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The Development of Violence Research in Psychiatric Nursing: A Bibliometric Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Background: There is a growing emphasis on violence-related research in psychiatric nursing, with an annual increase rate of 2.12% in publications and the highest number of publications occurring in 2024. This trend underscores the escalating importance of addressing violence in mental health settings.

Aim: This study aims to demonstrate the quantitative and qualitative features of violence publications in the field of psychiatric nursing from a bibliometric perspective. Web of Science was used during the research.

Methods: This study employed bibliometric analysis, a methodological approach for delineating the scope of information and assessing productivity within a specific domain. The data were searched with the keyword combination ‘violence and psychiatric nursing’, including studies published until December 2024, the study date, without a time limit.

Results: In this study, 464 violence research/reviews in the field of nursing were identified between 2001 and 2025, and the research was completed with 438 violence studies in line with the exclusion criteria. 1493 authors wrote 390 research and 48 review/systematic review articles, with an average of 22.14 citations for each publication. Most were published in 2024.

Discussion: There is an apparent increase in the involvement of psychiatric nurses in studies pertaining to violence. It is proposed that nursing professionals should undertake further research to investigate violence processes and develop ethically sound approaches to patients and healthy individuals, taking into account biopsychosocial factors.

Implications for Practice: These findings collectively suggest that while progress is being made in understanding and addressing violence in psychiatric nursing, there remains a critical need for ongoing research, policy development and practical interventions to ensure the safety and well-being of both nurses and patients in mental health settings.

1 | Introduction

Violence is conceptualised as physical, psychological, sexual, economic harm or developmental damage inflicted upon individuals, groups or communities as a consequence of the intentional utilisation, threat or neglect of physical force or power

(Englander 2017). Violence within mental health settings constitutes a significant issue. Numerous studies indicate the prevalence of violence in these environments. In Australia, 9% of incidents reported in health services involve physical violence or verbal assault, with this rate increasing to 16% in emergency services and 28% in mental health units (Benveniste et al. 2005).

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A study conducted in Ireland revealed that nurses frequently experience verbal assaults in mental health services (Maguire and Ryan 2007).

In this context, violence constitutes a significant issue that jeopardises the physical and psychological well-being of mental health nurses, diminishes the quality of patient care and escalates organisational costs (Itzhaki et al. 2018). Mental health nursing plays a crucial role in the care of individuals with mental health disorders; however, it is also one of the fields in which occupational risks are experienced most acutely (Jones et al. 2017). Kobayashi et al. (2020) elucidated the physical ramifications of violence perpetrated against mental health nurses, encompassing injuries and chronic pain, as well as the psychological sequelae, including post-traumatic stress disorder and burnout (Kobayashi et al. 2020). Reports from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2011, 2022) and the International Labour Organization (2024) indicate a significant rise in third-party violence against workers, particularly in sectors such as health and social services, in recent years (EU-OSHA 2011, 2022; ILO 2024). During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers encountered significant stigmatisation. A systematic review conducted by Saragih et al. (2022) revealed that 43% of healthcare workers experienced such stigmatisation during this period. This stigmatisation can manifest in various forms, including being perceived as hazardous, experiencing social distancing and being viewed as providing inadequate care (Rivera-Segarra et al. 2019). Although violence against healthcare workers is recognised as a priority issue in global health systems, the interdisciplinary nature and clinical implications of this phenomenon in the context of mental health nursing have yet to be examined from a comprehensive perspective (Jang et al. 2022). Furthermore, incidents of violence compromise the therapeutic relationship between patients and healthcare professionals, thereby diminishing the quality of care provided (Purcell et al. 2017). Specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an increase in aggressive behaviours among psychiatric patients, thereby elevating the risk of nurses' exposure to violent incidents (Cybulska et al. 2023; Lim et al. 2023). Nevertheless, this phenomenon has not been comprehensively addressed in the extant literature. While a study examining the 100 most cited articles on violence in nursing exists, there is a dearth of research investigating violence studies with a specific focus on mental health nursing (Yeşilbaş and Kantek 2023). Extant literature on mental health nursing and violence has predominantly focused on review and quantitative research methodologies (Konttila et al. 2018; McKinnon and Cross 2008). Bibliometric analyses are essential for incorporating violence management modules into nursing education curricula, enhancing evidence-based institutional policies and fostering interdisciplinary research. An examination of how the increasing open access publishing trends, particularly post-2020, are reflected in the field of mental health nursing will provide a methodological framework for future research. Bibliometrics is a discipline that provides a systematic analysis of studies in the literature utilising mathematical and statistical methods. This methodology offers a comprehensive overview of current research by identifying research trends, changes in disciplines and the most productive scientists and institutions (Aria and Cuccurullo 2017). Notwithstanding the absence of a bibliometric analysis specifically addressing violence in mental health nursing, the extant

