National Network Study of Operational Failures in Frontline Nursing: *Small Troubles, Adaptive Responses (STAR-2)*

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Highlights

• STAR-2 Study
  – Background
  – Specific Aims
  – Laboratory
  – Results

• Next Steps
ISRN Mission: To advance the scientific foundation for quality improvement, safety and efficiency through transdisciplinary research addressing healthcare systems, patient-centeredness, and integration of evidence into practice.

- Unique infrastructure for conducting improvement research—a *collaboratory for research*

- NINR/NIH-supported improvement infrastructure for a research network.
Catalysts

- Improving our work is our work.
- *Future of Nursing* calls for “...nurses to lead and manage collaborative efforts with ... other members of the health care team to conduct research and to redesign and improve practice environments and health systems.” *(IOM, 2011)*
- Lead with evidence of ‘what works’
Example of Missed Learning Opportunities

“We never told the pharmacy when we got a dose of medicine that was more than we requested. We just squirted out the extra because we figured they were busy, they had not intended to make the mistake, and they wouldn’t do anything about it anyway.” - Nurse Hosp #8

Tucker, 2008
Example of Missed Learning Opportunities

“…It was sad really because we weren’t letting them have the information so they could fix their own problems.”

– Nurse Hosp #8
Tucker, 2008
Study Background

- Failures occur about:
  - one per hour per nurse on hospital units and
  - 95% of problems are managed through workarounds. (Observational, Tucker)

- Detection of first order operational failures provides opportunities to fix problems and contributes to organizational learning.

- Frontline engagement produces better solutions
Small Troubles, Adaptive Responses (STAR-2): Frontline Nurse Engagement in Quality Improvement

BACKGROUND

- In frontline nursing, workarounds are a response to first order operational failures exposing patients to errors and creating inefficiencies in care.  (Hassmiller)

- Endemic shortages of nursing staff and difficult working conditions present substantial barriers on the path to improvement.  (Tucker)
Experts

Anita Tucker, DBA, associate professor, Harvard Business School, specializes in understanding the national response to frontline providers to improve patient care. She has found that many spend 70 percent of their day doing work-related things, leaving them very little time. "This represents a real loss to patient care activities they had wanted to do but didn't have time for," says Tucker.

"Go to the unit that wants to work on the problem and give them resources and time."

ANITA L. TUCKER, DBA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

Research Resources: Systems Change

To learn more about Anita Tucker’s research, consult the following references:


Web Events Update

Uniting Frontline and Leadership Capacity to Improve Patient Care
Wednesday, February 14, 2011
6:00 p.m. EST

Presenters will discuss how frontline clinicians and leadership can collaborate to improve patient outcomes. For more information, visit the RHN’s website at www.rhn.net.
Network Study of Operational Failures

1. Detect

2. Eliminate
Aims of STAR-2

- Describe first-order operational failures (defects)
- Investigate relationships among
  - Detection of first-order operational failures
  - Organizational context, and
  - Outcomes related to quality improvement

Results will guide redesign to decrease defects
Specific Aims of STAR-2

1. Describe the type and frequency of first-order operational failures detected by frontline nurses on their clinical units.

2. Examine the association between first-order operational failures that are self-detected by nurses and those that are detected by non-participant observers.

3. Explore the relations among frontline engagement (detection of operational defects and team vitality), work environment (culture of patient safety and excellence in work environment), and quality improvement outcomes (quality improvement activities, quality of care, and job satisfaction).
Research Approach

- Conduct in the ISRN “research laboratory”
- Multisite, cross-sectional, multivariate research
- 14 sites, 41 med/surg units, ~840 RNs
  - 4 Pediatric Hospitals
- Analyze data using descriptive, multivariate, and path analysis methods
# Quantification of Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Variable</th>
<th>Measurement Approach-Research Instruments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency and type of operational failures</td>
<td>STAR Pocket Card</td>
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<tr>
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<td><em>(Ferrer &amp; Stevens, 2010)</em></td>
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<td>Team collaboration</td>
<td>Team Vitality Instrument</td>
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<td><em>(Upieneks, et al, 2009)</em></td>
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<td>Hospital staff opinions about patient safety issues, medical error, and event reporting</td>
<td>AHRQ Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture (HSOPS)</td>
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<td><em>(Sorra &amp; Nieva, 2004)</em></td>
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<td>Work environment</td>
<td>Practice Environment Scale of the Nursing Work Index (PES-NWI)</td>
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<td><em>(Lake, 2002)</em></td>
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<td>Volume of QI activities</td>
<td>QI Action Scale</td>
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<td><em>(Adapted from Upieneks, et al, 2009)</em></td>
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<td>Quality of care</td>
<td>Nurse Assessment of Quality</td>
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<td><em>(Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, 2002)</em></td>
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<td>Overall job satisfaction</td>
<td>Visual Analog Scale</td>
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<td><em>(Schmalenberg &amp; Kramer, 2008)</em></td>
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## Small Problems in Providing Care Today

**Date:** ____/____/____  **Shift:** ______

**Unit:** __________  **Title:** ______________

**ID:** __________

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<th>Equipment/Supplies</th>
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The Improvement Science Research Network (ISRN) is a national, virtual laboratory for healthcare QI research.

The ISRN creates a robust research environment that brings together a network of academic-practice partners to collaborate on IS studies.

This unique platform is designed to accelerate the development and dissemination of IS in a systems context across multiple hospitals.

Using the ISRN Collaboratory, STAR-2 was designed to capture a national sample in order to obtain a larger database of operational failures and interacting systems-level variables.

Fidelity of the protocol is assured through the ISRN’s Coordinating Center.

Using ISRN’s unique infrastructure, STAR-2 is able to capture a large, national sample through multiple study sites that are associates in this virtual research network.
Protocol Implementation Kit

Frontline Nurse Engagement in Quality Improvement

A Network Study of the Improvement Science Research Network

Protocol Implementation Kit
Survey Packet

Frontline Nurse Engagement in Quality Improvement
A Network Study of the Improvement Science Research Network

STAR-2 Survey Packet
Data Collection-Plan

- Identical across all sites
- Supported though Coordinating Center
- Data aggregated via electronic database
- Collected 10 shifts over 20 days

Analysis
- Aggregate
- Site-Specific report
Regulatory-IRB

• 14 Sites
  – UTHSCSA IRB
  – 13 Sites – Independent Review
  – 1 site deferred to UTHSCSA IRB

• Approvals
  – 12 Expedited (Category 7)
  – 2 Full Board

• Consent
  – 11 sites required documented consent
  – 3 documented consent not required
Results

- 14 hospitals completed
- 716 RNs engaged
  - 85% of enrollment for 14 sites
- 3,902 pocket cards submitted
  - 5.53 cards per RN
- 24,014 operational failures reported
- 6,420 Equipment/Supplies – Most reported operational failure
- 4,396 Information/Communication – Second most operational reported failure
- 3,648 Other – Third most reported operational failure
- 6.25 failures per 12 hour shift
Discussion

• Frequency of operational failures occurring in med-surg units
• Frontline engagement, context, and quality improvement
• Satisfaction Rating: ISRN infrastructure is effective for conducting multisite improvement research:
  – Enthusiasm for engagement in rigorous research
  – Broad national representation
  – Clinical relevance
  – Rapid deployment
  – Rapid completion
  – Scale up and spread
This project was supported by

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