

Study: Workplace aggression commonplace

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A McMaster University study indicates 47 million U.S. residents are victims of workplace aggression, with the general public the primary source of abuse.

The study by the Hamilton, Ontario, Canada school suggests nearly half of all U.S. workers are victims of workplace aggression, with customers, clients or patients the most likely source of such attacks.

"The stereotypical belief that large numbers of employees are 'going postal' is a bit of a myth," said Aaron Schat, assistant professor at the university's DeGroote School of Business. "Interestingly, workers pinpoint the general public as the most significant source of this aggression, as opposed to other co-workers or supervisors."

The survey found more than 40 percent of U.S. workers experience psychological aggression, such as being insulted or threatened with physical violence.

Acts of physical violence in the workplace, such as being slapped or attacked with a weapon, are less common, with about 6 percent of workers -- nearly 7 million people -- reporting such abuse.

Nearly all workers, 96 percent, who experience physical violence also experience some form of psychological abuse.

The study is to be included in the Handbook of Workplace Violence, to be published next month.

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