literature suggests an increasing scholarly focus on related subjects, including workplace violence in healthcare settings, the therapeutic alliance in psychiatric care and violence risk assessment in acute psychiatric environments. Subsequent bibliometric studies focusing on violence in mental health nursing could provide valuable insights into research trends, influential authors and key themes in this field. This study aims to analyse the publications on violence in the field of mental health nursing from a bibliometric perspective. The objective is to elucidate the developments in the field and to establish a roadmap for future research.

2 | Materials and Methods

2.1 | Design

This study encompasses a bibliometric analysis of violence-related publications in psychiatric nursing and utilises the bibliometric analysis guide developed by Donthu et al. (2021). Bibliometric analysis is a method used to map the scope of information and define productivity in a specific area (Rialti et al. 2019; Choudhri et al. 2015).

2.2 | Sampling

In this study, 438 violence studies published in the field of psychiatric nursing were examined ($N = 438$). Only research/review articles as the publication type and English as the publication language were included in the study. Those with publication types other than research/review articles or still in early access and with a publication language other than English were excluded.

2.3 | Data Collection

The Web of Science (WoS) database was utilised for this research. Access to WoS was facilitated through an independent and impartial internet network, and data were obtained. WoS is regarded as a significant source of data in scientific and academic research. Its high-quality, interdisciplinary coverage and comprehensive citation data render WoS the preferred platform for bibliometric analysis (Pranckutė 2021). WoS provides a comprehensive tool for quantifying scientific productivity, delineating research networks and evaluating academic impact. The selective nature of the platform enhances the credibility of research results, as it exclusively incorporates publications with high impact factors and established credibility (Birkle et al. 2020). Moreover, its standardised data structure, which facilitates the identification of scientific trends and intellectual frameworks, renders WoS an optimal resource for bibliometric analyses (Pranckutė 2021). Due to these characteristics, WoS plays a crucial role in scientific decision-making and is widely recognised among researchers. Data screening was not temporally constrained, and all data up to the date of the search were included in the initial screening. The literature search was conducted using the keyword combination 'violence and nursing' in the WoS Nursing category. The search encompassed studies published up to December 2024, which was the date of the

study, without imposing any temporal limitations. The literature search yielded 464 publications pertaining to violence within the field of nursing 5 ($n=5$) were excluded because they were published in languages other than English, and 20 ($n=20$) because they were not research or review articles. The study was thus completed with 438 publications ($N=438$). The PRISMA Flow Chart showing the publication selection process is presented in Figure 1 (Page et al. 2021).

In the process of publication selection, all bibliographic data from the WoS database were initially downloaded in BibTeX

format, subsequently uploaded to the biblioshiny programme, and subsequently converted into bibliometric data. At this stage, the studies were evaluated based on publication type and language, and those that did not fulfil the inclusion criteria were excluded. The bibliometric data file was exported in Excel format, with verification conducted to identify any duplicate entries. Furthermore, a random selection of publications from the dataset was evaluated for suitability in relation to the study's objectives, thereby finalising the dataset. Subsequently, the dataset was reloaded into the software, synonyms were consolidated, and the analysis commenced.

