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Safety Culture Assessment in Primary Care Settings in Greece

Introduction

Safety culture is considered one of the most crucial premises for further development of patient care in healthcare. The aim of this study was to set a reference evaluation for the patient safety culture in the primary health sector in Greece, based on health professionals' perceptions.

Materials and Methods

A specialized tool - the Medical Office Survey on Patient Safety Culture (MOSPSC) - developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), validated, to evaluate Greek primary care settings in terms of safety culture and quality. Factor analysis determined the correlation of the factor structure in Greek data with the original questionnaire. The relation of the factor analysis with the Cronbach's coefficient alpha was also determined, including the construct validity.

Results

Eight composites with 34 items were extracted by exploratory factor analysis, with acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients and good construct validity. Consequently, the composites jointly explained 62% of the variance in the responses. Five items were removed from the original version of the questionnaire. As a result, three out of the eight composites were a mixture of items from different compounds of the original tool. The composition of the eight factors was like that in the original questionnaire. A stratified random sampling with a 62% response rate ($n = 459$), conducted in primary care settings in Greece (February to May 2020). The study participants were health professionals who interacted with patients from 12 primary care settings in Greece. The most highly ranked domains were: "Teamwork" (82%), "Patient Care Tracking/Follow-up" (80% of positive scores), and "Organizational Learning" (80%); meanwhile, the lowest-ranked ones were: "Leadership Support for Patient Safety" (62%) and "Work Pressure and Pace" (46%). The other domains, such as "Overall Perceptions of Patient Safety and Quality" (77%), "Staff Training" (70%), "Communication about Error" (70%), "Office Processes and Standardization" (67%), and "Communication Openness" (64%), ranked somewhere in between.

Conclusions

The MOSPSC tool in Greek primary healthcare settings can be used to assess patient safety culture in facilities across the country. From the study, the patient safety culture in Greece was positive, although few composites showed a negative correlation and needed improvement.

Keywords: quality in healthcare, patient safety, patient safety culture, medical errors, Primary Care

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Biography

Antonakos Ioannis is a Medical Physicist at the Second Department of Radiology of the Medical School of the University of Athens, and in the University General Hospital “ATTIKON”. He holds the position of Laboratory and Teaching Staff of the Medical School of the University of Athens. He is a graduate of the Department of Physics of the University of Patras. He obtained his postgraduate degree in Medical Physics from the Medical School of the University of Athens and completed his doctoral thesis at the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. He also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Unit Administration. He has worked as a radiation protection consultant in Radiology and Nuclear Medicine Departments of the Public and Private Sectors. His work experience and scientific interests are in the Physics of Radiology and include, among others: patient dosimetry, optimization of imaging protocols and quality assurance in Radiology. He is a certified expert in Medical Physics and Radiation Protection as well as a member of the Hellenic Association of Medical Physicists.