

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Objective**

The objectives of this study were to investigate the prevalence of violence among psychiatric patients in Hong Kong and to investigate the risk factors related to violent behaviour. In addition, this study also explored the nature and targets of violence committed by psychiatric patients.

### **Method**

This was a retrospective case notes study of psychiatric patients admitted to the in-patient psychiatric units of the New Territories East Cluster (NTE) of Hong Kong within the period from 1 January 2005 to 31 March 2005. The case notes of 515 patients, aged between 18 and 65, with diagnosable psychiatric disorders were studied. Patients were divided into 'with violent behaviour' and 'without violent behaviour' groups. These two groups were then compared for socio-demographic and psychopathological variables.

### **Results**

The prevalence of violent behaviour within 4 weeks before the index admission was 18.6%. Patients of older age and under the care of community psychiatric nurses were found to be associated with violence. Specific clinical variables, including being diagnosed with psychotic disorders, having persecutory delusion and agitation were associated with violence. Among the victims, parents and spouse were the main targets of violence.

## **Conclusion**

The prevalence of violent behaviour in the present study was 18.6% which was comparable to other similar studies conducted in western countries. Associated risk factors were identified and preventive measures could be implemented accordingly.