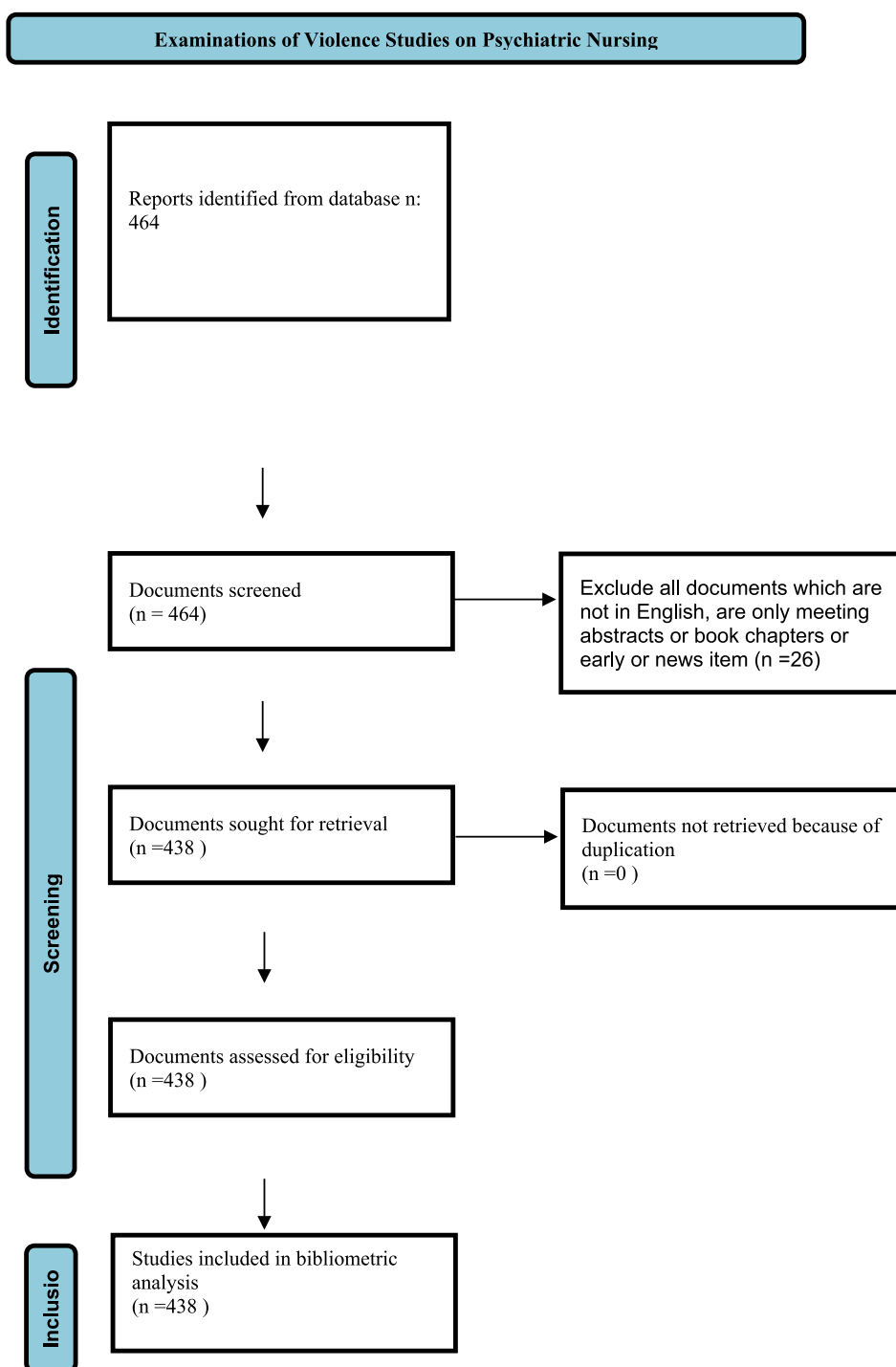


FIGURE 1 | Article selection process.

2.4 | Statistical Analysis

The biblioshiny interface in the bibliometrix tool of the open Access R program (R 4.2.2) was used to analyse and visually present the data. The R package and the bibliometrix tool are recommended for comprehensive scientific mapping analyses (Aria and Cuccurullo 2017). Information on the data analysis process is presented under four headings, and the details are presented below.

