

Surgeons face teamwork and leadership tests to cut mistakes

Smith, Rebecca . The Daily Telegraph ; London (UK) [London (UK)]23 Aug 2014: 12.

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT

Simon Paterson-Brown, consultant general and surgeon at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, said: "For many years now it's been demonstrated that avoidable complications and deaths still occur because of flawed learning behaviours and surgeons' poor understanding of the importance of nontechnical skills in operative performance; as a result training for future surgeons must encompass more than just clinical and technical skills.

FULL TEXT

TRAINEE surgeons are to be assessed for their ability to communicate under pressure, decision-making and leadership skills following concern that failures in these areas are putting patients at risk.

It is estimated that half of all "adverse events" in surgery are avoidable. There have been claims that surgeons' lack of ability outside purely technical skills could be contributing to mistakes.

Under new requirements set out by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, one of the main bodies that trains surgeons, all doctors will be formally evaluated as part of the national curriculum.

Ian Ritchie, the president of the college and a consultant trauma and orthopaedic surgeon, said: "We are committed to improving standards through education and training and by supporting research into human factors which may prevent or mitigate patient harm.

"We're proud to have developed the world's only behavioural marker tool for surgeons and are excited to see it adopted into the curriculum of all surgical specialties."

The new system is based on those used in aviation to test pilots' thinking abilities and although it has been in job interviews for surgeons this is the first time the skills are being formally evaluated through the national curriculum.

Under the Non-Technical Skills for Surgeons (NOTSS) doctors will be observed and analysed for their ability to make decisions, often with limited information and communicate under pressure.

Their ability to work as part of a team and how they deal with suggestions or concerns raised by more junior members of the team will also be taken into account.

Recent figures released by NHS trusts showed that 750 incidents, including operating on the wrong body part or

leaving instruments inside patients, have occurred between 2009 and 2012.

Such events are deemed as "should never happen" and are often blamed on surgical teams failing to work together properly.

Simon Paterson-Brown, consultant general and surgeon at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, said: "For many years now it's been demonstrated that avoidable complications and deaths still occur because of flawed learning behaviours and surgeons' poor understanding of the importance of nontechnical skills in operative performance; as a result training for future surgeons must encompass more than just clinical and technical skills.

"Other high-hazard sectors have recognised that technical expertise is not enough to ensure safety. NOTSS is both innovative and unique in that it was developed entirely by surgeons for surgeons, underpinned by psychologists experienced in studying human factors."

He added: "This approach is encouraging greater emphasis on identifying the skills necessary to maximise safe and effective management of patients and requires an appreciation of the role of non-technical abilities, defined as the cognitive and interpersonal skills that underpin technical proficiency."

Credit: By Rebecca Smith, Medical Editor

DETAILS

Subject:	Physicians
Publication title:	The Daily Telegraph; London (UK)
First page:	12
Publication year:	2014
Publication date:	Aug 23, 2014
Section:	News
Publisher:	Daily Telegraph
Place of publication:	London (UK)
Country of publication:	United Kingdom, London (UK)
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--Great Britain
ISSN:	03071235
Source type:	Newspapers

Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	1555353064
Document URL:	https://search.proquest.com/docview/1555353064?accountid=130472
Copyright:	Copyright (c) Telegraph Group Limited 2014
Last updated:	2017-11-21
Database:	ProQuest Central

LINKS

Database copyright © 2018 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)