

# Improving the Quality of Team Communication through Coaching

CATHERINE KLEINER PHD, RN, KATHERINE HALVERSON-CARPENTER RN, MBA, CNOR, TERRI LINK RN, MPH, CNOR



## Background

- Breakdowns in communication have been identified as the root cause of many medical errors.
- Sentinel events occurring in surgery comprise a significant number of these events.
- Briefings and debriefings, utilizing the WHO surgical checklist, have been added to the operative routine to prevent communication breakdowns.

## Purpose

- To evaluate coaching as an intervention to improve the quality of briefings and debriefings occurring in the operating room.

## Research Questions

- Is there a difference in the quality of briefings and debriefings following coaching sessions?
- Is there an increase in the number of briefings and debriefings completed following coaching sessions?

## Team Briefing and Debriefing

- Addressing teamwork and communication
- Creating High Reliability
- Minimizing the risk that errors occur or escalate through predictability and repetition

## Methods

### Pre-Observations Completed by SaferHealthcare

- July-August 2011
- 160 observations
- 57 surgeons observed
- Variety of services

### Coaching

- Completed by a retired surgeon with CRM expertise
- 10 days on site in operating rooms
- Additional information sharing sessions with staff

### Post-Observations Completed by SaferHealthcare

- November-December 2011
- 160 observations
- 65 surgeons observed (40 in both)
- Variety of services

## Results

Is there a difference in the quality of briefings following coaching?

Briefing	#Observed	Mean	SD
Pre-data	161	3.47	.69
Post-data	160	3.64	.76

Is there a difference in the quality of debriefings following coaching?

De-briefing	#Observed	Mean	SD
Pre-data	161	2.377	1.10
Post-data	160	2.991	1.18

## Implications

- Improving communication in the hospital setting addresses the main cause of sentinel events making the setting safer for patients.
- Coaching was a successful intervention in addressing the quality of communication during the briefing and debriefing in the operating room.