3 | Basic Information

This section presents information regarding the content, authors, sources, citations and journals of pertinent publications, with data expressed as numerical values, percentages or proportional figures (Table 1, Figure 2). A word cloud visually represents a topic through key terms, wherein frequently utilised words are displayed in larger fonts and diverse colours (Riggs and Hu 2013). This investigation examines the initial

TABLE 1 | Basic information on the publications.

Basic information	Results	%
Data		
Number of sources	69	—
Number of documents	438	—
Time range of publications	2001–2025	
The average age of publications	9.46	—
Annual growth rate of publications	—	2.12%
Authors		
Number of authors	1493	—
Authors of single-authored	38	—
Author collaboration		
Co-author per document	4.19	
International co-authorship		19.63
Publication content		
Number of keywords used in publications	1.511	
Number of sources used in publications	440	
Publication type		
Research paper	390	89.041
Review	48	10.959
Citations		
Average number of citations in each publication	22.14	—
Countries of the top five most active principal authors in the field		
United States of America	109	24.9
United Kingdom	56	12.8
Australia	45	10.3
China	34	7.8
Canada	27	6.2
Top five journals with the most publications in the field		
<i>International Journal of Mental Health Nursing</i>	64	14.612%
<i>Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing</i>	57	13.014%
<i>Archives of Psychiatric Nursing</i>	40	9.132%
<i>Issues in Mental Health Nursing</i>	28	6.393%
<i>Journal of Advanced Nursing</i>	28	6.393%

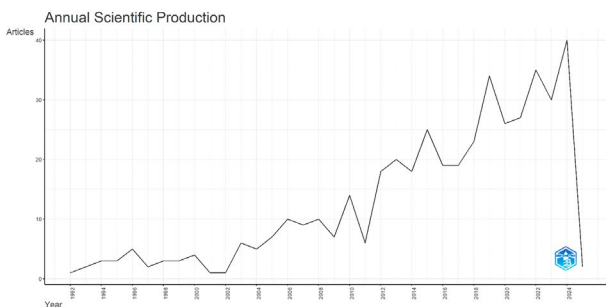


FIGURE 2 | Distribution of publications by years.

25 keywords provided by the authors, with findings presented in the text accompanied by frequency and percentage values (Figure 3). The thematic map illustrates a field's conceptual and intellectual structure and developmental trends (Jain et al. 2021). Nodes represent network clusters, with size indicating word occurrence frequency and location relating to centrality and density. Significant concepts encompass: **Centrality** denotes a theme's relevance, with higher values indicating greater importance (Arruda et al. 2022). **Density** reflects a theme's development, revealing internal coherence. **Motor themes** are situated in the upper right quadrant, characterised by high centrality and density, representing significant research topics. **Basic themes** in the lower right quadrant show high centrality and low density, signifying themes still in development. **Niche themes** in the upper left quadrant indicate developed but isolated topics. **Emerging or declining themes** in the lower left quadrant show low centrality and density, representing fading or newly developing areas (Jain et al. 2021). In this study, 250 authors' keywords and the fast greedy algorithm were utilised to create the thematic map, with a minimum cluster frequency set at five and three levels per cluster.

3.1 | Ethical Considerations

As this study does not directly involve human or animal subjects, ethical approval is not required. The research utilised secondary data.

3.2 | Limitations of the Work

The limitations of this study encompass its reliance on publications within the WoS database, its focus on journals in the field



FIGURE 3 | Author's keywords word cloud.

of psychiatric nursing, its constraints regarding the WoS nursing category, the type and language of publications, and the temporal scope of the search results. Investigations conducted across diverse databases, at varying time points, in multiple languages and encompassing alternative publication types may yield disparate outcomes.

4 | Results

In this study, 438 ($N = 438$) articles were examined. Their publication years were between 2001 and 2025. The average publication age was 9.46, and the annual increase rate was 2.12%. A total of 1493 authors wrote 390 research ($n = 390$) and 48 review/systematic review articles ($n = 48$), with an average of 22.14 citations for each publication. Most publications were published in 2024 ($n = 40$). The country with the highest number of principal authors of nursing publications on violence was the United States of America (24.9%) (Table 1, Figure 2).

