

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES AT KENYATTA NATIONAL
HOSPITAL, NAIROBI COUNTY**

GETTER WASILWA

N69/76095/2009

**A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF ANTHROPOLOGY,
GENDER AND AFRICAN STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN GENDER AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

University of NAIROBI Library



0546054 8

2012

DECLARATION

This is my original project paper and has not been presented to any other university or institution for the award of a degree.

Sign Getter Wasilwa

Date 27/11/12

Getter Wasilwa

This project proposal has been presented for examination with my approval as the university supervisor

Sign Prof. Simiyu. Wandibba

Date 27/11/12

Prof. Simiyu. Wandibba

DEDICATION

To all women and men who have made it their obligation to help victims of gender-based violence re-build their hopes, you are the embers of hope within my heart and source of inspiration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vii
CHAPTER ONE : BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY	
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Problem statement.....	3
1.3 Study Objectives.....	4
1.3.1 Overall Objective.....	4
1.3.2 Specific Objectives.....	4
1.3.3 Assumptions of the study	4
1.4 Justification of the study.....	4
1.5 Scope and Limitations of the study.....	5
1.6 Definition of key terms.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Forms of sexual harassment.....	6
2.3 Perception of sexual harassment.....	10
2.4 Consequences of sexual harassment on employees.....	11
2.4.1 Relationship between sexual harassment and workplace bullying.....	11
2.4.2 Psychological and physical consequences on employees.....	13
2.5 Theoretical framework.....	16
2.5.1 Feminist theory.....	16
2.5.2 Relevance of the theory to the study.....	17

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction.....	18
3.2 Study site.....	18
3.3 Study Design	19
3.4 Study population and unit of analysis.....	19
3.5 Sample size.....	19
3.6 Sampling procedure.....	19
3.7 Data collection methods	19
3.7.1 In-depth Interviews.....	19
3.7.2 Key Informant Interviews.....	20
3.7.3 Secondary data sources.....	20
3.8 Data Processing and Analysis	20
3.9 Ethical considerations.....	21

CHAPTER FOUR: SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES AT K NH, NAIROBI COUNTY.

4.1 Introduction.....	22
4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents	22
4.3 Forms of violence.....	25
4.3.1 Understanding of sexual harassment.....	25
4.3.2 Forms of Sexual Harassment.....	27
4.4 Perception of sexual harassment.....	28
4.5 Consequences of sexual harassment at the work place.....	30
4.6 Case narrative.....	32

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction	34
5.2 Discussion	34
5.2.1 Forms of Sexual Harassment.....	34

5.2.2 Perception of Sexual harassment.....	36
5.2.4 Consequences of sexual harassment.....	37
5.3 Conclusion.....	39
5.4 Recommendations.....	40
References.....	41
Appendix 1: Consent form.....	46
Appendix 2: In-depth interview guide.....	47
Appendix 3: Key informant interview guide.....	49

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere and unreserved gratitude to my university supervisor, Prof. Simiyu Wandibba, for his unmatched academic guidance and brilliant theoretical input in the entire research process. His consistent re-direction helped to shape this study to a great success; I humbly salute all your efforts to see this process through. I also wish to acknowledge his support during the period of my illness on and off.

I wish to convey my special thanks to the entire teaching staff of the Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies who gave me an insight into the study topic, the Chairman of the Faculty Post-graduate Studies Committee and the entire staff who critiqued my work to shape my ideological build up. I am indebted to your candid and unreserved inputs to see me through the proposal and project development stages.

My unrivalled gratitude goes to the Kenyatta National Hospital staff for their insurmountable input of information into this study. Your ideas were such an asset to me and the broad academia; thank you so much and be blessed. To all my study subjects, thank you and be blessed for the cooperation throughout the study period.

I am gratified by the help and counsel I received from friends and former classmates. Your encouragement became such a timely asset for the successful completion of the project. I remain forever indebted to you. Be blessed.

ABSTRACT

This was a cross-sectional study on sexual harassment experienced by women employees at Kenyatta National Hospital. The study sought to describe forms of sexual harassment, perceptions of harassment by women employees and the consequences of this harassment on them.

The study was guided by the feminist theory on dominance and oppression and differing social locations for men and women. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and case narratives. Analysis was done through the thematic approach and content analysis.

The study findings suggest that the research subjects see sexual harassment as being manifested in the way their colleagues of the opposite sex touched their bodies uninvited, talked to them in sexually suggestive ways when uninvited, pressured them to go for dates or demanded sexual favours at the work place. Incidences of sexually demeaning remarks, sexual teasing and uninvited jokes were found to be frequent within the work place. In addition, sexual harassment was perceived by some employees as a means of winning the trust of the supervisors leading to promotion. On consequences, there were mixed feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, resentment, loss of interest in work and nervousness.

The study, therefore, concludes that sexual harassment negatively affects women employees of KNH and so needs to be stemmed and aggressively addressed in order to boost the productivity of the women employees at the work place.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EOC Equal Opportunities Office

FGDs Focus Group Discussions

ILO International Labour Organization

KNH Kenyatta National Hospital

NCST National Council for Science and Technology

WHO World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

According to Stanko (1988:12), sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention. Its behavioural forms are many and include visual (leering); verbal (sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions); unwanted pressures for sexual favour or date; unwanted touching or pinching, unwanted pressures for sexual favours with implied threats of job-related consequences for non-co-operation; physical assault; sexual assault; and rape. Stanko (1988) went further to argue that men back up these types of harassment with their power within organizations. This is because men are usually concentrated at the higher status in the organization where they can hire and fire women employees as they like. Male managers can also take punitive action against these women if they complain. Sexual harassment is also defined as repeated sexual advances, remarks or behaviours that are offensive to the recipient and cause discomfort or interference with job performance.

Sexual harassment is a problem that is faced by workers all over the world. However, most of the available research is conducted in western countries (Crocker and Kalemba, 1999). There is a lack of such studies in developing countries in general (Lui, 1996; Limpaphayom and Williams, 2006) and Kenya, in particular. Nevertheless, reports in Malaysian newspapers and magazines indicate that female Malaysian employees are frequently subjected to sexual harassment behaviours by their male colleagues.

Although sexual harassment may involve either men or women as the victims, men are not frequent victims of sexual harassment and, in fact, pose more as the harassers. Previous studies have shown that sexual harassment incidents frequently involve a male harasser and a female victim (Terpstra and Cook, 1985). Thus, there is much less research on harassment of men. Even though the problem has actually existed for many decades, research on sexual harassment only started in the late 1970s (Gutek and Done, 2001).

Most of the initial studies were descriptive, mainly to examine the frequency of occurrence, the characteristics of perpetrators and victims, and the effect on victims (Langley, 1999). The perceptions of sexual harassment were also examined and were found to vary by demographic characteristics such as age (Nielsen, 1996; Fitzgerald and Ormerod, 1991). For example, older respondents tend to perceive sexual harassment differently in that they would be more likely to regard an incident as sexually harassing as compared to younger ones (Langley, 1999).

Later studies have focused on the consequences of sexual harassment to both the organization and to the individual. This is because a number of organizations, especially in western countries, have been facing lawsuits over the issue. Some companies, in fact, had to pay out damages in addition to incurring indirect costs such as high job turnover, rampant absenteeism, low morale as well as low productivity and excessive medical claims (Fitzgerald et al., 1997:14). Besides, women who reported sexual harassment suffered lower levels of job satisfaction compared to women who had not been harassed. They tended to be absent from work using sick leave as an excuse. For the individual, it could bring adverse effects on the victim's emotional state. Emotional distress may be manifested in such symptoms as anxiety, depression, irritability,

anger and insomnia. All these could in turn affect motivation and effectiveness at work as well as family relations at home (Dansky and Kilpatrick, 1997; Ragins and Scandura, 1995).

Reskin and Padavic (1994) point out that because sexual pressures are typically initiated by those in superior positions against the less powerful, women are more likely than men to be the objects of unwanted attention, especially in the workplace. They further contend that power imbalances facilitate harassment even though women can and do sexually harass subordinates because men usually hold positions of authority, it is most common for men to harass women.

This study looked into sexual harassment of women at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) in Nairobi County.

1.2 Problem statement

The bulk of discussions about gender inequalities at work focus on various ways in which female workers are unnecessarily underprivileged in the workplace in terms of low pay, lower status job, restriction from certain jobs as well as confinement to sex-type jobs (Mackinon, 1979; Schaefer, 1989; Haralambos and Holborn, 2000). In addition, although studies have indicated that there is sexual harassment at workplaces, the focus of these studies has been on gender inequalities. There is therefore, a gap in literature that this study is set out to fill. Victims of sexual harassment feel more undervalued and are traumatized to talk about it. Sexual harassment could contribute to the ill-health and underperformance hence the need for research. This study sought to assess sexual harassment at workplace among the women employees of KNH. To answer this objective, the study was guided by the following questions:

- i. What are the forms of sexual harassment experienced by employees at Kenyatta National Hospital?
- ii. What are the perceptions of the Hospital's employees of sexual harassment?
- iii. What are the consequences of sexual harassment on the employees of the Hospital?

