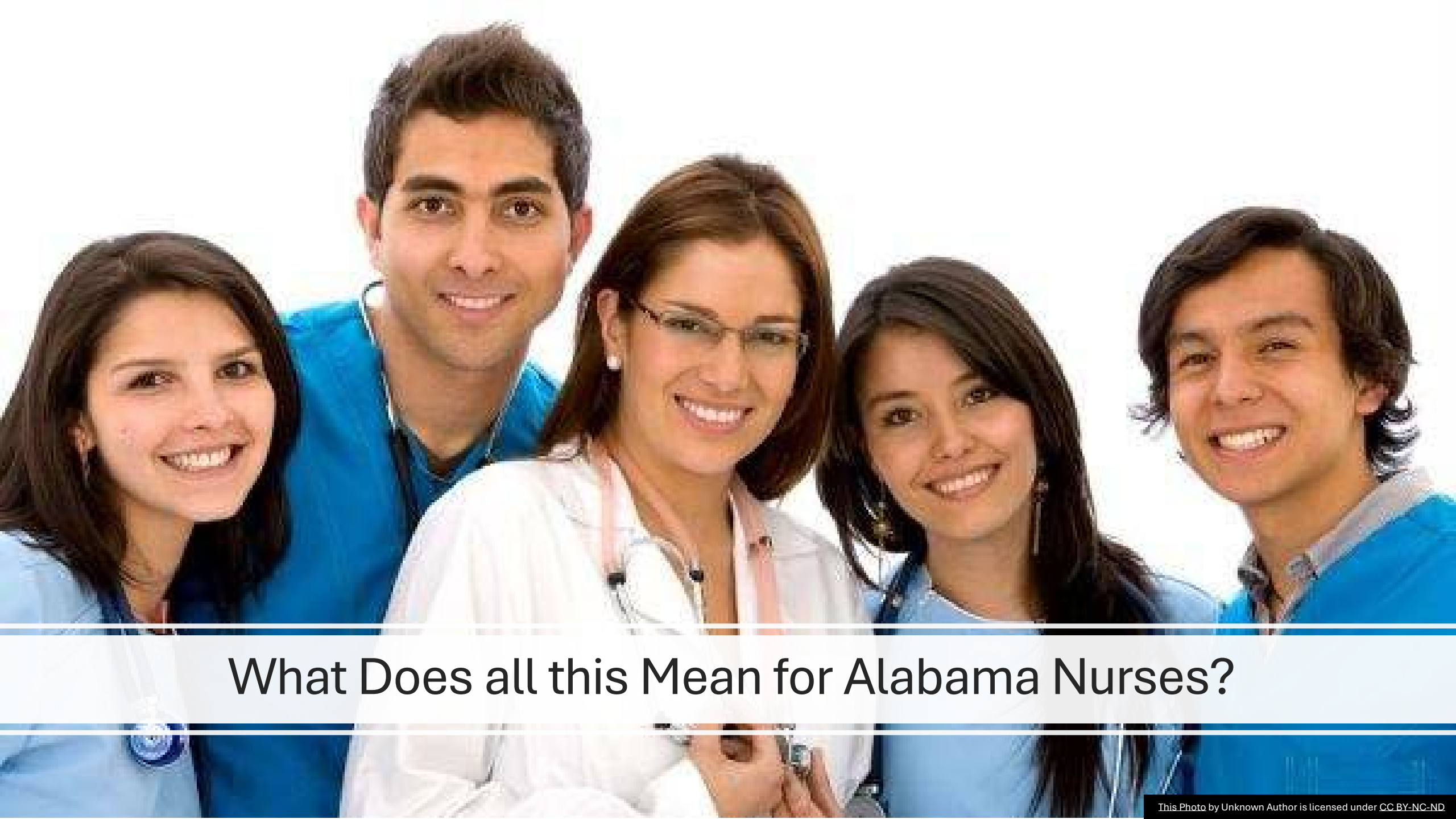"They don't have a translator, so that makes it really hard"

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths:

- No known similar studies conducted in Alabama.
- Despite the small sample size, data saturation was met.
- Finding were unique to this study and contrary to the reports from the reviewed literature

Limitations:

- One geographical location (Alabama).
- Small sample size
- Findings were unique to this study and contrary to reports from the reviewed literature where the waiting room and triage were identified as the locations most prone to violence.