The *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* (13.014%) is one of the journals that publish the most articles on violence.

In the word cloud showing 'author keywords' used by the authors, the prominent keywords were violence ($n = 108$, 7.14%), aggression ($n = 85$, 5.62%), mental health ($n = 48$, 3.17%) and nursing ($n = 4$, 3.17%). These were followed by psychiatric nursing ($n = 42$, 2.77%) (Figure 3).

According to the author's keywords thematic map (Figure 4), the keywords in the nodes are the network clusters with the highest rate of co-occurrence among themselves in publications. Accordingly, 'violence, mental health nursing, workplace violence' is the cluster with the highest cooccurrence, centrality and density. The clusters in the motor themes section are the most studied subjects in the field and are the motor themes. The 'violence, aggression and mental health' keywords, the basic themes, continue to develop in the field. This cluster, which is the basic theme, is accompanied by the 'mental health nursing, risk assessment, in patient' clusters. In addition, the keyword 'resilience wellbeing', 'forensic psychiatry, physical restraint', 'restraint seclusion safety' are niche themes that refers to a developed but isolated workspace.

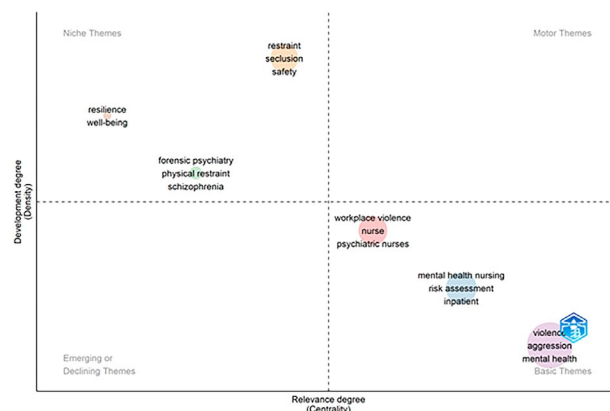


FIGURE 4 | Author's keywords thematic map.

5 | Discussion

This study has systematically elucidated the primary trends, salient themes and developmental trajectories in the field of violence within mental health nursing through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of relevant publications. The findings are consistent with the extant literature and offer novel contributions to the field. Violence in nursing services persists as a significant issue that nurses frequently encounter in their professional practice. Recent studies indicate that nurses are subjected to high rates of verbal, physical and psychological violence perpetrated by patients and their relatives (Zhang et al. 2017).

The effects of violence on nurses encompass significant psychological consequences, including burnout syndrome, anxiety, depression and professional dissatisfaction (Jang et al. 2022; Spector et al. 2014). This situation adversely impacts both the health of nurses and the quality of patient care. In this study, the annual rate of increase in the number of publications on violence (2.12%) and the highest number of publications in 2024 indicate that violence is gaining increasing significance in the field of mental health nursing. This trend is further corroborated by recent empirical investigations. Notably, the study conducted by Odes et al. (2023) elucidates that violent incidents increased in psychiatric clinics during the post-pandemic period, and this phenomenon significantly influenced the research focus of scholars. This finding is of considerable significance for comprehending the challenges in mental health services and the long-term ramifications of the pandemic (Odes et al. 2023; Rabiou Abubakar et al. 2022). Healthcare professionals frequently encounter significant levels of stress, anxiety, depression and fear. Empirical evidence suggests that 25%–38% of healthcare workers exhibit symptoms of moderate to severe anxiety, 30%–34% experience depression and 30%–33% contend with traumatic stress (Huang et al. 2024; Pappa et al. 2021). Additionally, 65% of healthcare workers report moderate to severe emotional burnout, while 92% experience severe depersonalization (Pappa et al. 2021). Research provides substantial evidence of a high global prevalence of violence against mental health nurses; however, rates vary in different contexts. In a study conducted by Ridenour et al. (2015), it was reported that 20% of mental health nurses experienced physical assault, 43% were subjected to threats of physical assault and 55% encountered verbal assault within a single work week (Ridenour et al. 2015). Similarly, a study conducted in Switzerland revealed that 73% of nurses experienced verbal violence, 63% encountered violence against property and 28% faced physical violence within the preceding 30 days (Schlup et al. 2021). The findings indicate that mental health nurses frequently encounter incidents of violence in the course of their professional duties. The study by Lozzino et al. (2015) emphasises that violent incidents constitute a significant problem in psychiatric clinics and that these incidents pose substantial risks for both patients and healthcare professionals (Iozzino et al. 2015).

