

Abstract

Background
Patient safety is the key quality and risk management issue in healthcare internationally. It is suggested that the development of a positive patient safety culture within healthcare can contribute to the reduction of errors and the creation of a safer healthcare environment. Increasing importance is being placed on the role of psychological and behavioural aspects of patient safety.

Purpose
The central aim of this study was to explore the relationship between measures of positive organisational behaviour (psychological capital & work engagement) and health service staff perceptions of patient safety culture and outcomes. In addition the psychometric properties of the instruments used were tested.

Design/Methods
A cross-sectional design was used to survey the total population of staff in an Irish maternity hospital (N=780). The survey instrument consisted of the Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture (HSOPS) questionnaire, Psychological Capital questionnaire (PsyCap-24) and Ultrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17). The response rate was 30% (n=234), made of 66% nurses and midwives.

Main Findings
A significant positive relationship was found between both PsyCap and UWES and HSOPS dimensions with a small effect size. Using multiple regression analysis a linear relationship was found between PsyCap and three of the four patient safety culture outcome measures (overall perception of patient safety, patient safety grade and number of events reported in the past 12 months) accounting for less than 10% of variance. Work engagement was found to have an additive effect on patient safety grade accounting for an additional 2% of variance. Reliability analysis found Cronbach’s alpha’s generally within accepted limits with the exception of optimism (a = .57) on the PsyCap scale and staffing (a = .51) on the HSOPS. Confirmatory factor analysis was carried out on the PsyCap and UWES scales. A four factor structure was found for the PsyCap scale following the removal of negatively worded items. The three factor structure was not found for the UWES and analysis was carried out only on the overall construct.

Conclusion
Positive organisational behaviour measures have been found to be related to patient safety culture perceptions. However, further work is required to further investigate and confirm these findings. In addition further psychometric evaluation is required on each of the instruments used in this study within the Irish context.

Originality
The study was one of the first to explore the relationship between positive organisational constructs and patient safety culture. In addition it was one of the first to include both measures of psychological capital and work engagement.