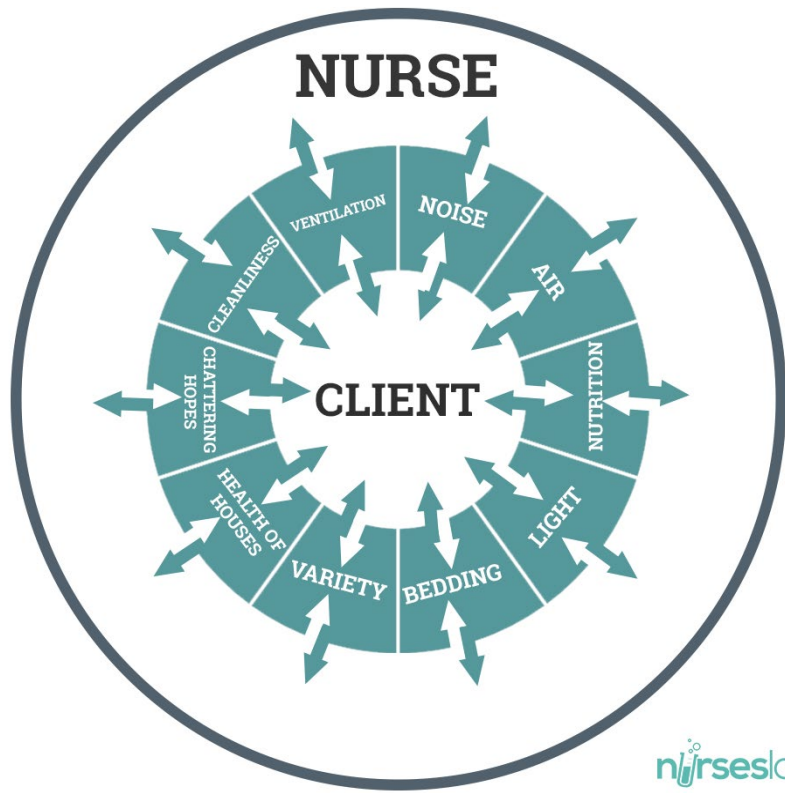What Does all this Mean for Alabama Nurses?

Back to Basics
"Ole Flo"

