Patient Safety Concerns among Emergency Medical Staff and Patients

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ABSTRACT

Recently, much of the world, including the World Health Organization, the European Union and many North American countries, have emphasized patient safety. Around the same time, Taiwan’s Department of Health (DOH) devoted a significant amount of resources to better the quality of medical treatment for their patients. This study explores perceptions of and attitudes towards patient safety among medical staff and patients in emergency departments. Analysis results indicate that medical staff and patients significantly differ in perceptions and attitudes. Results of this study provide a valuable reference for governmental authorities and hospital managers in formulating policies aimed at clarifying perceptions and attitudes regarding patient safety among medical staff and patients in emergency departments.

Keywords: Attitudes, Emergency, Patient Safety, Perceptions

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Motivation and Background of Research

The World Health Organization, the European Union and North American countries have heavily emphasized patient safety recently. Correspondingly, the Department of Health (DOH) in Taiwan has devoted considerable resources to enhancing the quality of medical treatment, as evidenced by establishment of a Patient Safety Committee in February 2003. The following year, the Committee established definitions of patient safety substantives, related forums and training courses, as well as supervisory controls. Five patient safety strategies have subsequently been adopted, avoiding errors in prescribing medicine, implementing infection control, eliminating wrongful surgeries based on...
faulty diagnosis, avoiding patient identification errors and preventing patient falls. Public health bureaus wide have prioritized these objectives as essential to effectively managing medical organizations and promulgating enhanced patient safety among the general public, medical staff and other hospital employees. Given recent researchers emphasized medical errors and quality of care (Khatri, Baveja, Boren, & Mammo, 2006) or patient safety structure and organize (Gaba, 2000), moreover, current global trends aimed at patient safety, Taiwan has begun emphasizing pertinent issues such as patient rights. As emergency medical treatment in Taiwan continues to develop rapidly, providing quality and sufficient services depends on the ability to clearly define patient rights during emergency treatment. This study attempts to provide hospital authorities and medical staff with a valuable reference for effectively addressing this issue.

Patient safety studies rising recently, e.g. Armstrong and Laschinger research in 2006 (Armstrong & Laschinger, 2006), Stokowski value in 2006 (Stokowski, 2006), Smith focus in 2007 (Smith, 2007). Patient safety researches largely focus on reporting faulty treatment and clarifying patient rights. However, exactly how emergency medical staff should view patient safety has seldom been addressed despite the relevance of this subject in facilitating communication between medical staff and patients. Clarifying the differing roles of medical staff and patients with respect to the patient’s role in patient safety can benefit interaction between the emergency treatment department and patients, ultimately increasing patient benefits. Given the wide variation in emergency medical treatment globally, this study attempts to determine whether medical staff and patients are aware of patient rights and responsibilities so that patient safety procedures are executed. Of priority concern are the perceptions of and attitudes toward emergency medical staff and patients in relation to patient safety concerns. Results of this study provide a valuable reference for governmental authorities and hospital management involved in establishing practical measures.

1.2. Hypotheses

The above issues and objectives lead to the following hypotheses that can be proven statistically:

1. Probe a variable into different specialty of the emergency department patient population, we bring up the following hypothesize whether there is a difference in the perception of “patient s’ participation in patient safety”:
   ○ H1: Different emergency patient population specialty values markedly differ in the perception of patient safety.

2. Probe a variable into different specialty of the emergency department patient population, we bring up the following hypothesize whether there is a difference in the attitude of “patient s’ participation in patient safety”:
   ○ H2: Different emergency patient population specialty values markedly differ from each other in terms of attitudes towards patient safety.

3. Probe a variable into different specialty of the emergency department medical staff population and service, we bring up the following hypothesize whether there is a difference in the perception of “patients’ participation in patient safety”:
   ○ H3: Different specialty values in emergency medical staff population markedly differ in the perception of patient safety.
   ○ H4: Different values of emergency medical staff characteristics markedly differ in the perception of patient safety.

4. Probe a variable into different specialty of the emergency department medical staff population and service, we bring up the following hypothesize whether there is
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