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A new Speak Up Tool to promote patient safety

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Introduction

Good team communication is one of the key areas that may help prevent sentinel events. Apart from the well-known check list and time out in surgical and procedural safety, WHO advocates several communication tools like SBAR, call out, check back and graded assertiveness to enhance team communication. While the two challenge rule in graded assertiveness was used to promote patient safety in Western societies, direct verbal challenges may create negative emotional response or even block patient safety messages in Chinese culture.

Objectives

1) PQRST is a standardized clinical communication tool innovated and advocated to improve speak up culture in NTEC 2) The second goal is to align Speak up tool (PQRST) with local communication training in NTEC to further enhance team communication in surgical and procedural safety .

Methodology

A work group of 7 Chinese clinicians was formed and synthesized the graded assertiveness concepts over a 3-hour meeting as an innovative Speak Up Tool PQRST. The mnemonic stands for P – address the person by name and rank, Q – raise a question, R – give a reason S – repeat verbal alert a second time if message not got across, T – call a third party to remind on safety issue. PQRST tool was shared and improved with feedbacks received from NTEC Operation Theatre staff and Surgical staff during several 2-hr interactive workshops on teamwork communication for patient safety. It was later advocated by some NTEC hospital departments as part of local patient safety training.

Result

In the most recent workshop evaluation with 37 participants in October 2013, the

feedback response was 78%. In ascending scale of 1-4, the evaluation results showed achievement of objectives 3.7, appropriate rundown 3.5, contents useful 3.7, contents understood 3.8, presentation satisfactory 3.9, AV aids useful and informative 3.8, venue satisfactory 3.6. Most participants expressed appreciation towards the interesting pictorial and video presentation and the speak up PQRST tool that would be applied in daily practice. There was request to run workshops for both message sender and receiver in surgical settings. In future, the PQRST Speak Up training modules for doctors and nurses would be further refined with video-powerpoints, bad and good practice demonstration videos, assessment by supervisors and online training at iLEARN and Q&S Dashboard platform at INTEC.