HUMAN ERROR IN ANAESTHESIA: WHO'S FAULT IS IT ANYWAY?

STATUS QUO IN ANAESTHESIA

Human error in anaesthesia is a complex issue with numerous contributing factors. The root causes for human error are often systemic and therefore harder to identify. In many, if not most cases, the culpability lies in the anaesthetist's environment.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

- Clinical outcome impact
- Financial impact
- Cost per patient
- Cost per hospital
- Cost per year
- Cost per death
- Cost per procedure
- Cost per error
- Cost per adverse drug event
- Cost per patient injury
- Cost per malpractice claim
- Cost per lawsuit
- Cost per death

CLINICAL OUTCOME IMPACT

- Problems in anaesthesia
- Incidents and accidents
- While reports suggest that it is mainly the anaesthetist himself/herself who is responsible for errors, more recent studies have thrown up a new perspective on who is at fault.
- James Reason rates the involvement of human error at 70 to 80% of anaesthetic critical incidents.

CAUSES OF HUMAN ERROR IN ANAESTHESIA

- Human factors
  - Inadequate communication
  - Haste/lack of precaution
  - Inadequate experience
  - Equipment design
  - Inadequate familiarity with equipment
  - Situational awareness
  - Distractions
  - Unforeseeable events

- Environment factors
  - Tighter health care budgets
  - Understaffing
  - Workforce shortage
  - Overloading the workforce
  - Alarm fatigue
  - Medical errors
  - Workload
  - Unplanned events
  - Work overload

- System factors
  - Human errors
  - Equipment failures
  - Environmental failures
  - Organizational failures
  - Legal failures

- Break the silence that has surrounded medical errors and health care professionals who face malpractice claims during their career. Physicians are human beings who make honest mistakes.

THE 2ND VICTIM

The impact that errors have on patient outcome. However, the impact that errors have on the health care providers themselves should not be overlooked.

THE IMPACT ON HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

- Guilt, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder
- Medical malpractice claims
- Fatigue
- Alarms
- Workload
- Unplanned events
- Work overload
- Staffing
- Environmental failures
- Legal failures
- Human errors
- Equipment failures
- Organizational failures
- Numerous other issues

Leading causes of death in the U.S. from 2010-2014:

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Medical error
- COPD
- Suicide

To err is human, to forgive divine.

An essay on criticism by Alexander Pope.