

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

Hospital safety culture



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Organizational safety culture is created by a variety of factors including leadership style, organizational goals and safety norms and procedures.

Industrial safety culture has previously been shown to be linked with the number of recorded worker accidents and injuries. Within healthcare, safety culture has been linked to various patient safety outcomes, including medication errors and falls. The aim of this research project was to assess safety culture in Scottish acute hospitals.

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Safety culture in Scottish acute hospitals

Recent concern regarding the safety of patients in healthcare systems has resulted in the adoption of safety management techniques used in high-risk industries. One method is the use of safety culture questionnaires to survey workforce perceptions and attitudes towards safety which have demonstrated the influence of organizational factors on safety outcomes.

In the current study, a national safety culture questionnaire was used to assess safety culture in seven acute hospitals during 2009. A total of 1966 clinical staff completed a questionnaire that included the Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture. The main aim of the study was to develop an appropriate safety culture measure for hospitals and to use it to identify the organizational strengths and weaknesses related to safety culture within the sample of Scottish hospitals. The results illustrated that the Scottish Hospital Safety Culture questionnaire was suitable for this type of measurement. Culture factors where staff were less positive related to the organizational level, such as perceptions of staffing levels, senior management culture, commitment to safety as well as safety behaviours, safety outcomes and handovers across hospital units.

Publications

- Sarac, C., Flin, R., Mearns, K.J., & Jackson, J. (2011). Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture. Psychometric analysis on a Scottish sample. *Quality and Safety in Health Care*, 20, 842 – 848.

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- Jackson, J., Flin, R., & Sarac, C. (2010). Hospital climate surveys: measurement issues. *Current Opinions in Critical Care*, 16, 632 – 638.

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