1.3 Study objectives

1.3.1 Overall objective

To explore sexual harassment amongst the employees of Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- i. To find out the forms of sexual harassment experienced by the employees of Kenyatta National Hospital.
- ii. To determine the perceptions of sexual harassment amongst employees of the Hospital.
- iii. To describe the consequences of sexual harassment on the employees of the institution.

1.3.3 Assumptions of the study

- i. Women employees at Kenyatta National Hospital experience various forms of sexual harassment.
- ii. Employees at Kenyatta National Hospital hold different perceptions of sexual harassment.
- iii. Employees of Kenyatta National Hospital are negatively affected by sexual harassment.

1.4 Justification of the study

The findings of this study have highlighted the forms and the context of abuse at the work environment which are important in designing mitigation strategies. Findings on perceptions of

sexual harassment among employees of different cadres and varied demographic characteristics in the same institution should be important in addressing the attitudinal bias that is a precursor to sexual harassment, including enhancing self-reported abuse cases amongst victims to the management of KNH. The study findings have also added to existing literature on sexual harassment at institutional levels amongst the employees that is important for scholars interested in analyzing experiences of various forms of gender-based violence in different sectors of the community.

1.5 Scope and limitations of the study

This study focused on sexual harassment of employees at Kenyatta National Hospital. It specifically looked into the forms of harassment, the perceptions of employees of sexual harassment and the consequences of sexual harassment on the employees of the institution. Being qualitative in nature, the study findings do not capture the quantitative trends and patterns of sexual harassment among employees of Kenyatta National Hospital. However, data collection methods were triangulated to produce rich data.

1.6 Definition of key terms

Sexual harassment: the uninvited advances, remarks and behaviours that are always offensive to the recipient and which can cause discomfort or interference with performance.

Perceptions: Feelings held by employees about sexual harassment.

Employees: Female workers at Kenyatta National Hospital.

Forms: Characteristics that define sexual harassment experienced by employees at a workplace.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on sexual harassment at the workplace. The review is done using the following sub-headings: forms of sexual harassment, the perceptions of sexual harassment and consequences of sexual harassment. The section concludes by presenting the theoretical framework that guided the study.

2.2 Forms of sexual harassment

It is generally accepted that sexual harassment includes two types of behaviour. The first is usually defined as *quid pro quo* and relates to where an individual, often in a position of power, will explicitly or implicitly make sexual requests and/or advances. In exchange they may offer some desired result, for example, a promotion. The second is sexual harassment which can be defined as “hostile environment”, which refers to sex-related behaviours which make the person being harassed feel uncomfortable, thereby creating an intimidating working environment. This type of sexual harassment is a source of much debate as it may be more subtle and is often termed a ‘grey area’ (Smolensky and Kleiner, 2003: 60).

Smolensky and Kleiner (2003:61) provide examples of past court cases in the United States illustrating a hostile environment, including:

- Female office workers at AT&T Technologies in North Carolina who were ‘rated’ by male employees as they passed the men’s desks, followed by lascivious comments about their hips and breasts;

- Women who were subjected to a dress code which banned trousers by their supervisor, established by him specifically so he could admire their legs.
- A student at the New York City police academy who had to fight off the assault of a male student by hitting him with a box of ammunition, and who had her breasts fondled from behind by her instructor as she tried to fire her gun.

Also in the US, a 1988 study (Rutter, 1996:16) listed the seven most frequent forms of harassment. In order of frequency they were:

- Sexual teasing, jokes, remarks or questions;
- Pressure for dates;
- Letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature;
- Sexual looks or gestures;
- Deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering or pinching;
- Pressure for sexual favours;
- Actual or attempted rape or sexual assault.

An even earlier study (Till, 1980) of a national sample of US female college students, led to the formulation of five levels of sexual harassment: gender harassment, seductive behaviour, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual imposition. Gender harassment describes sexist or offensive remarks and jokes. The seductive behaviour category describes inappropriate flirting and also stretches to sexual advances without the threat of sanctions. Sexual bribery, sexual coercion and sexual imposition categories normally involve the threat of sanctions, ranging from rewards for sexual activity (sexual bribery) to sexual assault (sexual imposition) These categories were

validated by Fitzgerald and Hesson-McInnis (1989). Through analysis of court cases and a review of the literature, Gruber (1992:17) developed three general categories of the ways in which sexual harassment could be expressed: verbal requests, verbal comments and non-verbal displays.

Harassment via electronic means has increased as the level of internet and email usage has grown. In the last decade, the proportion of female internet users has risen from 5% to 66 % (LeClaire, 2005:33; Jackson *et al.*, 2001). The percentage of women using the internet (66 %) still falls slightly behind the percentage of men (68%) but because women outnumber men in the population, slightly more women than men are now online (LeClaire, 2005:34).

Tyler (2002: 195) states that “the internet seems to have created a new way of doing old things”. With this has come a general increase in unsolicited email, including emails which can be perceived as inappropriate or harassing (Khoo and Senn, 2004). Emails have a language and culture of their own and people, who may never consider sexually harassing someone person to person, may be open to abusing the email system. A survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 20 per cent of employers had received complaints from employees about improper or harassing emails received at work (Armour, 1999:24).

Khoo and Senn’s (2004) study found that women were more likely than men to find email content offensive and that emails which amounted to a sexual proposition were perceived to be extremely offensive by women, whereas men appeared to find them rather enjoyable. Thus, gender is critical to an individual’s perception of an email’s content, suggesting there is need to

focus on “immediate responses” (Woodzicka and LaFrance, 2001: 19) to increase understanding of how this form of sexual harassment affects the individual and how it can be prevented.

According to recent US studies, as little as 35 per cent of internet use by employees is work related, with porn sites, sports pages and online shopping cited as those visited by many employees. Soewita and Kleiner (2000) suggest that companies can do a range of things to protect their employees, the first step being to adopt a clear policy on the actual use of company email and the internet prior to allowing employee access.

Sexual harassment over the telephone is also a problem, especially for those who work in call centres, but to date, there has been little research into this. One study within the call centre of a German telephone company found that overwhelmingly, it was men harassing women and that 10 per cent of respondents described incidents which contained threats of sexual violence. It was a stressful experience for the women and those who experienced this harassment reported feeling “disgusted or disrespected” (Sczesny and Stahlberg, 2000: 133).

There have also been studies of sexual harassment when the telephone is in private use. Fifty per cent of women and two per cent of men had at some point experienced sexual harassment over the telephone, based on a sample of one hundred German students (49 women and 51 men) (Sczesny, 1997). The most serious form of harassment contained ‘groaning’ in 55 per cent of cases, ‘sexual advances’ in 49 per cent, and ‘silence’ in 26 per cent of cases (Sczesny and Stahlberg, 1999: 158). Silent phone calls can also constitute sexual harassment as a form of menace and intimidation. In a report of four studies covering a 10-year period in England and Wales, Buck et al. (1995:15) found that between 7 and 10 per cent of women suffered one or

more obscene calls in the course of a year, and that the groups most likely to receive them were single, separated and divorced young women.

2.3 Perception of sexual harassment

Hearn and Parkin (1995, 2001, 2005) have written extensively on issues of sexual harassment at the workplace. While recognizing that there are certain distinctive features of sexual harassment and bullying, they see both of these behaviours as a form of 'organisational violation' or violation of the individual, where the culture of an organization allows individual employees to be treated abusively or with disrespect. They believe that it is essential to examine gender and sexuality when discussing organisational characteristics, and that "Organizations and sexuality simultaneously construct each other" (Hearn and Parkin, 1995: 94). However, organisational policies, on the whole, tend to deal with harassment, bullying and violence as separate issues with little attempt to recognize the links and relationships between and among them. Often, bullying is seen as something to be ashamed of whereas harassment is something which is asked for. In contrast, being a victim of physical violence receives the most sympathy and is also more closely linked to criminality.

Hearn and Parkin (2005:8) argue that taking a non-gendered approach towards examining a culture of organisational abuse and disrespect has many limitations, and that hierarchical and managerial power is a central theme. The majority of people who are sexually harassed are women and violence by men towards men tends to be based on the social construction of men and masculinity; for example, aggression is associated with male behaviour and acts of violence

and crime are regarded as vehicles for men to demonstrate these behaviours (Messerschmidt, 1993).

Even if an organization does not appear to be dominated by men and has an equal gender ratio of senior managers, masculine norms can still be apparent and overriding. This can be illustrated by looking at the profession of midwifery which is overwhelmingly a female profession where women care for women, but is still managed from a male medical perspective (Hearn and Parkin, 2005). There are also assumptions about what is good management; historically strong, masculine environments were seen as positive and desirable (Collinson, 1988; Einarsen and Raknes, 1997), although this has changed considerably in recent years. However, the gender of a management team may be less relevant than its style. Types of nuisance call, such as threatening, offensive or heavy breathing, roughly doubled the proportion of women affected. There is limited information on how such harassment is handled by the person who faces it, or its effect upon them.

2.4 Consequences of sexual harassment on employees

2.4.1 Relationship between sexual harassment and workplace bullying

The attention given to 'workplace bullying' has grown substantially since the term was introduced and defined as a workplace problem in Britain in the early 1990s (Adams, 1992). Whilst interest in bullying at work first developed in Scandinavia nearly a decade earlier, it has now become a globally recognized problem reflected in the recent agendas of international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (Di Martino et al., 2003). Sustained effort by articulate victims, victim

support groups and trade unions, aided by the results of several high profile nationwide surveys (Hoel and Cooper, 2000), have helped to keep the issue in the public eye as well as gradually attracting growing academic interest (Rayner et al., 2002).

