



Manipulation by Prison Inmates as it Pertains to Forensic Nurses; an Undergraduates Perspective

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Abstract

Background: Forensic nurses working with correctional populations relate their expectations that they will experience manipulation; however there is little research literature on the topic. This study was conducted to expand the knowledge on manipulation as experienced by nurses working in corrections, with the eventual purpose of developing intervention protocols to decrease its frequency and negative consequences that occur as a corollary of nurses being manipulated by inmate clients. With more than 2 million inmates in the United States, 25% of the world's prison population, research studies related to nursing and the delivery of health care to inmate population remain scarce. This may have to do with the lack knowledge by nursing students as well as the lack of funding by government budgets.

Objectives: As part of a larger study on manipulation in forensic settings the objective of this study was to collect data on the experience of manipulation on correctional health care providers forensic nurses in a specific geographic region.

Method: This is a descriptive study conducted in the southern part of Georgia. An interview of 5 nurses and one psychologist were conducted using an open-ended interview technique. The interview schedule and the research data collection strategies were approved through the Valdosta State University IRB in conjunction with Dr. Anita Hufft's research. The interviews took approximately 30 minutes to an hour each

Results: A definition of manipulation of nurses by inmates in a forensic setting was developed based on the descriptions provided by the respondents. The experiences of these nurses have been recorded as well as their suggestions to help other nurses in forensic settings to avoid manipulation by inmates.

Conclusion: The five nurses interviewed in this study recounted that they had experienced manipulation by inmates while working in a prison. They all believed that they were not prepared for the amount of manipulation or the consequences involved of manipulation

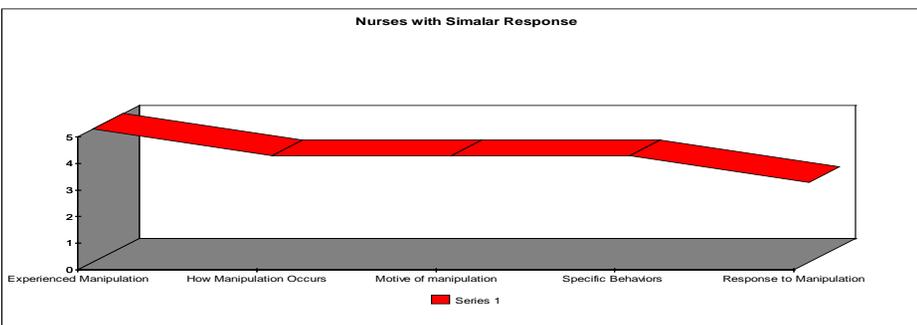
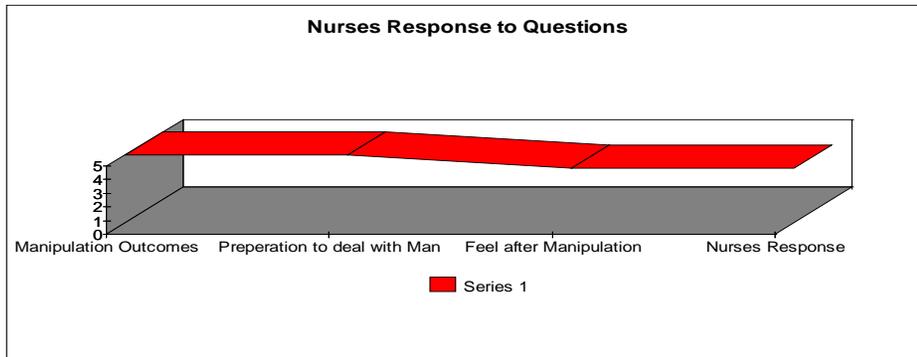
by inmates. The five nurses believed that further education by the employer or the nursing school would be useful in their careers.

When reflecting upon inmates, a forensic correctional nurse imparted to me an inmate adage: "There are two days when you come to prison. The day you get here and the day you are released. Everything else is just survival!" This may be the inmate motivation for manipulation upon staff while in prison.

In the forensic environment, manipulation is the act of an inmate trying to get a staff member to do something so that the inmate experiences **personal gain**. The personal gain can be tangible such as goods or services or intangible such as "putting one over" on the staff or what is commonly referred to as "running a game". Manipulation may also be called **deviating from policies and procedures** or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). All respondents agreed that manipulation was the **effort by an inmate to control a nurse or a staff member**. The inmate would then experience control in an environment in which the inmate has little to no control.

Most of the nurse's believe that they were not ready for a career in forensic nursing. The nurses I interviewed **did not believe they were prepared in school or by institution** they worked at for the intensity of manipulation they would be subjected to

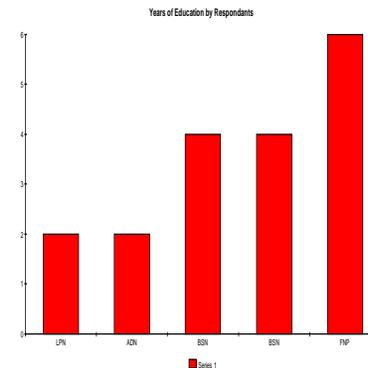
In the nurses and inmate's eyes the **manipulation is progressive and not ending**. "If they catch weakness or even sense that you are weak, they will eat you alive and manipulate you to no end."



Nurses Response to Questions
 What are the outcomes for manipulation? For the inmate/offender? Have you been prepared to deal with manipulation? How do you feel when you have been manipulated? What actions do you take in response to manipulation? What is the outcome of those actions?

The nurses' credentials ranged from Licensed Practical Nurse, RN Associate Degree, RN Bachelor's Degree, and Nurse Practitioner. All of the respondents have either worked in or currently work in a forensic environment for at least 5 years. All of the respondents worked in facilities that had mental health services inside the prison setting

Conclusion: The results of this research are very limited in their size and scope using five nurses as respondents in a particular geographic area and using only one category of forensic venue. This research is beneficial in the fact that it provides underwriting concepts and themes from which to create a definition of manipulation endured by nurses working in corrections.



Nurses who work in a forensic environment face the likelihood of manipulation that is verbal, physical or both. This form of abuse may occur on a daily basis. Notwithstanding, the nurse must provide patient care that is fair, equitable, and culturally competent. This is extremely problematic in the fact the nurse may have never been trained to work in an environment where manipulation is as prevalent as in correctional settings. This would support background for further analysis into the background relevance and significance of manipulation of nurses in the correctional setting.

Implications: The responses of these nurses in this study indicate the need for professional development related to the concept of manipulation for nurses working in corrections. These results endorse the expectation that manipulation will transpire in correctional settings and that the object of manipulation is power and control. Newly graduated nurses working in a correctional setting must surmount the competencies essential to equalize compassion with security concerns. The increasing number of inmates in the prison population of the United States exemplifies a substantial population necessitating health care. Institutions of higher learning will need to espouse curriculums and clinical experiences inside correctional institutions in order to encourage options in a correctional nursing career path and to allow those that choose the role to be more efficacious in their endeavors.