



Tittel: What do health professionals think about patient safety?

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Sammendrag:

Patient safety is a main determinant of the quality of healthcare services. The literature shows that the occurrence of medical errors is quite important in countries where it has been measured. Various actions like legislative measures, financial, or educational measures may help, but they are not always effective in controlling the level of avoidable errors. That happens because patient safety is strongly related to the culture specific to healthcare organizations. This study is aimed at getting some perspective on the organizational culture in Romanian hospitals in regard to patient safety.

Objectives: the main objectives are (1) to identify the views of healthcare professionals about patient safety in Romanian hospitals and compare them with other countries, (2) to identify to which extent the views about patient safety relate to the specific organizational culture in healthcare, and (3) find out if there are differences in perceptions of professional categories about their own work and that of the clinical team.

Method: a survey was conducted, based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire was aimed at realizing a screening of the problem, to get some specific views of respondents from their work experience, and eventually to get suggestions on how to improve patient safety. The same questionnaire has been previously applied in four other countries: Australia, Singapore, Sweden and Norway. Overall views of hospital professionals from Romania were compared to those from the other countries. Also, views per professional categories — clinical vs. non-clinical staff, doctors vs. nurses, and senior vs. junior staff—were compared. Results: answers from 100 respondents from Romania indicate that patient safety is a major concern of hospital professionals, and it should be improved. Basically, they show as much interest and willingness to improve as observed in the other countries. This indicates that no major differences in the organizational culture exist in regard to patient safety. However, differences among professional categories have been noticed; for example, nurses are more aware than doctors on the need to take action for improving patient safety.

Conclusions: patient safety is a major concern of health policy in many countries. In Romania, this study shows concern of professionals about patient safety, although they are

facing many barriers such as inadequate leadership, lack of communication between professional categories, between senior and junior staff, and most of all with the patients. This is a problem of organizational culture, which requires complex, multi-level strategies, targeting a longterm change. Results of this initial study should be viewed as a baseline for a larger study.

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