Most of the literature on bullying is based on school bullying (Brown et al., 2005; Smith and Birney, 2005), with noticeably less published on workplace bullying (Lee, 2002; Cowie et al., 2002). However, the pervasiveness of workplace bullying in organizations (Hoel and Cooper, 2000; Quine, 1999), the psychological harm which is often suffered by those who have been bullied (Einarsen and Mikkelsen, 2003) and, not least, the impact on organizations in terms of absenteeism, turnover and productivity (Hoel et al., 2003), have resulted in it being increasingly recognized as a management and leadership problem (Smith, 1999).

No single agreed definition of bullying exists, although a convergence of definitions is gradually emerging (Di Martino et al., 2003; Hoel et al., 2003). Thus, there appears to be agreement that bullying refers to persistent exposure to negative behaviour and negative acts, often over a long time, where those at the receiving end have difficulty in defending themselves. It follows that in most cases, a one-off negative encounter would not be considered to be bullying, albeit an unpleasant experience (Einarsen et al., 2003).

Workplace bullying has also been informed by the literature on sexual harassment, particularly with regard to research methodology. By highlighting the importance of power relations within an organization, it is suggested that there may be strong links between these two concepts, with sexual harassment possibly falling within the wider context of bullying. However, it is

recognized that although important theoretical development has taken place in recent years, the concept of bullying is still underdeveloped in the research literature, compared to the more mature field of sexual harassment. The latter has a stronger theoretical underpinning with links to feminist theories, and is firmly located within the broader framework of power relations, as discussed below (MacKinnon, 1979).

2.4.2 Psychological and physical consequences on employees

Experiencing sexual harassment has been shown to affect people's psychological and physical well-being, as well as their employment situation (Earnshaw and Davidson, 1994; Dan et al., 1995). Harassment can lead to: illness; apparent lack of commitment; poor performance; absenteeism; and, in some cases, resignation (CIPD, 2005). On the other hand, Sczesny and Stahlberg's study (2000) of call centres found that the experience of sexual harassment over the telephone had a negative impact on both job satisfaction and job performance.

A study by Dan et al. (1995:33), aimed at exploring female nurses' experiences of sexual harassment and the impact of those experiences in clinical settings, found that sexual harassment could have an impact in a variety of different ways. Nurses described feeling: annoyed, upset, shocked, threatened, uncomfortable, anxious, disgusted, tense, angry, embarrassed, isolated, resentful, intimidated, furious, frightened, guilty, worried, frustrated, nervous, and vulnerable. Other research has resulted in similar findings and identified additional feelings, in both women and men, of: humiliation; self-blame; loss of self-confidence and decreased self-esteem; reduction in the ability to perform in the job; decreased job satisfaction; decreased morale; damage to interpersonal relations at work; and various economic losses (Fitzgerald, 1993:60).

Self-reported physical symptoms of sexual harassment have also been reported and include: gastrointestinal disturbances, headaches, inability to sleep, nausea, loss of appetite, and weight loss (Gutek, 1985:26). Furthermore, studies have shown that it can be linked to serious mental health problems such as depression (Gutek, 1985) and posttraumatic stress disorder (Kilpatrick, 1992).

A study of self-perceived health and mental health among women flight attendants examined recent experiences of sexual harassment (Ballard et al., 2006). It found that the victims perceived their health as only 'fair' or 'poor' and reported psychological distress more frequently than former flight attendants. Sexual harassment by passengers particularly affected their health and was related to low job satisfaction.

The negative physical and psychological effects of sexual harassment may have a detrimental effect on the organisational culture (Glomb et al., 1997) by creating a stressful environment for all employees. Studies have shown that when women are disrespected in an organization, this will ultimately have an impact on all employees (Miner-Rubino and Cortina, 2004). Employees who witness sexual harassment may conclude that the organization does not care about the workforce, ultimately leading to negative assumptions regarding organisational norms and behaviours, specifically relating to fairness and justice (Lamertz, 2002:19-37). The result can be a loss of confidence in management, a loss of loyalty to the organization, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.

As the frequency of sexual harassment increases within an organization, it is increasingly likely to be recognized as an unwelcome form of behaviour but one that is likely to recur. A study by Barling et al. (1996), which examined the organisational and personal consequences of workplace sexual harassment, confirmed that frequency of sexual harassment has a direct impact on negative attitudes towards work and professional relationships between colleagues and superiors.

The investigation of any complaints, for example, not only carries a financial cost, but can lead to serious divisions between staff (Gregory, 2002). In turn, these workplace difficulties can increase the level of psychosomatic problems among staff, such as headaches, sleep and gastric problems. Furthermore, the frequency of sexual harassment was found to be a positive predictor of the turnover intentions for female respondents (Barling et al., 1996). In other words, the higher the incidence of sexual harassment within an organization, the higher the turnover of female employees. However, it did not appear to impact on the turnover rate for male employees, no doubt because those who faced harassment were primarily women. Thus, women's experiences of and reactions to sexual harassment differed significantly with those of their male counterparts.

These findings illustrate the detrimental impact that sexual harassment can have and the importance of treating it as a health and safety issue for all organizations. Health and safety regulations provide a practical framework for assessing risks and taking action to address those identified.

2.5 Theoretical framework

2.5.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is rooted in themes of dominance and oppression, and differing social locations for men and women (Ruth 1998; Loue, 2002). Feminist theory argues that sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, is rooted in the patriarchal system of domination, a system that sanctions sexual harassment as a means of maintaining a patriarchal social order and a system where men benefit materially and psychologically from the subordination of women (Connell, 1987). In this regard, a patriarchal society supports male power, female submission and inequities that lead to sexual harassment (Ruth, 1998; McCue, 2008).

Sexual violence is seen as a form of oppression that occurs within a social context that makes violence against the oppressed group (women) possible and even acceptable where women are an oppressed group as we live in a society where women do not have equal rights and institutional power, which provides the social context in which sexual harassment exists (McCue, 2008). Feminists define sexual harassment along the lines of gender and a patriarchal structure, with men as a class wielding power over women (McCue, 2008). Sexual harassment is understood as a consequence of patriarchal power and the assertion of male privilege within the family, characterized by a pattern of behaviour designed to dominate and control one's partner.

Proponents of feminist theory believe that sexual harassment is a systemic issue – as long as women are not equal to men in all ways, it will continue to be a problem in society. Consequently, most feminist approaches look at the power imbalances that exist in patriarchal societies that create and perpetuate sexual harassment (McCue, 2008).

The theory argues that a patriarchal society supports male power, female submission and inequities that lead to violence against intimate partners and that patriarchy is fostered by the current economic and social system (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Our social system has defined the husband as the dominant, strong, authoritarian, aggressive, and rational provider for the family while the wife has traditionally been assigned to a dependent, passive, submissive, soft role (McCue, 2008). Accordingly, early socialization conditions girls to become submissive

victims while boys are socialized to become perpetrators of violence, which sets the stage for dominant male figure over the passive female figure.

2.5.2 Relevance of the theory to the study

This theory views sexual harassment as being rooted in the power imbalances between men and women in patriarchal society. This imbalance occurs across different social contexts including home, workplace and community levels where more often than not men exert their power by oppressing women. This helps to explain the prevalence of sexual harassment at workplace such as Kenyatta hospital.

The theory views sexual harassment as a socially tolerated practice in the patriarchal society as enrichment of the social order and not viewed as a vice per se. The very argument in the theory that men who by extension are predominantly the perpetrators benefit psychologically from the harassment helps to explain perceptions that were the concern for this study. The theory argues that sexual harassment has multiple effects on the recipients of whom a majority are women hence addresses the objective of this study on the consequences of sexual harassment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the context in which the study was conducted. It describes the study site, the study design, study population, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection methods and data analysis. The chapter finally discusses the ethical issues that had to be taken into consideration.

3.2 Study site

This study was carried out at the Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi (Figure 3.1) below. This hospital is the oldest and the largest public national referral and teaching hospital in Kenya, and in the whole of Eastern and Central Africa. It has 1800 beds, 50 wards and 22 out-patient clinics.



Source: Google maps, 2010

Fig: 3.1 Location of Kenyatta National Hospital.

3.3 Study Design

This was a cross-sectional descriptive study. The study used qualitative research methods in exploring sexual harassment of employees at Kenyatta National Hospital. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. They were then analyzed thematically and selected quotes have been used to amplify the arguments captured in the key themes.

3.4 Study population and unit of analysis

The study population included all female and male employees who have worked in Kenyatta National Hospital for the past six months. It also included those in authority and under authority. The unit of analysis was an individual employee.

3.5 Sample size

A sample of 50 Kenyatta National Hospital women employees was selected for the study. This sample size was found to be sufficient given the qualitative nature of the study.

3.6 Sampling procedure

Convenience sampling was used to select the sample for in-depth interviews. Purposive sampling was used to select new informants.

