



# Research Week 2020

## Is worker safety, patient safety?

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### Keywords

Social Network Analysis, Safety Climate, Worker Safety, Patient Safety

### Abstract

#### Introduction

Patient and worker safety relies on leadership, safety culture and teamwork to be effective, yet are often administratively "siloe" leading to interference that often sacrifices one area at the expense of the other. To demonstrate that from workers' viewpoint, worker and patient safety are intertwined, our study mapped advice networks of patient safety and worker safety using Social Network Analysis (SNA) among healthcare workers.

#### Methods

Cross-sectional survey administered through email among Registered Nurses (RNs) and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) (n=54, 75.3% response rate) of a critical access hospital in rural Oregon. Participants nominated from a roster as many co-workers they would ask advice about 1) safe patient handling and 2) general patient safety. Networks were mapped through SNA and analyzed through quadratic assignment procedure (QAP).

#### Results

Each participant nominated an average of 11 (SD  $\pm$ 13.1) peers for safe patient handling advice and 9 (SD  $\pm$ 7.3) for patient safety. The correlation between co-worker nominations for worker and patient safety was .51 ( $p < 0.001$ ). Half as many peers nominated for safe patient handling advice were also nominated for patient safety.

#### Discussion

Significant overlap between patient and worker safety networks suggests that from workers' viewpoint, their safety is interconnected with patient safety. Further, safety networks are not domain specific, building on similar safety climate findings across an organization and by unit. Limitations of sample size make determining causality not feasible.

#### Conclusion

Organizations should consider how to integrate patient and worker safety since they require similar resources and often intersect.