Nightingale's Environmental Theory
Conceptual Framework

NURSE

CLIENT

VENTILATION · NOISE · AIR · NUTRITION · LIGHT · BEDDING · VARIETY · HEALTH OF HOUSES · CHATTERING HOPES · CLEANLINESS
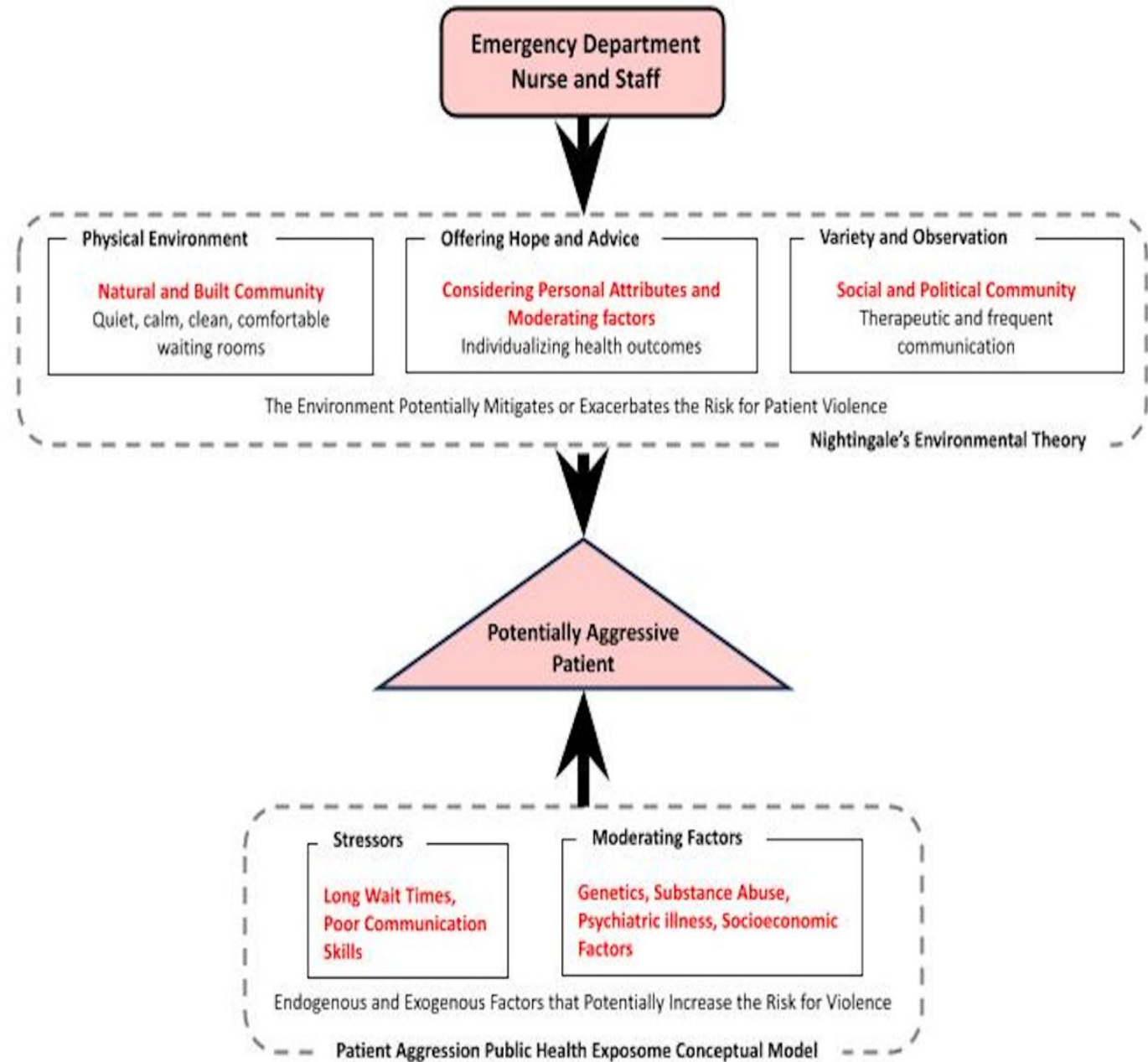
nurseslabs

Areas for Environmental Improvement

1. Appropriate bed assignments/location
2. Decreasing noise and chaos
3. Promoting safe communication and care to vulnerable patient populations

The Patient Violence Framework

Emergency Department Nurse and Staff

Physical Environment
Natural and Built Community
Quiet, calm, clean, comfortable waiting rooms

Offering Hope and Advice
Considering Personal Attributes and Moderating factors
Individualizing health outcomes

Variety and Observation
Social and Political Community
Therapeutic and frequent communication

The Environment Potentially Mitigates or Exacerbates the Risk for Patient Violence

Nightingale's Environmental Theory

Potentially Aggressive Patient

Stressors
Long Wait Times, Poor Communication Skills

Moderating Factors
Genetics, Substance Abuse, Psychiatric illness, Socioeconomic Factors

Endogenous and Exogenous Factors that Potentially Increase the Risk for Violence

Patient Aggression Public Health Exposome Conceptual Model

Questions

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