3.7 Data collection methods

3.7.1 In-depth Interviews

Fifty individual in-depth interviews were conducted with the sampled employees. This was the main data collection method for the study. The method was important in providing the individual

accounts of sexual harassment at the workplace, the various forms experienced across genders and ranks and the perceived causes of sexual harassment at workplace. The interviews were conducted with the help of an interview schedule (Appendix 2) containing open-ended questions so as to provide room for thorough probing to elicit detailed information.

3.7.2 Key Informant Interviews

These were conducted with one KNH staff drawn from the human resource department, head of nursing department, and head of the subordinate staff department. The key informants provided information on factors perpetuating sexual harassment in workplace settings, the various forms reported by employees and the policies in place to curb sexual harassment at the workplace. All key informants were purposively drawn based on their knowledge of the workplace code of ethics and professionalism. A key informant interview guide (Appendix 3) was used to collect the data.

3.7.3 Secondary data sources

Secondary sources were reviewed to provide background information on the incidents of sexual harassment at the workplace, the causes, perceptions and consequences. These sources continued to be used throughout the study period. Information was drawn from existing scholarly publications, government documents, working papers and websites.

3.8 Data Processing and Analysis

Data were analyzed thematically. A descriptive approach was adopted in which direct quotations and selected comments from informants were used to reinforce the thematic arguments. Triangulation of data was done by looking into complementarities and divergent opinions across

the key informant interviews and in-depth interviews. Content analysis was used in deciphering information from secondary sources.

3.9 Ethical considerations

A research permit was sought from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology before proceeding to the field. Ethical clearance was sought from the Ethical Review Board of Kenyatta National Hospital and the University of Nairobi.

Before the interviews were conducted, a statement of consent (Appendix 1) was duly read to all subjects in the study to confirm their free will to participate in the study. Explanations were given to all the informants concerning confidentiality issues in the study by using codes and pseudonyms instead of real names. Furthermore, they were informed that confidentiality and privacy would be maintained throughout the data collection, analysis and dissemination stages. Finally, the study subjects were informed of their right to disqualify themselves or withdraw at any stage of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES AT KENYATTA NATIONAL HOSPITAL, NAIROBI COUNTY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on sexual harassment of women employees at Kenyatta National Hospital. The chapter starts with presentation of the demographic characteristics of the informants and then discusses the rest of the findings.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

In this study, half (50%) of the respondents were aged between 31 and 45, 30% were aged between 25 and 30, while those aged 46 years and above comprised 20% (Table 4.1).

Age was deemed to be important for the study because it directly correlates to the rank of the employees which in turn has a converse relationship with harassment of junior employees by their seniors who happen to be older.

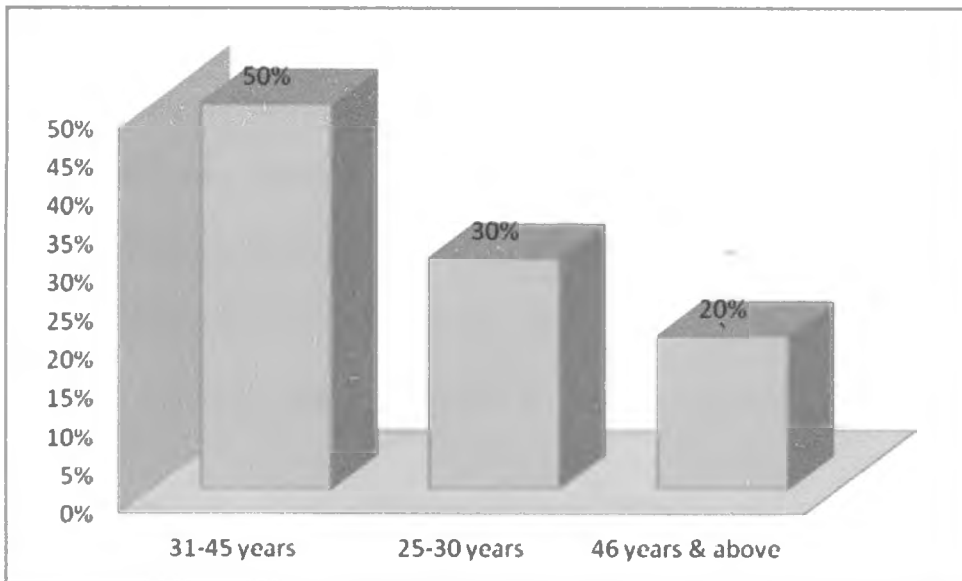


Figure 4.1: Age groups of the respondents

Analysis of marital status of the informants revealed that 18% were single women, 52% were married and 30% were either divorced or separated. Marital status was an important variable in this study because the presence or absence of a spouse is an important determinant of the nature of response taken in the post-harassment period. Figure 4.2 below depicts the marital status of the study subjects.

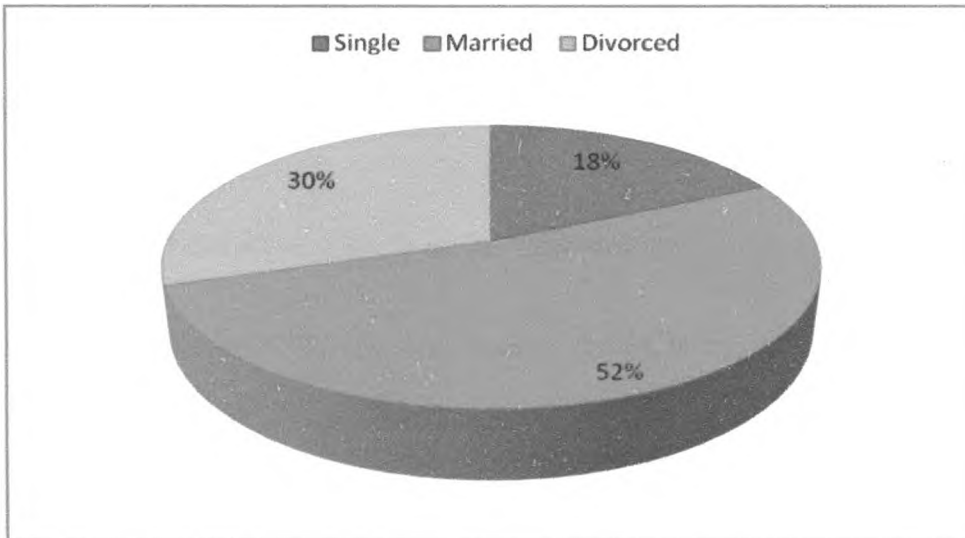


Figure 4.2: Marital status of the respondents

On education, the findings indicate that over half (55%) of the respondents had a Bachelor's degree, 25% had a post-graduate degree, 15% had a diploma level while only 5% had secondary school certificate. Thus, none of the respondents lacked formal education. Educational level defines the survivor's knowledge reporting procedures and the ethical conduct at workplace.

Figure 4.2 below shows the educational level of the respondents.

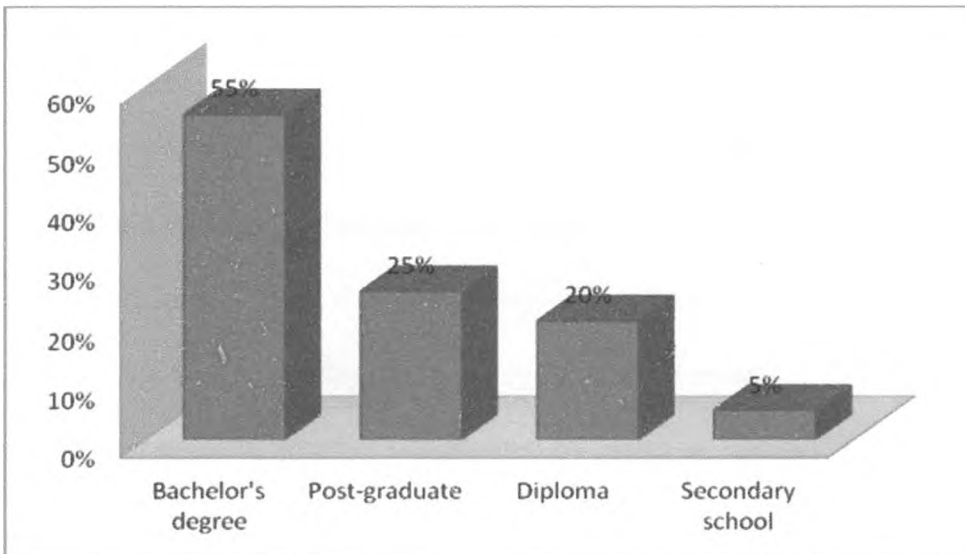


Figure 4.3: Educational levels of the respondents.

On income levels, 30% of the respondents earned below KES 30,000 a month, a majority (60%) of the respondents earned less than KES 40,000 while the remaining 10% earned more than KES 40,000. Income level is an important variable since it determines the level of economic vulnerability and differences that may perpetuate the harassment within the workplace. Figure 4.3 below depicts the income levels of the respondents.

