

Inter-Professional Teamwork Challenges In the Emergency Room and Critical Care Unit

Intensive care units (ICUs) and Emergency rooms (ERs) are demanding fast paced environments where patient acuity and complexity can pose many challenges, especially with inter-professional collaboration and teamwork. ICU and ER teams consist of doctors, nurses, and many allied health professionals including, physiotherapists, dietitians, speech therapists, pharmacists, and social workers.

Teamwork focuses on shared decision making that may lead to conflicting points of view and inter-professional confrontation during the administration of critical care. Furthermore, there are inherent challenges in leadership and communication when prioritizing safe clinical care or the critically ill. As such, stability in these team dynamics is important as critical care can be a physically and emotionally stressful environment.

Researchers have developed workplace models of care to improve team cohesion, climate, decision- making and culture, that ultimately leads to effective clinical care of patients. Multidisciplinary teams need structured yet flexible hierarchy, developed training, skills and assessment tools, particularly in challenging environments such as the ER and ICU. Proactively addressing these challenges, healthcare professionals can reduce adverse events and improve patient safety, morbidity and mortality and reduce hospital length of stay. Importantly, enhancing inter-professional collegiality allows the team to achieve goal directed patient care that is centered around collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment to holistically address patient needs. The aim of this special issue is to explore teamwork challenges in healthcare workplaces and introduce models of care that may address barriers and identify facilitators.

Key- words: Teamwork; challenges; ICU; ER; training skills; teamwork models

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