Among the countries of the primary authors publishing on violence in the field of mental health nursing, the United States was the most prolific contributor (24.9%). The high prevalence of violence-related publications observed in this country

is hypothesised to be associated with the prioritisation of comprehensive violence prevention strategies in nursing and mental health policies (Fricke et al. 2022). The investigation conducted by Somani et al. (2021) demonstrated that the implementation of 'Violence Prevention and Intervention Protocols' in the United States of America resulted in a significant enhancement of nurse safety and an improvement in the quality of patient care. The researchers posit that the adaptation of these protocols to health systems in countries that adopt them will contribute to addressing violence on a global scale (Somani et al. 2021; Yosep et al. 2023). The Occupational Safety and Health Act in the United States has significantly reduced workplace violence, and this legislative model serves as a reference for policymakers, particularly in developing nations (Ulrich et al. 2022).

Keywords such as 'violence', 'aggression' and 'workplace violence' that are prominent in the word cloud and thematic map analyses reflect the primary research foci of the field of mental health nursing. Mental health nurses are generally subjected to higher incidences of patient aggression compared to their counterparts in other clinical environments. Specifically, psychiatric nurses report experiencing all forms of patient aggression more frequently than medical and surgical nurses (Pekurinen et al. 2017). These data indicate critical areas of concern that align with research priorities at both global and local levels. These findings elucidate the systemic and individual challenges encountered by nurses working in high-risk environments due to the nature of mental health services and inform the discipline's priority research agenda (Van Godwin et al. 2023; Russell-Babin et al. 2023).

Globally, it is estimated that 20%–70% of nurses have experienced violence at least once in their professional careers (Boafo et al. 2016; Chowdhury et al. 2023). These rates are observed to be higher in psychiatric clinics; specifically, the frequency of aggressive behaviours increases due to acute psychotic symptoms, substance use disorders or impaired communication (Hilton et al. 2022; Yao et al. 2021). Research conducted in Turkey corroborates similar trends, indicating that between 50.4% and 86% of mental health nurses experience verbal or physical violence (Coşkun and Tuna Öztürk 2010; Kisa 2008). This phenomenon is attributed to localised systemic issues, including resource limitations, imbalances in patient–nurse ratios and insufficient institutional support mechanisms.

Ayal (2024) found that nurses were the most frequently targeted group for physical and sexual violence. Moreover, whilst anger is the most prevalent emotional response to verbal, physical and sexual violence among healthcare workers, the majority of these individuals do not employ any coping strategies to address such incidents (Ayal 2024).

In the study conducted by Spencer et al. (2023), the obstacles encountered by nurses in the process of reporting violent incidents are elucidated. The findings of the study reveal that nurses harbour concerns regarding potential negative repercussions following incident reporting and experience perceptual misconceptions and insufficient knowledge pertaining to the definition of violence and reporting procedures. Moreover, the absence of efficacious reporting mechanisms, which play a pivotal role

in mitigating incidents of violence, is highlighted as a systemic issue (Spencer et al. 2023).

In a study conducted by Abou-Abbas et al. (2023), the findings from interviews revealed that nurses who were exposed to or witnessed violent behaviour reported frequent occurrences of incidents ranging from verbal abuse to physical assault. The study's results indicate that multiple factors contribute to the prevalence of violence in hospitals, including patients' financial status, cultural beliefs and lack of medical knowledge (Abou-Abbas et al. 2023).

While nurses' positive approaches, such as empathy, calmness and confidence-building, are efficacious in managing aggressive patients, they encounter challenges including insufficient resources, priority management and the necessity for rapid intervention. These demanding conditions may increase nurses' propensity to exhibit limited tolerance and negative attitudes (Janzen et al. 2022). These findings elucidate the rationale for the cluster 'violence, mental health nursing, workplace violence' being identified as the 'motor theme' in the thematic map, indicating its status as a mature research focus within the field.

