

# Quality Patient Care: The Importance of Human Resource Systems

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## Presentation Outline

1. High performance work systems
2. Findings from our research
3. Implications and reflection



## High Performance Work Systems

- Aspects of HPWS both individually and in 'bundles' are positively related to organisational performance (Batt, 1999, 2002; MacDuffie, 1995; Snell & Youndt, 1995)
- HPWS practices are presumed to provide the information and discretion necessary to capitalise on employee's skills and commitment in completing their jobs (Guthrie, 2001; Preuss, 2003).

## HPWS

- Job security
- Selective recruitment practices
- Training & development
- Team work & decentralised decision making
- Sharing information
- Job quality (defined as appropriate workload, role clarity, and employee control)
- Transformational leadership
- Reduced status distinctions (not as important in health care)
- Measurement of 'management'

## HPWS in Health

- USA 'magnet' hospitals suggest that increased autonomy & decision-making latitude, empowerment & nurse/physician collaboration were associated with lower patient mortality rates (Aiken, Smith, & Lake, 1994)
- UK positive correlations between lower patient mortality and appraisal, teamwork and training (West, Borrill, Dawson, Scully, Carter, Anelay et al., 2002; West, Guthrie, Dawson, Borrill, & Carter, 2006).

## Exploring relationship of HPWS to:

### Clinical Outcomes

- Perceptions of quality of care by nurses (modified patient satisfaction scale)

### Employee Attitudes

- Affective commitment
- Psychological empowerment
- Trust in immediate manager
- Job satisfaction
- Intention to leave
- Burnout
- Social identity

## Method

Regression analysis with tests of mediation and moderation to analyse survey responses collected in 2008 of staff in regional and rural Australian health services (44% response rate)

### Validated scales:

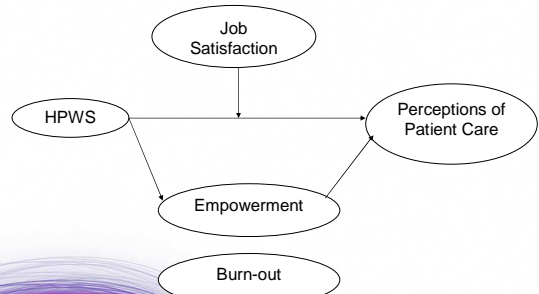
HPWS (Zacharatos, Barling & Iverson (2005)

Psychological empowerment (Spreitzer 1995)

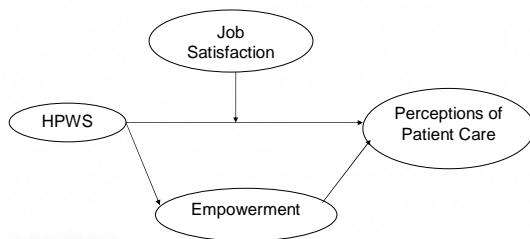
Job satisfaction (Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis & Camman 1982)

Victorian Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire.

## The model



## The model for nurses



## Implications

- There is a link between people management and perceptions of quality of care
- If staff feel empowered and that they belong, they are more likely to be satisfied and committed to the organisation and, when there are HPWS in place, provide higher quality care
- We believe middle managers have a critical role in this process

## Do health services have HPWS?

### Study of all Victorian health care organisations

- Differences in perception of HPWS from CEOs, HRDs & Senior Managers
- Larger organisations had biggest differences
- Organisations that said they had HPWS reported better HRM outcomes
- Community health services had more consistency in HPWS than hospitals
- Despite the confidence of CEOs & hopes of HRDs, managers were not engaged in HPWS practices
- With continuing shortages of health professionals, this study suggested that there was little evidence of HPWS in Victorian health care organisations

Bartram T, Stanton P, Leggat SG, et al (2007) Lost in translation: making the link between HRM and performance in healthcare. *Human Resource Management Journal* 17(1): 21-41.

## The Role of Managers

- A clear differentiator in our case study sites was the behaviour of the CEO - CEO's understanding and commitment to HRM was crucial to its success
- Within-group (in this case) senior management agreement is also critical
- The further away managers are from the strategy makers the more challenging it is to keep them informed, engaged & empowered particularly in large and complex organisations. Resourcing lower level managers in time, knowledge & information is crucial to effectively & consistently translating strategy into practice

Young S, Bartram T, Stanton P & Leggat SG (2009) High Performance Work Systems and Employee Well-being *Journal of Health Organization and Management*

Human resource systems are important - how they are used is just as important.

Need to be:

- consistently applied
- consistently interpreted
- well communicated

Role of line managers in HRM is crucial

Leggat SG, Stanton P & Bartram T (2008) Exploring the link between people management and patient safety in Australian public hospitals *Health Services Management Research*: 1-8

## History of HRM

- Welfare and reform early 20th Century
- 1950s emphasis on efficiency
- 1960s development of 'personnel management' strong industrial role
- 1970s Law enforcement and policy development
- 1980-90s Human resource management
- 1990-2000s Enhancing human capital

## Enhancing Human Capital

"... the effective management of human capital, not physical capital, may be the ultimate determinant of organisational performance" (Youndt, Snell, Dean & Lepak 1996)

"We realised that our largest asset was our work force and that our growth would come from asset appreciation"

Larry Colin, President Colin Service Systems

## Reflection

- Do you feel secure in your job? (not 'employment for life')
- Do you see selective recruitment practices?
- Is there support for training & development activities consistent with the organisational policy?
- Is teamwork and reasonable decentralised decision making encouraged?
- Is information appropriately shared?
- Do you believe you have a quality job?(appropriate workload, role clarity, and some control)
- Are you are transformational leader?

## Are you a transformational leader?

*Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means.*  
(Albert Einstein)

- You have high moral and ethical values.
- You express genuine interest in followers.
- You have an inspirational vision.
- Genuine trust exists between you and followers
- Followers share your values and vision.
- Participatory decision-making is the rule.
- Innovative thinking and action is expected.
- Motivation is to do the right thing.
- You mentor.

## Questions?