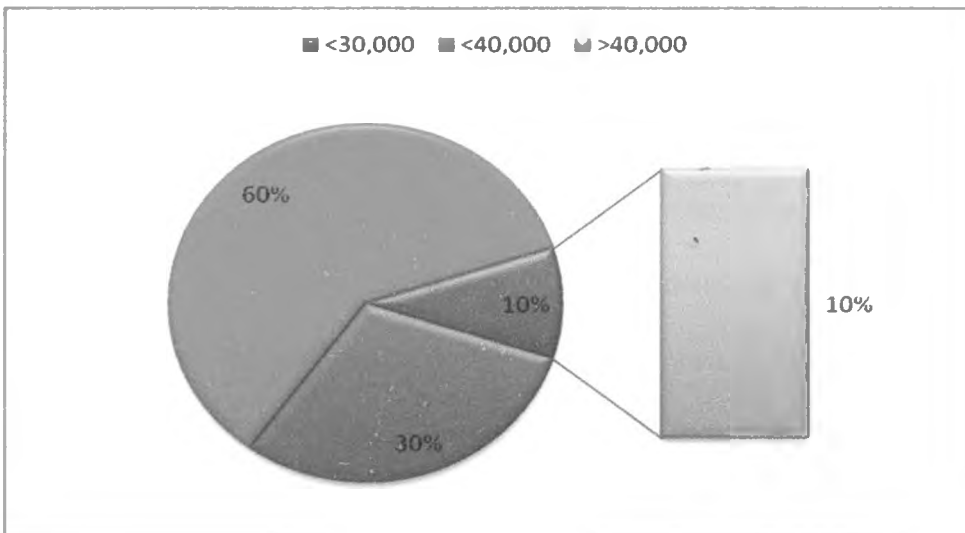


Figure 4.3: Income levels of the respondents

4.3 Forms of violence

4.3.1 Understanding of sexual harassment

The study sought to know from the respondents their understanding of sexual harassment at work place. This was necessary in assessing the degree to which respondents understand and define sexual harassment, whether perpetuated by males or females. It was also important in giving a cursory assessment of the kind of response or action one would take in case such incidences of harassment are encountered at the work place. This findings indicate that the respondents saw sexual harassment as being manifested in the way their colleagues of the opposite sex touched their bodies uninvited, talked to them in a sexually suggestive way when uninvited, pressured them to go for dates or demanded sexual favours at the work place. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents clearly understood the various dimensions of sexual harassment. This notion is captured in the interview below.

One is sexually harassed when there is pressure for dates and sexual favours from the opposite sex. At times, your colleague might even touch your breasts and bottoms without your consent especially when you are in the lobby or in private places within the hospital. It is embarrassing given that these are social strangers and persons you are supposed to professionally relate to; it occurs to both men and women employees at the hospital. **(An interview with 27 year old female employee).**

On the other hand, sexual harassment was also understood purely to mean pressure for sexual favours especially by the male bosses. This is understood as insistence on going out with male supervisors for better appraisal, promotion or as a means of receiving more favours with regard to 'offs' at work. While the practice is interpreted as an offence, the study outcomes indicate that some employees at the hospital have taken it as a norm and a quick means of gaining promotion as in the interview below.

The female employees especially those who have just cleared college are pressured to offer sexual favours by their male supervisors, either the aim is to get a good

recommendation, to be assured of your job security or to avoid any transfers to any departments that the new recruits find less favourable. It is sad that even seasoned employees would give in to sexual demands from their seniors in order to be promoted irrespective of clear understanding of the labour laws, the human resource stipulations and regulations that govern the work place environment. (**An interview with female doctor**).

Interviews conducted with the key informants on sexual harassment concurred with the sentiments of the study respondents to a great extent. However, the key informants also observed that there was an increasing use of technology at the work place to perpetrate sexual harassment through the use of phones and internet. These tools have become new sites of engagement with employees and have been used to put pressure on the junior employees as they are seen to be more discrete than the traditional 'corridor talks' that would easily be detectable. Moreover, the key informants opined that frequent harassment occurs between male and female employees but most pronounced in cases where one is under the supervision of the other as elaborated in the interview below.

Sexual harassment at work place might have been stemmed through strict work policy but that has not resolved the menace, it has taken space in the advent of cell phones and internet surfaces. Employees report receiving sexually laden messages and pressure dates from their colleagues via emails or short message services, even worse is when these platforms are used to send pornographic materials. I must also observe that the traditional forms of teasing and joking are largely reported within different work places. (**An interview with the head of nursing department**).

It can be deduced from the findings that sexual harassment is not merely understood as sexual favours at work place but cut across the general sexually-laden behaviours that are directed at other employees without their invitation. It might take several forms across touching, verbal and non-verbal formats including the use of internet and mobile phone surfaces.

4.3.2 Forms of sexual harassment

The study sought to know from the respondents various forms of sexual harassment that they have experienced at their work place. The respondents observed that incidents of sexually demeaning remarks, sexual teasing and uninvited jokes were frequent within the work place. These actions were more often directed to junior female employees or those in the same cadre. It was deduced from the study that males more often perpetrate/perpetuate the violence than receive the same at work place as exemplified in the interview below:

We have had incidences where my colleagues have been described in ways meant to demean them by their male supervisors especially when they refuse to honour dates at work place. Sometimes, you are sexually ridiculed as a virgin just because you would not yield to your boss. In fact, there are male workers within who will sexually tease even if you resist the same and they consider it normal...this more often affects the new female employees at the hospital. **(An interview with 31-year old nurse).**

Similarly, the respondents in the study reported incidents of indecent touches from their colleagues while in the course of discharging duties. Touching of private parts such as breasts was reported to be frequent within the lifts, corridors and unlocking rooms from theatres.

“You will be cornered by a male colleague while walking and the guy leans over you, touches you indecently just because you are their supervisee. They do not ask for your consent and sometimes they compliment it with sexual remarks meant to seduce you. When you get to discuss such behaviours with your female colleagues, they give you similar experiences so you conclude that it is an entrenched culture of operation within the hospital set-up.” **(An interview with 25 year old nurse).**

Experts observed that there is a continued reporting of sexual harassment by junior employees in the form of sexual flirting, coercion and advances that are backed by threat of dismissal in case the perpetrator is reported. The aim is to put the junior employees in situations where they are not able to resist the advances from their supervisors and finally accept the trend as a norm as expounded in the interview below.

4.3.2 Forms of sexual harassment

The study sought to know from the respondents various forms of sexual harassment that they have experienced at their work place. The respondents observed that incidents of sexually demeaning remarks, sexual teasing and uninvited jokes were frequent within the work place. These actions were more often directed to junior female employees or those in the same cadre. It was deduced from the study that males more often perpetrate/perpetuate the violence than receive the same at work place as exemplified in the interview below:

We have had incidences where my colleagues have been described in ways meant to demean them by their male supervisors especially when they refuse to honour dates at work place. Sometimes, you are sexually ridiculed as a virgin just because you would not yield to your boss. In fact, there are male workers within who will sexually tease even if you resist the same and they consider it normal...this more often affects the new female employees at the hospital. (**An interview with 31-year old nurse**).

Similarly, the respondents in the study reported incidents of indecent touches from their colleagues while in the course of discharging duties. Touching of private parts such as breasts was reported to be frequent within the lifts, corridors and unlocking rooms from theatres.

“You will be cornered by a male colleague while walking and the guy leans over you, touches you indecently just because you are their supervisee. They do not ask for your consent and sometimes they compliment it with sexual remarks meant to seduce you. When you get to discuss such behaviours with your female colleagues, they give you similar experiences so you conclude that it is an entrenched culture of operation within the hospital set-up.” (**An interview with 25 year old nurse**).

Experts observed that there is a continued reporting of sexual harassment by junior employees in the form of sexual flirting, coercion and advances that are backed by threat of dismissal in case the perpetrator is reported. The aim is to put the junior employees in situations where they are not able to resist the advances from their supervisors and finally accept the trend as a norm as expounded in the interview below.

Sexual harassment occurs between the supervisors and their juniors within the work place, that is a fact. In this place, we have had reports where female employees are forced to show up for dates or consistently touched indecently by their male bosses, even in some cases, women bosses have pressured their supervisees for dates even though these get reported quite too late especially when the male junior is heading for a transfer. I would say that pressure for dates and indecent touches are largely recorded with the human resource department for disciplinary action at the hospital. **(An interview with Human Resource personnel).**

From the study findings, it can be deduced that various forms of sexual harassment are experienced by women employees at Kenyatta National Hospital. Sexual teasing, jokes, pressure for dates, uninvited touches, internet and phone materials sexually loaded were found to be rampant within the KNH work place.

4.4 Perception of sexual harassment

The study sought to know how the respondents perceive incidences of sexual harassment encountered at the work place. This was important in assessing whether the respondent would report the occurrence of an incidence or sit on the information if it is perceived to be a norm. Similarly, perceptions inform attitudes that can either sustain or work against the occurrence of such harassment in the future at the work place. Findings suggest that, sexual harassment is perceived by some employees as a means of winning the trust of the supervisors and subsequently promotion. This belief therefore insinuates a tolerant attitude by the harassed employees who consider the outcome to be bigger than the stress of undergoing one especially at the hands of people who hold key to promotion. This sentiment was expressed in the interview below.

I am aware that people are sexually harassed especially when you are young and just starting up your career, so cannot bear while others choose to stay for the sake of the job and better things like promotions. I know many colleagues that we were recruited with but became resistant to dates from their superiors and have remained at the same level five years down the line, so if you are fine with the touches, teasing and occasional

outings you are better placed in this environment because the competition is stiff and everyone needs a pay rise...”. (An interview with 37-year old female employee).