The concept of 'workplace violence' within the 'motor theme' section of the thematic map has recently undergone significant transformation, particularly with the integration of technology. A study on artificial intelligence-based early warning systems reported that algorithms analysing patient behaviour in real time can substantially predict the risk of violence, and that these systems enhance nurse safety (Tay et al. 2022). These innovative approaches demonstrate how motor themes contribute to sustainable research trajectories. Nevertheless, the concept of 'aggression', which remains isolated as a 'niche theme' in the thematic map, indicates methodological challenges.

The findings regarding niche themes derived from the bibliometric analysis in this study indicate that, despite substantial progress in comprehending violence within psychiatric nursing, there is currently an absence of concentrated attention on the core area (Tang et al. 2024). Nevertheless, niche themes remain interconnected with other concepts explored within the field (Baby et al. 2014). For instance, while resilience and well-being may not have been directly investigated in this context, their significance is well acknowledged in research on workplace violence and risk assessment in psychiatric nursing. An examination of the earliest articles in our literature review reveals a focus on psychiatric conditions, resilience and isolation (Harris and Morrison 1995; Madela and Poggenpoel 1993). In contrast, more recent studies have concentrated on issues such as aggression and risk assessment (Arenas et al. 2025; Colizzi et al. 2024; Spencer et al. 2024).

Research has demonstrated that investigations into the aetiology of aggression predominantly rely on quantitative data, with a notable paucity of qualitative studies incorporating the patient perspective (Kynoch et al. 2024; Chakraborty et al. 2022). This situation demonstrates the necessity of utilising mixed methods in future research. Studies have indicated that training programmes that enhance nurses' capacity to recognise aggressive behaviours early and address them with verbal communication techniques reduce the incidence of violence and strengthen the

patient–nurse trust relationship (Heckemann et al. 2015; Hallett and Dickens 2015). The bibliometric analysis conducted in this study systematically elucidates the conceptual and methodological evolution of violence-themed research within the field of mental health nursing and presents an interdisciplinary research perspective for future investigations.

6 | Conclusions and Recommendations

In this investigation, a bibliometric publication map encompassing quantitative and qualitative evaluations of violence publications in the field of mental health nursing was constructed. The United States of America was identified as the country with the highest number of primary authors in nursing publications pertaining to violence. Among the publications that feature the most articles on violence, the *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* stands out with 13.014% of such content. Upon examination of the word cloud generated from the 'author keywords' utilised by the authors, it was observed that the most frequently employed keywords were violence, mental health nursing and workplace violence. In the thematic map analysis, the keywords 'mental health nursing, risk assessment and patient' constituted the cluster exhibiting the highest association, centrality and density. This cluster represented the most extensively investigated topic, identified as the motor theme, followed by the clusters 'violence, aggression and mental health'. Furthermore, the keywords 'nursing' and 'qualitative research' among the principal themes indicate that developments in the field continue to progress.

It has been observed that mental health nurses are assuming an increasingly prominent role in violence-related activities. Given the rising incidence of violent behaviours in society, nurses, particularly those specialising in mental health, should receive more comprehensive training in identifying violent behaviours and implementing appropriate interventions. In this context, it is recommended that mental health nurses be encouraged to place greater emphasis on violence-related research and practice.

Author Contributions

Mustafa Durmuş: conceptualization, funding acquisition, conception and design of study, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing. **Deniz Pamuk:** conceptualization, funding acquisition, conception and design of study, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing. **Yusuf Durmuş:** conceptualization, funding acquisition, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing. **Aysin Çetinkaya Büyükbodur :** conceptualization, funding acquisition, data collecting, formal analysis, interpretation of data, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing. **Ayşe Okanlı:** conceptualization, funding acquisition, data collecting, formal analysis, interpretation of data, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing.

Ethics Statement

As this study does not directly involve human or animal subjects, ethical approval is not required. The research utilised secondary data.

Consent

The authors have nothing to report.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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