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Establishing a culture for patient safety – The role of education

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Summary

This paper argues that the process of making significant moves towards a patient safety culture requires changes in healthcare education. Improvements in patient safety are a shared international priority as too many errors and other forms of unnecessary harm are currently occurring in the process of caring for and treating patients. A description of the patient safety agenda is given followed by a brief analysis of human factors theory and its use in other safety critical industries, most notably aviation. The all too common problem of drug administration errors is used to illustrate the relevance of human factors theory to healthcare education with specific mention made of the Human Factors Analysis and Classification System (HFACS).



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Keywords

Patient safety; Education and training; Human factors; Safety culture; Clinical governance

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This article was written whilst Frank Milligan was on a part-time secondment to the National Patient Safety Agency.

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