

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

Senior charge nurses



Dr Çakıl Sarac (c.sarac@abdn.ac.uk)

Industrial Psychology Research Centre, University of Aberdeen

In 2009, the NHS Confederation published a series of papers (Future leadership) to stimulate the discussion on NHS leadership. The key points highlighted the long standing focus on the senior managers and called for a shift to leaders at all levels of the organizations. Especially, the need to establish leadership development as a core part of the line managers' role was emphasized (The NHS Confederation, 2009). However, the recent patient safety literature has not drawn specific attention to the leadership behaviours of senior charge nurses and safety-related outcomes. The focus of this project is on ward leaders and safety. The principal aim of this study is to identify the leadership behaviours of the front-line leaders (senior charge nurses) at the unit level (i.e. ward) and the secondary aim is to describe these behaviours and if possible to determine the extent to which they relate to the wards' safety and other performance metrics (e.g. safety-related behaviours, incident reports, infection rates).

Funded by SPSRN 2011 – 2012.

Leadership behaviours of senior charge nurses

Interviews were conducted (n=15) with senior charge nurses within acute hospitals in Scotland to identify the leadership behaviours they use in their role. The identified behaviours were categorized using an established leadership taxonomy (Yukl, Gordon & Taber 2002). In the second phase, clinical staff at the ward, i.e. staff nurses, auxiliaries, and the senior charge nurses anonymously rated the leadership behaviours of ward leaders using a standardised leadership questionnaire (Managerial Practices Survey, Yukl et al., 2002).

By systematically outlining these behaviours and linking these to safety outcome measures, this study will form a foundation for future studies to examine the influence of nursing leadership behaviours at the ward level. The findings of this project will provide data that could form the basis of a training programme targeting safety leadership skills based on the most effective leadership behaviours of senior charge nurses.

Publications

This project is currently running