**THE EXPERIENCE OF YOUTH VICTIMS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE ATTENDING A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY**

**Abstract**

**Background:** The Western Cape Province of South Africa has the worst multifactorial crime problem in the country. It has the fastest growing crime rate in many crime categories, such as rape and gun related incidents. The experiences of the youth after a violent physical incident are unclear.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this article is to describe actions for the support of professional nurses at a community health centre to youth victims of physical violence in the Cape Flats.

**Methods:** A phenomenological, exploratory, descriptive, and contextual design was followed in this study. This study explored and described the lived experiences of youth victims of physical violence in terms of the support they received in a natural setting at a community health centre in the Cape Flats. Purposive sampling was used for the study, and data saturation determined the size of the sample, that was eight participants who visited a health care centre for follow-up treatment. Data was analysed using Creswell’s six steps of open coding.

**Results:** Main themes that emerged from the data analysis included: (1) violent incidents that had a negative impact on the participant; (2) participants applied defence mechanisms to deal with their trauma; (3) and participants experienced care and support either negatively or positively.

**Conclusion:** A recommendation of this article is the implementation of an in-service training programme to the nurses who care for the youth after violent physical incidents.

**Key words:** community health centre,physical violence, traumatic events, victims, youth.