

NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS

Ophthalmic surgery



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Non-technical skills refer to the human factors that may influence job performance, but which are distinct from the technical or practical skills required to complete a task. Non-technical skills can be broadly divided into two sub-groups: 1) cognitive skills (e.g. decision-making, situational awareness) and 2) social skills (e.g. teamwork, communication). Previous research has evaluated the non-technical skills of surgeons, anaesthetists and scrub nurses. However, to date these skills have not been applied to ophthalmic surgery.

Ophthalmic surgery is surgery performed on the eye or the area surrounding the eye. This type of surgery can be conducted under general or local anaesthesia, with local anaesthesia used most frequently. There are specific constraints on the behaviours of the surgical team present during eye surgery due to the majority of patients remaining conscious during the operation. Specifically there are acknowledged issues surrounding communication amongst team members with an awake patient present. These issues will be examined within the framework of non-technical skills during the current MSc project.

MSc project 2011 – 2012.

Non-technical skills in ophthalmic surgeons

The aim of this project is to adapt the existing non-technical skills taxonomy for surgeons (NOTSS: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/iprc/notss/>) to make it suitable for use with ophthalmic surgeons. In order to achieve this a task analysis including a literature review, observations and a series of semi-structured interviews (n = 14) will be conducted with consultant and trainee eye surgeons. The task analysis will be based around the non-technical skills identified for other surgeons (e.g. NOTSS), such as communication and decision making. The interviews will be transcribed and then coded to identify the eye surgeons' non-technical skills.

Publications

Azuara-Blanco, A., Reddy, A., Wilkinson, G. & Flin, R. (*in press*). Safe eye surgery: non-technical aspects. *EYE*.