

Enhancing patient safety culture in an acute general hospital by implementing team-based training in Crew Resource Management

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Objective: To enhance the patient safety culture among healthcare personnel of Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (PYNEH) through education and implementation of team-based crew resource management (CRM).

Methods: The CRM concept has been successfully applied from aviation to healthcare. PYNEH, a 1,600-bed general hospital in Hong Kong with more than 2,200 clinical staff and serving 0.8 Mn population, piloted CRM training for the Hong Kong Hospital Authority (which oversees all 41 public hospitals) in October 2009.



With the input from Hong Kong Government Flying Services, and overseas consultants from Safer Healthcare Inc., tailor made course materials were designed, based on incidents in PYNEH and in Hong Kong.



CRM Advocates were trained on human factors in healthcare as well as effective teamwork, communication, assertiveness, situational awareness, decision making, team briefing and debriefing. Feedback from participants was used to revise the curriculum in the first two months. Team based training would also be conducted in second phase.



Results: As at September 2010, more than 800 frontline doctors and nurses were trained. Post-course evaluation revealed 90% of participants satisfied with the program and over 80% stated that they would apply CRM skills in their workplace because they positively impact patient safety. In addition, 88% participants indicated that they would try one or two CRM tools in daily practice. Two designated CRM Teams (Surgery & Operation Theatre Team, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Team) were established in October 2010, to develop strategies on putting CRM into their daily practice through integrating teamwork and communication tools to address specific issues in diverse clinical settings. A checklist has been developed for conducting clinical observation to further evaluate the effectiveness of CRM training in December 2010.

Conclusions: To further its journey of building patient safety culture, PYNEH has successfully mobilized its own healthcare personnel to learn and introduce team-based training in Crew Resource Management within the hospital.

This project showed that, when motivated by the quest for patient safety and enhancement of practice, healthcare personnel respond well to training in situation awareness, teamwork and communications, which will be further enhanced to achieve consistently safe patient care. Following on the experience of the PYNEH pilot, the Hong Kong Hospital Authority is planning to roll out the training to all its 53,000+ staff in a phased manner to enhance the safety culture of all its hospitals.



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