The study, also established that people perceive the perpetrators as being more powerful people who could immaturely terminate their employment if they reacted in a manner to resist their advances. This has meant that few incidents are reported because there is the fear of straining the relations between the juniors and their supervisors. This is because a majority of the perpetrators are usually concentrated at the higher status in the organization where they can hire and fire junior employees as they like. Even more astounding, the study revealed that male managers can also take punitive action such as immediate transfers, dismissal and denial of weekday offs, amongst other frustrating actions, against these women if they complain.

Sometimes people tolerate such abuses because at certain points people who report to the human resource department or other bosses are either transferred or subjected to cruel treatments. This dissuades the reporting and people have come to devise ways of dealing with sexual harassment at personal level rather than break the silence. (An interview with a 40-year old female employee).

Study findings suggest that the belief that sexual harassment by male employees is part and parcel of masculine norm in the society was eminent. Female employees in this study were of the opinion that most men who happen to be dominant in the supervisory positions in the hospital have been brought up with the adventurers and dominance mentality. While they agreed that the mentality and image of male aggression exported to work place is unhealthy, women employees tended to resign to the fact that men will always want to touch, date and sexually tease the females as a show of masculine image.

Men are domineering in the society; that notion has been extended to work place and they do not feel like they are behaving in unethical way at work. Sometimes we say it is manly to be sexually adventurers even if such behaviour poses a threat to productivity at work. Women usually perceive such advances to be well within the range of societal behaviour of the males. (An interview with 42-year old female employee).

Key informants were of the opinion that sexual harassment is perceived as a taboo subject, embarrassing discourse and an encounter that should be treated as a private matter. These notions have resulted in low reporting of the incidents of sexual harassment which in turn propels the practice. It was observed that the perception of harassment as a normal and private affair at the same time severely contributes to the work place abuse.

Sexual harassment is treated with such privacy probably because victims feel embarrassed while giving such evidence before resolution committees within the work place. Besides, it is sustained by the attitude that purports such harassment to be within the normal range of behaviour for men. (**An interview with the Head of Sub-ordinate staff department**).

From the study findings, it can be concluded that female employees have an attitude that classifies sexual harassment as a private domain and a male behaviour. This set of attitudes, therefore, tend to sustain harassment given that little reporting is undertaken by the victims.

4.5 Consequences of sexual harassment at the work place

The study sought to know from the respondents the various outcomes of sexual harassment they were subjected to at work place. This was important in assessing the psycho-social, economic and self-perception outcomes. Moreover, the question also helped to clarify the possible impact of sexual harassment on job in inputs. The respondents reported mixed consequences of sexual harassment that they had undergone. There was the feeling of embarrassment, anxiety, resentment and nervousness. These consequences were largely reported by junior employees who had not anticipated such behaviour to be prevalent at the work place and even more damaging, to come from their supervisors as in the interview below.

He (new male supervisor) kept complimenting me every morning I reported to work. He would lean on my desk and make so sexual remarks before proceeding to his office...he pressured me to go out with him even if it would just be once. After my refusal, he opted to threaten and deny me offs. This continued till I was transferred to a new department

after lodging complaints several times to the human resource department. (**An interview with 39-year old female employee**).

Females who had been sexually harassed reported feeling annoyed, upset, shocked, threatened, uncomfortable and nervous around the perpetrators. They indicated that these feelings have a negative effect of slowing down their labour input at the work place. Many respondents in the study observed that sexual harassment was an equivalent of work place bullying due consistent exposure to unbecoming behaviour from the perpetrators.

I feel like am being frustrated at the work place because the person who violated me by fondling my breasts was pardoned and installed as my supervisor. I can never be sure if what he refers back to me is out of malice or a true reflection of faults. Sometimes I feel like quitting my job but I have limited options; if I had a transfer the better. (**An interview with 36-year old female employee**).

Respondents also reported low productivity at work due to sexual harassment. This is because those who felt frustrated and anxious at times kept off their duty stations in order to heal. Moreover, the respondents observed that they were less satisfied and comfortable working under the people who had violated them.

I lost great interest in my work. I could not stand the sight of the man who had attempted to kiss me by force when we were leaving the office. I feared for the worst. I was just apprehensive at his sight and always lost the steam to work. I had to take sick off leave even though the doctors could find nothing to treat. My performance was at its lowest till he was transferred to a different department. (**An interview with 33-year old female employee**).

Key informants in the study observed that sexual harassment at the work place has multiple implications for the offended and the organization as a whole. At the individual side, sexual harassment results in psychological disorders such as stress and loss of motivation to work and inability to sleep, both of which have a negative bearing on the work input. Sexual harassment by

seasoned employees may present an institution the wrong way to new comers who may be forced to think that merit does not count in getting good appraisals and promotion but agreeing to provide sexual favours does. Consequently, it might result in high employee turnover and less job satisfaction at the place of work.

Sexual harassment basically denies an individual room to grow at the work place because those who cannot bear with such advances at times opt to quit and get themselves frustrated even the more. At times, it slows one's interest in the work and presents the employment institution as a place deprived of ethics and merit. **(An interview with an employee of 37-years working in the Human Resource Department).**

From the findings, it can be concluded that sexual harassment not only scales down the productivity of an individual's input at work but also affects the victim's psycho-socially with a spill-over effect on the reputation of the employing institution.

4.6 Case narrative

I had come to office at 7:30pm that evening. My night shift was due at 8pm and I knew the doctor that I was to work with as gentle and interactive person. The truth is that he had asked me in a joking manner for a coffee date before which I had turned down and instead opted to keep our conversations official and business oriented...he would occasionally tease me and touch me 'uninvitedly' which I greatly resented but he seemed not to give up. At that point I thought he was just trying to demonstrate the image of a man in a private set-up with a woman but my senses were clear he would not attempt anything further than that. In the late night we took a 30-minute break to have coffee...he came and leaned over me from behind and closely pressed his body on me, I warned him but he continued and told me that he had been waiting for such opportunity. I felt disrespected because he could not stop despite my warnings. Finally, he tried to lift my dress at which point I shouted to alert anyone in the lobbies nearby. He quickly pulled off and tried to warn me of dire consequences if I told the management what had actually translated...I could not hold back my tears, so the other personnel on duty took me aside from where I narrated my ordeal.. I was lucky that the hospital took up my case and dismissed the doctor on grounds of unethical behaviour after other colleagues joined in the case to report their encounters with the same person... (An interview with 43-year old nurse).

Narratives serve to indicate how sexual harassment occurs within the institutions. In the narrative, the male perpetrator is senior to the female victim who has to provide him with some degree of assistance during work. The forms of harassment manifested here range from uninvited touches, pressure for dates and attempted rape. These forms of harassment are seen to weigh down negatively on the informant as they make her feel frustrated and cornered within her work place. Moreover, there is a feeling of anxiety within the informant and this interferes with her labour input. The informant confirms a tolerating attitude that tends to justify the offender's actions as being traits of masculinity and thus acceptable. However, the impact of the consequences on her self-worth and work inputs pushes her to report the incident which again opens up a series of complaints from other females who had suffered the same fate.

In summary, the findings have illuminated the forms of sexual harassment that women employees at Kenyatta national hospital have experienced. More pronounced in the forms of sexual harassment is pressure for dates and uninvited touches coupled with sexual teasing. The findings indicate a tolerating attitude towards sexual harassment and thus the continuation of the trend within the institution. The findings indicate that victims of sexual harassment suffer psycho-social stress and generally feel less motivated to work.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the study objectives. Following the discussions, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Forms of sexual harassment

The first objective of this study was to describe forms of sexual harassment experienced by women employees at Kenyatta National Hospital. In the study, it was deemed that understanding the meaning of sexual harassment by the women victims is an important aspect in designing subsequent intervention programmes. This might be influenced by the environment in which survivors experience violence, the extent to which they have been sensitized on manifestations of sexual harassment and the lived accounts of colleagues that they have come across within the work environment.

Respondents in this study defined sexual harassment as being manifested in the way their colleagues of the opposite sex touched their bodies uninvited, talked to them in sexually suggestive way when uninvited, pressured them to go for dates or demanded sexual favours at work place. The findings serve to reinforce earlier conclusions arrived at by Stanko (1988), who posits that sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention. This study established that, the behavioral forms of sexual harassment at KNH included sexual teasing, jokes, comments, unwanted pressures for sexual favour or date, unwanted touching or pinching and unwanted

pressures for sexual favours with implied threats of job-related consequences for non-cooperation. The study, therefore argues that the meaning of sexual harassment can be narrowed or expanded across the identified behavioural forms dependent on the situations experienced by the victims. The study also established seductive behaviours involving inappropriate flirting and sexual advances without the threat of sanctions.

