Title: The VENT Study: Violence in Emergency Nursing and Triage.

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository**, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Publication List


In addition the systematic review included in the thesis has been accepted for publication by the Joanna Briggs Institute.
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To my husband Dave and children Hollie, Ellie, Meg and Tom: I finished!
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Synopsis

Violence in healthcare is a significant issue globally and the Emergency Department (ED) is one of the highest risk clinical areas for such violence. Nurses have been identified as the profession most vulnerable to violence, and within this context ED nurses are the speciality at greatest risk of being exposed to violence.

The VENT Study, Violence in Emergency Nursing and Triage, was a national study of Australian ED nurses’ experiences with one type of violence: patient-related violence. This was a mixed methods study comprising of two parts. Part I of the study was quantitative in nature, with data collected using a national survey that was distributed to all members of The College of Emergency Nursing Australasia. Part II of the study was qualitative in nature and involved the use of semi-structured interviews with two sub-groups of interest: young adults (16-25 years of age) and the parents of paediatric patients.

The results of this study were consistent with the extant evidence on the topic and the results from each part of the study complemented each other. The results of Part I of the study included the identification of antecedents and precipitants for violence. Triaging was identified as a significantly high risk nursing activity, with nurses almost three times more likely to experience violence when performing this role. In addition the triage area was identified as high risk location in the ED; with the odds of experiencing an episode of violence almost four times greater for nurses working there. Patients under the influence of alcohol and illicit substances also posed a significantly greater risk to ED nurses. These findings were supported by those in Part II of the study, with young people aged 16-25 years of age identified as a high risk group for violence precipitated by alcohol intoxication.

Geographic similarities and differences between ED nurses working in metropolitan and regional areas were identified. In particular regional nurses reported
significantly less access to risk prevention and management strategies and were more likely to feel “not safe” at work.