

Lost Another One

London RN Patrick Clarke's death is yet another reminder of healthcare violence

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Patrick Clarke was a 68-year-old, semi-retired nurse working at a South London community mental hospital.

On May 12, 2016, he lost his life.

Clarke was attacked by patient, suffering multiple stab wounds. He died at the scene.

As a human being, I am saddened by this tragic event, just as most of us would be. I am deeply pained for Mr. Clarke's family, colleagues and friends in the face of this unnecessary loss.

And as a career nurse, I am acutely distressed and dismayed. Mr. Clarke's death is yet another tragic reminder that my colleagues in the nursing profession are facing unnecessary acts of physical, verbal and psychological violence every day, everywhere.

Working as a nurse has its moments. The job is challenging. There are days when you question why you went into nursing. Working to become a nurse isn't easy; it takes a commitment. The shifts are long; the plethora of required and ever-changing knowledge is mind-boggling; the time spent away from family can be lonely; and any error can have devastating repercussions. By no means do I wish to imply that other jobs are easy, but becoming and being a nurse has some pitfalls that a lawyer, dentist or teacher might not. And it's very unpopular with the general public for a nurse to complain, yet no one truly comprehends what it's like to be a nurse -- except other nurses.

Still, nursing also has its extraordinary, wonderful moments. And I love it.

But the physical, verbal, financial and psychological abuse can take its toll.

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When I was a nursing student there were no discussions of workplace violence. One would surmise it didn't exist then. But I believe – no, **I know** – it did; it simply wasn't recognized. Case in point: I was working as a medical assistant, and I was assaulted.

I have often wondered why, as nurses, we tolerate assault and abuse. Perhaps because those of us who love nursing are loathe to leave. Perhaps because we are conditioned that it's part of our job – although clearly it's not. I'll bet a lawyer, dentist or teacher wouldn't put up with it.

Nursing is like a brotherhood. We are trained to take care of the ill and the injured, no matter what disease, religion, race or life alternatives. But we never agreed to be assaulted or murdered taking care of you.

The nursing profession has lost yet another nurse to violence.