The study informants and experts observed that there is a new wave of using technology in perpetuating sexual harassment at the work place. These new surfaces involve the use of cell phones and the internet as platforms of communicating uninvited sexually loaded messages to colleagues at the work place. In specific terms it was observed that emails have a language and culture of their own and people who may never consider sexually harassing someone person to person, may be open to abusing the email system. The findings in the study concur with earlier survey findings by Amour (1999) on who found that 20 per cent of employers had received complaints from employees about improper or harassing emails. In the current study, it was reported that women were more likely than men to find email content offensive and that emails which amounted to a sexual proposition were perceived to be extremely offensive by women, whereas men appeared to find them rather enjoyable. Therefore, as technology matures, so does the platform for anonymous or intended sexual harassment of colleagues tend to grow in proportion at the work place as.

5.2.2 Perception of sexual harassment

The second objective of this study was to examine the perception of sexual harassment by employees at KNH. The findings are discussed across the following areas: need for promotion, masculine norms, organisational culture and hierarchy and dominance. The study findings suggest that, sexual harassment is perceived by some employees as a means of winning the trust of the supervisors and subsequent promotion. This belief therefore insinuates a tolerant attitude by the harassed employees who consider the outcome to be bigger than the stress of undergoing by one especially at the hands of people who hold key to promotion. These findings closely relate to the conclusion by Reskin and Padavic (1994) which point out that because sexual pressures are typically initiated by those in superior positions against the less powerful, women are more likely than men to be the objects of unwanted attention, especially in the workplace and sometimes this is seen as a way of buying promotion.

The study also established that people perceive the perpetrators as being more powerful and people who could, therefore, immaturely terminate their employment if they resisted their advances. This has meant that few incidents are reported because there is the fear of straining the relations between the juniors and their supervisors. This is because a majority of the perpetrators are usually concentrated in the higher echelons of the organization where they can hire and fire junior employees as they like. To this end, Hearn and Parkin (2005:8) have previously argued that that hierarchical and managerial power is a central theme in perpetuating sexual harassment at the work place.

The findings show that women are more likely to receive sexual harassment than their male colleagues. Indeed, the key informants were of the opinion that perceiving sexual advances as a masculine norm situates the women as central recipients with accommodating attitude. These

notions are constructed around the images of masculinity in the society, which describe men as adventurers and asexually aggressive beings with express authority to approach women of their liking. In similar studies, Messerschmitt (1993) argues that aggression is associated with male behaviour and acts of violence and crime are regarded as vehicles for men to demonstrate these behaviours hence the ease with which men commit sexual harassment. Moreover, Einarsen and Raknes(1997) argue that there are assumptions about what is good management. Historically, strong, masculine environments were seen as positive and desirable although this has changed considerably in recent years. In the context of this study, it was found that most offenders are males who dominate the supervisory and management positions within the hospital.

5.2.4 Consequences of sexual harassment

The third objective of this study was to describe the consequences of sexual harassment on the employees of the institution. This was discussed along a number of the following areas.

First respondents reported mixed consequences of sexual harassment that they had undergone. There was the feeling of embarrassment, anxiety, resentment and nervousness. These consequences were largely reported by junior employees who had not anticipated such behaviour to be prevalent at the work place and even more damaging. The kind of sexual harassment experienced by the women employees is commensurate with work place bullying that consistently attracts negative behaviours and attitudes from the male colleagues. In their previous examination of sexual harassment as bullying, Einarsen et al. (2003) argue that in most cases, a one-off negative encounter would not be considered to be bullying, albeit an unpleasant experience. In essence, the employees feel pressed to tolerate and accommodate behaviours that are unethical at the work place but still perpetuated by the seasoned senior employees under whom they fall.

Second is the psychological harm which is often suffered by those who have been bullied. Experiencing sexual harassment has been shown to affect people's psychological and physical well-being, as well as their employment situation. A study of self-perceived health and mental health among women flight attendants examined recent experiences of sexual harassment (Ballard et al., 2006). It found that they perceived their health as only 'fair' or 'poor' and reported psychological distress more frequently than former flight attendants.

In this study, some respondents reported symptoms that negatively impact on their health. For example, headaches, inability to sleep, nausea, and weight loss after consistent exposure to the perpetrators in the office were largely mentioned as consequences. Moreover, the feelings of anxiety, resentment and worthlessness have been largely reported in the study. These symptoms and feelings indicate a severe negative impact of sexual harassment on the employees at the work place at any given time. They, therefore, serve to add to what Gutek (1985) has linked sexual harassment to serious mental health problems such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. Similarly, these consequences point to the self-blame characteristics associated with harassment humiliation such as loss of self-confidence and decreased self-esteem, and reduction in the ability to perform in the jobs that are documented in the works of Fitzgerald (1993:60).

Third respondents in this reported low productivity at work due to sexual harassment. This is because those who felt frustrated and anxious at times kept off their duty stations in order to heal. Moreover, the respondents observed that they were less satisfied and uncomfortable working under people who had violated them. Similarly, the key informants in the study observed that

sexual harassment at the work place has multiple implications for the offended and the organization as a whole. At the individual level, sexual harassment results in an array of psychological disorders such as stress and loss of motivation to work and inability to sleep, both of which have a negative bearing on the work input. The findings serve to take the cue of previous studies not indicating that the impact of sexual harassment of employees on organizations is greater in terms of absenteeism, turnover and productivity (Hoel et al., 2003). On the other hand, Sczesny and Stahlberg's study (2000) of call centres found that the experience of sexual harassment decreased job satisfaction; decreased morale; damaged to interpersonal relations at work; and led to various economic losses (Fitzgerald, 1993:60).

5.3 Conclusion

The subjects in this study reported a deep understanding of sexual harassment at the work place. The study, found that pressure for dates, sexual teasing, sexual jokes and uninvited touches were found to be the most common forms of sexual harassment within the institution. The study also established that sexual harassment is mostly perpetrated by the male supervisors against their female juniors at work place and, specifically, those who have been newly recruited.

Perception of sexual harassment was found to cut across notions of masculinity, perception of offence as private affair and harassment as part of the organisational norm of seeking promotion. The secrecy that surrounds sexual harassment was established to dissuade reporting of the incidences sexual harassment amongst employees.

In the study, sexual harassment was established have multiple consequences on the employees as well as the institution. Psycho-social consequences of resentment, anxiety, fright, lack of interest in the job, stress and feeling of worthlessness were so pronounced. Moreover, there is low

productivity of labour and damage to the reputation of the institution when most employees feel out of place and less satisfied in the job environment due to sexual harassment.

5.4 Recommendations

- There is need to sensitize the employees on sexual harassment at the work place, its consequences and the discrete reporting procedure that can be used by the victims in case of abuse;
- The hospital management must instill stringent and timely measures to punish the offenders who take advantage of their superior positions to harass junior employees within the hospital set up;
- There is need for the government through the ministry of labour in partnership with legal bodies such as FIDA to train the employees on legal consequences of work place environment and available dispute resolution mechanisms;
- This study recommends a further study on sexual harassment of male employees that largely remains underreported within the work place environments.

References

- Adams, A. (1992). *Bullying at Work: How to Confront and Overcome it*. London: Virago Press.
- Armour K. (1999). *Offensive E-mail in Office in Increase*. *USA Today*. 4 May: 01B. pp. 24-41.
- Ballard, T. J., Romito, P., Lauria, L., Vigiliano, V., Caldora, M., Mazzanti, C. and Verdecchia, A. (2006) 'Self-perceived Health and Mental Health among Women Flight Attendants'. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 63: 33-38.
- Barling, J., Dekker, I., Loughlin, C. A., Kelloway, E. K., Fullagar, C. and Johnson, D. (1996) Prediction and Replication of the Organizational and Personal Consequences of Workplace Sexual Harassment. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 11 (5): 4-25.
- Brown P., E. Karen., A. Dill Michael and Collins B. (2005). Effects of Exposure to Sex-stereotyped Video game Characters on Tolerance of Sexual Harassment. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44(2008):1402–1408.
- Buck, W., M. Chatterton and K. Pease (1995) *Obscene, Threatening and other Troublesome telephone calls to Women in England and Wales, 1982-1992*. Research and Planning Unit Paper 92. London: Home Office.
- Collinson, David L. (1988) 'Engineering Humour: Masculinity, Joking, and Conflict in Shopfloor Relations', *Organization Studies*, 12: 181-199.
- Cowie, H., Naylor, P., Talamelli, L., Chauhan, P., and Smith, P. K. (2002). Knowledge, Use of and Attitudes towards peer support. *Journal of Adolescence*, 25, 453–467.
- Crocker D. and Kalembo V. (1999). The Incidence and Impact of Women's Experiences of Sexual Harassment in Canadian Workplaces. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 541–55.
- Dansky E. and Kilpatrick R. (1997). *National Violence Against Women Prevention*. Medical University of South Carolina: Research Center.
- Di Martino, V., Gold, D. and Schaap, A. (2003). *Managing Emerging Health Problems at Work — Stress, Violence, Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs, HIV/AIDS*. Geneva: ILO.
- Einarsen, S., and Raknes, B.I. (1997). Harassment at Work and Victimization of Men. *Violence and Victims*, 12, 247-263.
- Einarsen, S. and Mikkelsen, E. G. (2003) Individual Effect of Exposure to Bullying at Work. In Einarsen et al. (Eds.) *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace: International Perspectives in Research and Practice*. Taylor and Francis: London/New York.

