Healthcare Heroes: Preventing Patient – Handling Injuries & Violence Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. **Sudden Patient Movement:** Patients may shift, resist, fall, or grab without warning, exposing healthcare workers to acute back, shoulder, and wrist injuries.
2. **Manual Lifting Overload:** Repositioning or transferring patients without mechanical aids places extreme stress on the spine, often exceeding safe lifting limits.
3. **Awkward Postures:** Bending over beds, reaching across gurneys, or twisting during transfers increases musculoskeletal strain and injury risk.
4. **Violent Patient Behavior:** Confusion, pain, intoxication, dementia, or mental health crises can lead to hitting, biting, scratching, or kicking staff.
5. **Fatigue-Related Errors:** Long shifts and understaffing reduce physical strength and reaction time, increasing both handling injuries and escalation incidents.
6. **Limited Escape Space:** Small patient rooms, bathrooms, and hallways restrict movement, making it harder to maintain safe body positioning or retreat during aggression.

STATS

- U.S. nurses experience back injuries at a rate twice that of construction workers, primarily from lifting and repositioning patients (NIOSH).
- In Canada, healthcare accounts for more than 40% of all workplace violence claims, making it the most affected sector (CCOHS / provincial WCBs).
- A 2022 Canadian survey found that 61% of nurses experienced physical or verbal violence at work within a single year (Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions).
- Patient-handling injuries result in over 250,000 lost workdays annually in U.S. healthcare facilities due to strains and sprains (BLS).
- In Canada, 61% of nurses reported experiencing workplace violence (including physical assault and verbal abuse) in recent surveys (2020-2025), with accepted violence-related claims for nurses rising significantly in provinces like Manitoba (from 298 in 2015 to 812 in 2024).
- In the US, healthcare and social assistance workers experience nonfatal workplace violence at a rate nearly four times higher than other industries, with 76% of hospital workers reporting exposure to violence (2020-2025 data).