

NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS

Anaesthetic Assistants



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Research indicates that approximately 10% of patients suffer an adverse event whilst in hospital and that half of these are potentially preventable. Many of these events have been attributed to a failure of practitioners non-technical skills, such as communication or team-work, rather than lack of knowledge about the disease concerned. Non-technical skills encompass the social and cognitive skills that are considered important to ensure effective and safe job performance in healthcare. In response to the reported adverse events, non-technical skill taxonomies have been developed as a training tool for anaesthetists (ANTS), surgeons (NOTSS) and scrub practitioners (SPLINTS).

In the UK, anaesthesia is administered under the supervision of a trained anaesthetist, with dedicated assistance from anaesthetic assistants. Anaesthetic assistants are important members of the surgical team and have the potential to minimise or contribute towards critical incidents. The aim of this MSc project is to analyse the use of non-technical skills by anaesthetic assistants in the peri-operative period. Currently there is no framework of non-technical skills specific to anaesthetic assistants, this research intends to contribute to the development of such a taxonomy.

Anaesthetic Assistants' Non-Technical Skills

Interviews with anaesthetic assistants and consultant anaesthetists to identify the non-technical skills used in theatre to assist the anaesthetist.

A literature search was performed with the NHS e-library, PubMed Medline, BioMed Central, Science Direct and Scopus which identified 4 papers of relevance but no existing taxonomy.

Currently semi-structured interviews have been performed with 22 anaesthetic assistants and 11 consultant anaesthetists in 4 Scottish NHS hospitals. Analysis is on-going.

Publications

This project is currently running.