

Implementation of Violet Signs for Violent Patients to Reduce the OSHA Reportable Incidence of Assaults on Nurses



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Purpose

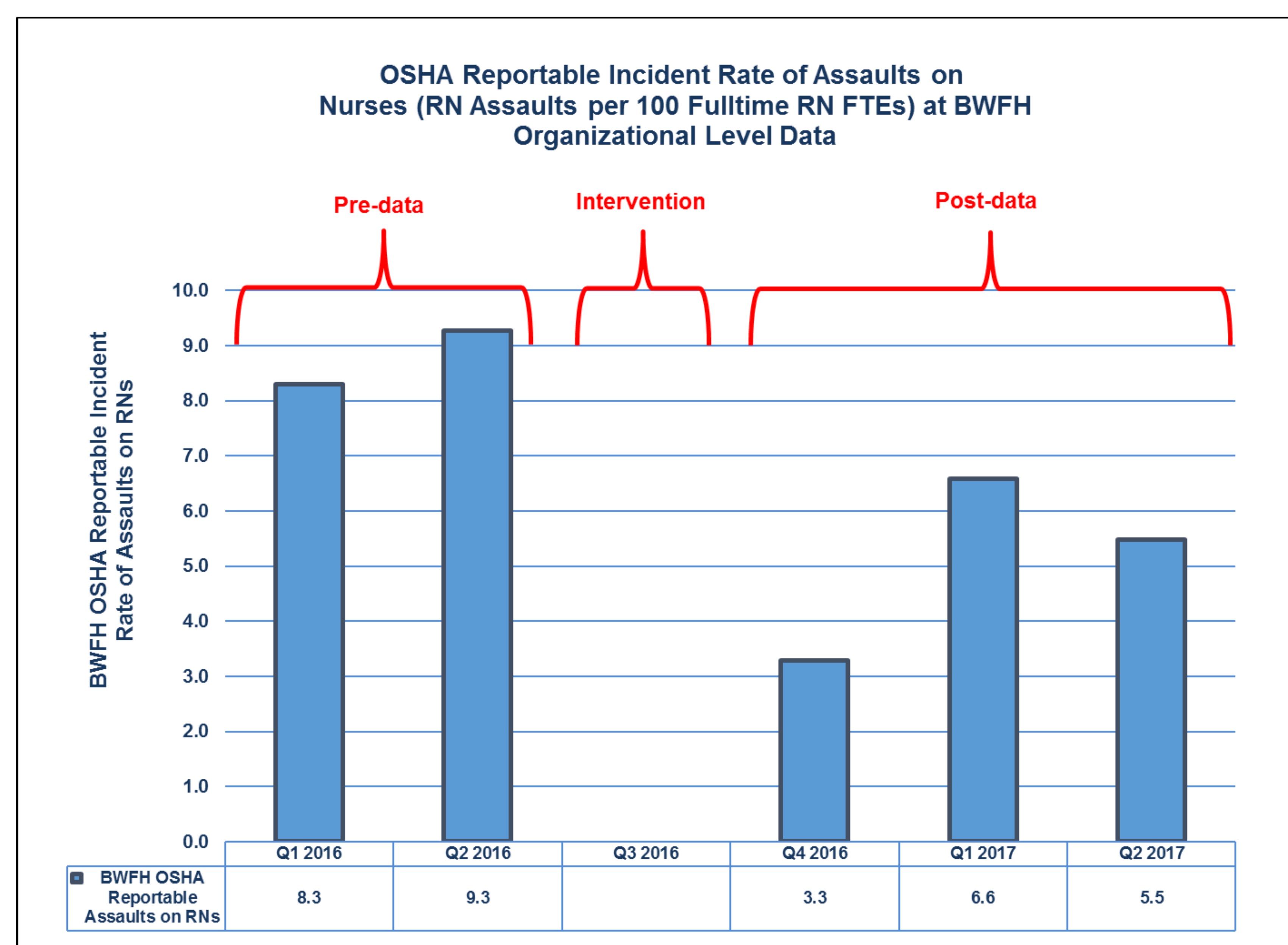
The purpose of this project was to reduce the rate of assaults by violent patients. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reportable incident rate of assaults on nurses at the hospital were used to evaluate impact of instituting the “Violet for Violence” strategy.

Background

Workplace violence is a concern within the United States. “Between 2011 and 2013, workplace assaults ranged from 23,540 and 25,630 annually, with 70 to 74% occurring in healthcare and social service settings” (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). There was a sudden increase in the number of patient assaults on nurses on various units across the hospital from February through May 2016.

Methods

Clinical nurses on a 36-bed medical unit in the hospital agreed to use violet colored name signs for patients with a history or active display of violent behavior. This sign replaced the standard white name signs on the patient’s door. Violet was chosen to align with the tag line: **“Violet signs for violent patients.”** This non-verbal cue was used to notify all staff to be on higher alert when entering a room. The staff was reminded to be thoughtful about every move they make; to knock first, be aware of their position in the room, and communicate risk of violence in handoff and safety huddles. The success of this unit initiative was subsequently expanded to the whole hospital in August 2016.



Results

As a result of the implementation of the ‘Violet signs for violent patients’ the hospital’s OSHA reportable incident rate of assaults on RNs (RN assaults per 100 Fulltime RN FTE) decreased, consistent with the organizational workplace safety strategy.

Implications

Strategies for preventing nurses and other caregivers from patient assaults are crucial in the hospital setting. This simple, cost-effective strategy was found to be highly successful in reducing patient assaults on nurses.

References

U.S. Department of Labor. (2016). *Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Healthcare and Social Service Workers*. Retrieved from OSHA.gov: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3148.pdf>