- Equal Opportunities Review (EOR) (2006) 'Compensation awards 2005'. *Equal Opportunities Review*. 155: 5-26.
- Fitzgerald, L. F. and Hesson-McInnis, M. (1989). The Dimensions of Sexual Harassment: A Structural Analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 35: 309-326.
- Fitzgerald, L. F. (1993) Sexual Harassment: Violence against Women in the workplace'. *American Psychologist*. 48:1070- 1076.
- Fitzgerald, L. F., and Ormerod, A. J. (1991). Perceptions of Sexual Harassment: The Influence of Gender and Academic Context. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 15: 281–294.
- Glomb, T. M., Richman, W. L., Hulin, C. L., Drasgow, F., Schneider, K. T. and Fitzgerald, L. F. (1997). Ambient sexual harassment: An Integrated Model of Antecedents and Consequences. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. 71: 309–328.
- Gregory, J. (2002) *Picking up the Pieces: How Organisations Manage the Aftermath of Harassment Complaints*. Standon Ware: Wainwright Trust.
- Gruber, J. E. (1992) A Typology of Personal and Environmental Sexual Harassment: Research and Policy Implications for the 1990s. *Sex Roles*, 26: 447-464.
- Gutek, B. A. (1985) *Sex and the Workplace: Impact of Sexual Behaviour and Harassment on Women, Men and Organizations*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA:
- Gutek, B. A., and Done, R. S. (2001). Sexual Harassment. In Rhoda K. Unger (Ed.). *Handbook of the Psychology of Women and Gender* pp. New York: John Wiley & Sons. PP.26-41
- Haralambos M and Holborn M (2000) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*; London: Collins Educational Books.
- Hartmann H.K. (1981) The Unhappy Marriage. Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more Progressive Union, in L. Sergent ed. *Women and Revolution*, New York: Monthly Review.
- Hearn, J. and Parkin, W. (1995) *Sex at Work: the Power and Paradox of Organization Sexuality*. Revised Edition. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall/St Martin's Press.
- Hearn, J. and Parkin, W. (2001) *Gender, Sexuality and Violence in Organisations*. Sage: London.

Hoel, H. and Cooper, C. (2000). *Destructive conflict and Bullying at Work*. Manchester: University Press.

Hearn J. and Parkin, W. (2005) Recognition of Processes in Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Violence at Work: The move to Organizational Violations. In J. E. Gruber and P. Morgan (Eds.) *In the Company of Men: Male Dominance and Sexual Harassment*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Hoel, H., Einarsen, S. and Cooper, C. L. (2003) Organizational Effects of Bullying. In S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf and C. L. Cooper (eds.) *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace. International perspectives in Research and Practice*. Taylor and Francis: London/New York. Pp. 8-22.

Jackson, L. A. K. S., Ervin, P. D. Gardner, and Schmitt, N. (2001) 'Gender and the Internet: Women Communicating and Men Searching' . *Sex Roles*, 44 (5/6): 363-379.

Khoo, P. N. and Senn, C. Y. (2004) Not wanted in the inbox! Evaluations of unsolicited and Harassing Emails. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 28: 204-214.

Langley, T. (1999). *The First Decade of Sexual Harassment Research: Attributions in the Eighties*. Available at <http://www.hsu.edu/faculty/afon>. Retrieved on 20th March, 2012.

Lamertz, K. (2002). The Social Construction of Fairness: Social Influence and Sense Making in Organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23: 19–37.

LeClaire, J. (2005) Study: Men and Women use Internet Differently. TechNewsWorld, 29 December. Pp.33-52. Available at <http://www.technewsworld.com/story/48048.html> . Retrieved on 5th June, 2012.

Limpaphayom, W. and Williams, R. J. (2006). Perceived Differences in Sexual Harassment between Business School Students in the US and Thailand. *Cross-Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 13(1): 32–42.

Lui, T. Y. (1996). Sexual Harassment in the Chinese Workplace: Attitudes Toward and Experiences of Sexual Harassment among workers in Taiwan. *Violence Against Women*, 2(3): 284–301.

Mackinnon C.A. (1979) *Sexual Harassment of Working Women: A Case of Sex Discrimination*, New Haven' CT Yale University Press.

McCue, Margi L. (2008). *Domestic Violence : A Reference Handbook*, ABC-CLIO.

- Messerschmidt, J. W. (1993) *Masculinities and crime: Critique and Reconceptualization of theory*: California: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Miner-Rubino, K. and Cortina, L. M. (2004) 'Working in a Context of Hostility toward Women: Implications for Employees' well-being'. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 9 (2): 107-122.
- Nielsen, W. R. (1996). Perceptions of Sexual Harassment: A Female Office Professional's Perspective. *Employee Counseling Today*, 8(4): 6–14.
- Pollert A (1985). "Women, Gender and Wage Labour" in E. Gamarnikow et.al. *Gender, Class and Work*, Gower Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Ragins, B. R. and Scandura, T. A. (1995). Antecedents and correlates of sexual harassment: A test of competing hypotheses. *Sex Roles*, 32: 429-45.
- Rayner, C., Hoel, H. and Cooper, C. L. (2002). *Workplace Bullying: What We Know, Who Is To Blame, and What Can We Do?* London: Taylor and Francis.
- Reskin F.B and Padavic I. (1994). *Women and men at work*. Pine Forge Press.
- Rutter, P. (1996) *Sex, power and boundaries*. New York: Bantam.
- Szczesny, S. and Stahlberg, D. (2000). Sexual harassment over the Telephone: Occupational Risk at Call Centres. *Work and Stress*, 14 (2): 121-136.
- Smolensky, E. and Kleiner, B. H. (2003). How to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. *Equal Opportunities International*, 22(2): 59- 66.
- Soewita, S. and Kleiner, B. H. (2000). How to monitor electronic mail to discover sexual harassment. *Equal Opportunities International*, 19(6/7): 45-47.
- Stanko, E (1992). Wife Battering: All in the Family. In A. Giddens (Ed). *Human Society*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Till, F. J. (1980). *Sexual harassment: A report on the sexual harassment of students*. Washington, DC: National Advisory Council of Women's Educational Programs.
- Terpstra, D. E. and Cook, S. E. (1985). Complainant characteristics and reported behaviors and consequences associated with formal sexual harassment charges. *Personnel Psychology*, 38: 559–574.

Tyler, T. R. (2002). Is the Internet Changing Social Life? It Seems the More Things Change, The more they stay the Same. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58: 195-205.

Quine, L. (1999). Workplace bullying in NHS Community Trust: Staff Questionnaire Survey. *British Medical Journal*, 318, 228–232.

Woodzicka, J.A. and LaFrance, M. (2001). Real Versus Imagined Gender Harassment. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57: 15-30.

Appendix 1: Consent Form

Hello, my name is Getter Wasilwa an M.A. student in Gender and Development at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting research on sexual harassment in this. You have been conveniently chosen to participate in the study as an employee of KNH. I want to assure you that all your answers will be kept strictly in secret. To this extent, I will not keep a record of your name or address or any leading identification. You have the right to stop the interview at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. There is no right or wrong answer in this research. Some of the topics may be difficult to discuss, but many survivors have found it useful to have the opportunity to talk. Your participation is completely voluntary but your experiences could be very helpful in mainstreaming protection within the hospital working environment. The interview takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. Do you agree to be interviewed?

Please sign here as indication of your consent

Sign _____

Date _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 2: individual in-depth interviews schedule

Hello, my name is Getter Wasilwa, a Master of Arts degree student in Gender and Development, University of Nairobi. I am conducting research on sexual harassment in this. You have been conveniently chosen to participate in the study as an employee of KNH. I want to assure you that all of your answers will be kept strictly in secret. To this extent, I will not keep a record of your name or address or any leading identification documents. You have the right to stop the interview at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. There is no right or wrong answer in this research. Some of the topics may be difficult to discuss, but many survivors have found it useful to have the opportunity to talk. Your participation is completely voluntary but your experiences could be very helpful to in mainstreaming protection within the hospital working environment. The interview takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. Do you agree to be interviewed?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Demographic characteristics

Age _____

Length of service at the institution _____

Nature of engagement (permanent/contract)

Income level _____

Position _____

Working hours (Day/night) other (specify) _____

Experience of sexual harassment at workplace

- i. What is your understanding of sexual harassment?
- ii. Are there reported incidents of the same at your workplace?
- iii. What are the major drivers and/or causes of sexual harassment at your workplace?
- iv. Who are the major aggressors and victims between men and women at your workplace?
- v. What is the relationship between men and women and sexual harassment at workplace ?
- vi. Is there fear of offending a colleague and continued sexual harassment?
- vii. Is sexual harassment a tool for seeking promotion between superiors and their juniors?
- viii. What systems have been put in place for reporting incidents of sexual harassment and their effectiveness?
- ix. How has sexual harassment affected you input at work?

Appendix 3: Key Informant Interviews Guide

- i. How is sexual harassment manifested at the workplace ?
- ii. What are the major causes of sexual harassment at the workplace?
- iii. Are there gender differences between perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment at the workplace?
- iv. How does sexual harassment impact on one's input at work?
- v. What are the policy issues developed to mitigate such harassments at workplace?
- vi. Are there certain loopholes in the policy implementation to perpetuate this kind of harassment?
- vii. What is your assessment of the victims' knowledge of redress mechanisms in place?