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### Improving Healthcare Team Communication

Building on Lessons from Aviation and Aerospace  
Christopher P. Nemeth

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Communications research in aviation is widely regarded by many in the healthcare community as the 'gold standard' to emulate. Yet healthcare and aviation differ in many ways, as do the vital communications shared among members of clinical teams. Aviation team communication should, then, be understood in terms of what lessons will benefit those who work in healthcare.

In *Improving Healthcare Team Communication*, renowned experts provide insights from 'sharp end' operator research in high-hazard sectors that shed light on the performance of cognitive tasks including resource availability assessment, allocation, anticipation, prediction, trade-off decisions, speculation and negotiation. The book reports on recent field research to address what is known, and what needs to be learned, about team communication among operators.

Students, clinicians and healthcare managers can find answers in it to the questions they face daily. How can healthcare information be better shared? What can we expect from its improvement, and how do we get there? Lessons learned from team communication research and experience in aviation and healthcare will point the way to improved patient safety.

#### Contents

Foreword; Preface; The context for improving healthcare team communication, Christopher P. Nemeth; The social construction of healthcare teams, Eric M. Eisenberg. Part 1 Sources of Team Communication: Improving healthcare communication: lessons from the flightdeck, Judith Orasanu and Ute Fischer; Crew resource management (CRM) in the aviation industry, David M. Musson. Part 2 Advances in Team Communication: Safety event reporting systems: problem detection in distributed systems, Charles E. Billings, Philip J. Smith and Amy L. Spencer; Voice loops: engineering overhearing to aid coordination, Emily S. Patterson, Jennifer Watts-Perotti and David D. Woods; Building shared situation awareness in healthcare settings, Melanie C. Wright and Mica R. Endsley. Part 3 Healthcare Team Communication in the Field: Factors affecting team communication in the intensive care unit (ICU), Thomas Reader, Rhona Flin and Brian Cuthbertson; Between shifts: healthcare communication in the PICU, Christopher P. Nemeth, Julie Kowalsky, Marianne Brandwijk, Madelyn Kanaha, P. Alan Klock and Richard I. Cook; Collaborative cross-checking, Jeffrey P. Brown; Maintaining common ground: an analysis of cooperative communication in the operating room, Leila Johannesen. Part 4 Future Trends: Communication as a sign of adaptation in socio-technical systems: the case of robotic surgery, Anne-Sophie Nyssen and Adélaïde Blavier; Telehealth and healthcare team communication, Rod Elford; A healthcare team communication research agenda, Christopher P. Nemeth and Robert L. Wears; Index.

#### Reviews

'To those working in patient safety, it is maddening that the results of root cause analyses always seem to be, "It's a communications problem". Nemeth and his colleagues show us why that is probably true, although not in the traditional sense of transmission of information. Rather, with abundant examples from both aviation and healthcare, they show that communication is about context, perception, relationships, and culture – aspects of healthcare that are far more complicated, messy, and dysfunctional than aviation ever was. Here a cluster of the world's experts extract lessons from both domains that those who seek to improve patient safety will find fascinating and useful.'

Lucian L. Leape, MD, Harvard School of Public Health, USA

'For too long, healthcare has focused on technical skills rather than teamwork skills; we are suffering for that. Far too many people suffer preventable harm and excess costs of care; failures in communication and teamwork underlie much of this suffering. *Improving Healthcare Team Communication* holds the promise to change this. The book is written by international experts, informed by a strong scientific background, and provides practical tools to improve communication. It should be required reading for those seeking to improve patient safety.'

Peter J. Pronovost, The Johns Hopkins University, USA

'Problems with and failures of communication are amongst the most important and frequently cited factors contributing to healthcare-associated harm. A comprehensive multi-disciplinary review is overdue and this book is a "must" for all with an interest in human factors in healthcare and for those who wish to learn about how people communicate in other domains.'

Bill Runciman, University of Adelaide, and Australian Patient Safety Foundation. Australia



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