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Inter-Professional Teamwork Challenges in the Emergency Room and Critical Care Unit

Maria Kapritsou

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EDITORIAL ARTICLE

INTER-PROFESSIONAL TEAMWORK CHALLENGES IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM AND CRITICAL CARE UNIT

Intensive care units (ICUs) and Emergency rooms (ERs) are demanding fast paced environments where patient acuity and complexity can pose many challenges, especially with inter-professional collaboration and teamwork. ICU and ER teams consist of doctors, nurses, and many allied health professionals including, physiotherapists, dietitians, speech therapists, pharmacists, and social workers.

Teamwork focuses on shared decision making that may lead to conflicting points of view and inter-professional confrontation during the administration of critical care. Furthermore, there are inherent challenges in leadership and communication when prioritizing safe clinical care or the critically ill. As such, stability in these team dynamics is important as critical care can be a physically and emotionally stressful environment.

Researchers have developed workplace models of care to improve team cohesion, climate, decision-making and culture, that ultimately leads to effective clinical care of patients. Multidisciplinary teams need structured yet flexible hierarchy, developed training, skills and assessment tools, particularly in challenging environments such as the ER and ICU. Proactively addressing these challenges, healthcare professionals can reduce adverse events and improve patient safety, morbidity and mortality and reduce hospital length of stay. Importantly, enhancing inter-professional collegiality allows the team to achieve goal directed patient care that is centered around collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment to holistically address patient needs. The aim of this special issue is to explore teamwork challenges in healthcare workplaces and introduce models of care that may address barriers and identify facilitators.¹

Healthcare professionals have their own perspectives and culture, which include their beliefs and behaviors. Professional attitudes have evolved over time, reflecting all historical and scientific changes. During the training, educational experience, and socialization process of healthcare professionals, common ideals, problem-solving methodologies, and language are overlapping. Consequently, increased specialization has resulted in health professionals becoming even more immersed in the information and learning of their particular professional group, especially in ICU environments. This health professional evolution sharpens the difficulties of effective interprofessional collaboration, particularly in ICUs and ERs. Understanding all the aspects of a team worker that influence professional culture can aid in the creation of instructional techniques that improve interprofessional collaborative practice and advance dialogue and communication, solving problems and providing quality healthcare services for patients.²

In recent decades, there has been an explosion of knowledge and information in the field of healthcare. Patients' care has gotten more complicated, requiring more specialization in all healthcare professions as well as in-depth investigation of concerns by each field. However, no single healthcare provider can address all of the complicated needs of a patient and his or her family. Interprofessional teams face the stress of altering healthcare systems driven by economic concerns and turnover of team members for a variety of reasons, in addition to the COVID-19 Pandemic Era and its challenges, which

has led to a scarcity of resources and the need for continual education. The Pandemic Era created the need for healthcare staff, as the addition of new team members might deplete the squad's energy. Individuals, in normal circumstances, interacted in a way that boosted their self-esteem. During times of conflict and stress, such as the COVID-19 era, the center of attention shifts. By withdrawing or changing interactions, the individual's dignity and self-esteem might not be preserved.³ There are many factors that influence inter-professional teamwork, like education background, specialization, dialogue promotion, and communication improvement, which can lead to successful teams. Working as part of a successful team can be quite beneficial in making overwhelming conditions bearable for oneself. Turning a negative experience for an individual into a great experience for a group.⁴

Professional teams are evolving at a constant pace. Meanwhile, the team is variable; the healthcare professionals differ by shift, both in terms of personality and number. The most crucial aspect of a team, however, is the recognition and respect that each member brings to it. Professionals are engaged on this occasion, and they feel highly valued and supportive of one another. This attitude is shared by their patients, who sense the staff's dedication to their care. Certainly, if these are the conditions in a team, there is a feeling of family among them, providing the best results for patient care and quality care.⁵

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Dr Maria Kapritsou

RN, MSc, MSHCM, PhD, Post doc

Chair of the Hellenic Perianaesthesia Nursing Organization

Chief Nurse of Anesthesiology Department, Hellenic Anticancer Institute, "Saint Savvas" Hospital, Athens, Greece

E-mail: mariakaprit@gmail.com