The Role of Safety Coaches in a Culture of Safety
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Abstract
Safety Coach programs embed safety specialists from all disciplines to mentor others in safe practices. Coaches reinforce communication and teamwork to promote safety and prevent patient harm. Researchers indicate that safety coaches can contribute to a culture of safety at the frontline of care.

Background
- 2016 analysis: medical errors 3rd leading cause of death in the U.S.
- Estimated 250,000 deaths annually
- 2013 IOM report: $750 billion waste in 2009
- Establishing a robust safety culture seen as key first step

Theoretical Framework
Behavioral Theory: Safety Coaches reinforce safe behaviors
Influencing Factors: Understanding of role, time, belief in ability to coach
Sources of Information:
Coaching, Observing others coach,
Verbal appreciation from management, Feeling that work is contributing to safe care.

Discussion
How do safety cultures influence patient outcomes?
- Positive produce positive
- Negative linked to negative

What do Safety Coaches do?
- Reinforce Error Prevention strategies
- Mentor on the frontline of patient care
- Reinforce desired safety behaviors
- Give "Just in Time" feedback
- Provide consistent drumbeat of patient safety

What is evidence-based best practice for a Safety Coach program?
- Education and Training
- Ongoing mentoring

Implications and Application
Safety Coaches must be adequately equipped to serve in their roles.

References

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PICOT Question
In those serving as Safety Coaches in a Pediatric Acute Care Unit, how will the implementation of a formalized Safety Coach program, versus current practice, affect safety coach self-efficacy, role-related practices, and unit culture of safety over a six month period?

Project Design
Mixed-methods: Collected pre and post interventions
Qualitative:
Safety Coach focus groups
Quantitative:
Safety Coach Self-Efficacy Tool
Safety Attitudes Questionnaire
Number of coach interactions

Acknowledgement
Toni Karimian, MSN, RN-C, CPN, CPON