

A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF DIFFERENCES IN STAFF ASSAULTS BY RESPONSES
TO RESIDENTS IN A FORENSIC HOSPITAL

Dean Marth

Dr. Martha Markward, Dissertation Advisor

ABSTRACT

This study examined psychiatric hospital staff interaction behaviors that have been found to increase the risk of client assault. Observers utilizing the Staff-Resident Interaction Chronograph instrument collected data related to interactions between hospital staff and clients on six social learning wards in a Midwestern forensic psychiatric hospital over a ten year period. Limit setting, activity demand, and denial of requests have been identified in the literature as staff behaviors that increase risk of assault by clients. Utilizing independent samples t-tests, this study compared rates of engagement in these types of interactions between assaulted staff members and non-assaulted staff members to determine if there are significant differences between the two groups. Results show that staff members who engage in limit setting, activity demand, and denial of request are assaulted more frequently than those who don't. This study addresses the need for utilization of a reliable and valid instrument to determine if staff member responses to client behaviors increases risk of client assault.