

Actions for mitigating the negative effects of patient participation in patient safety: a qualitative study



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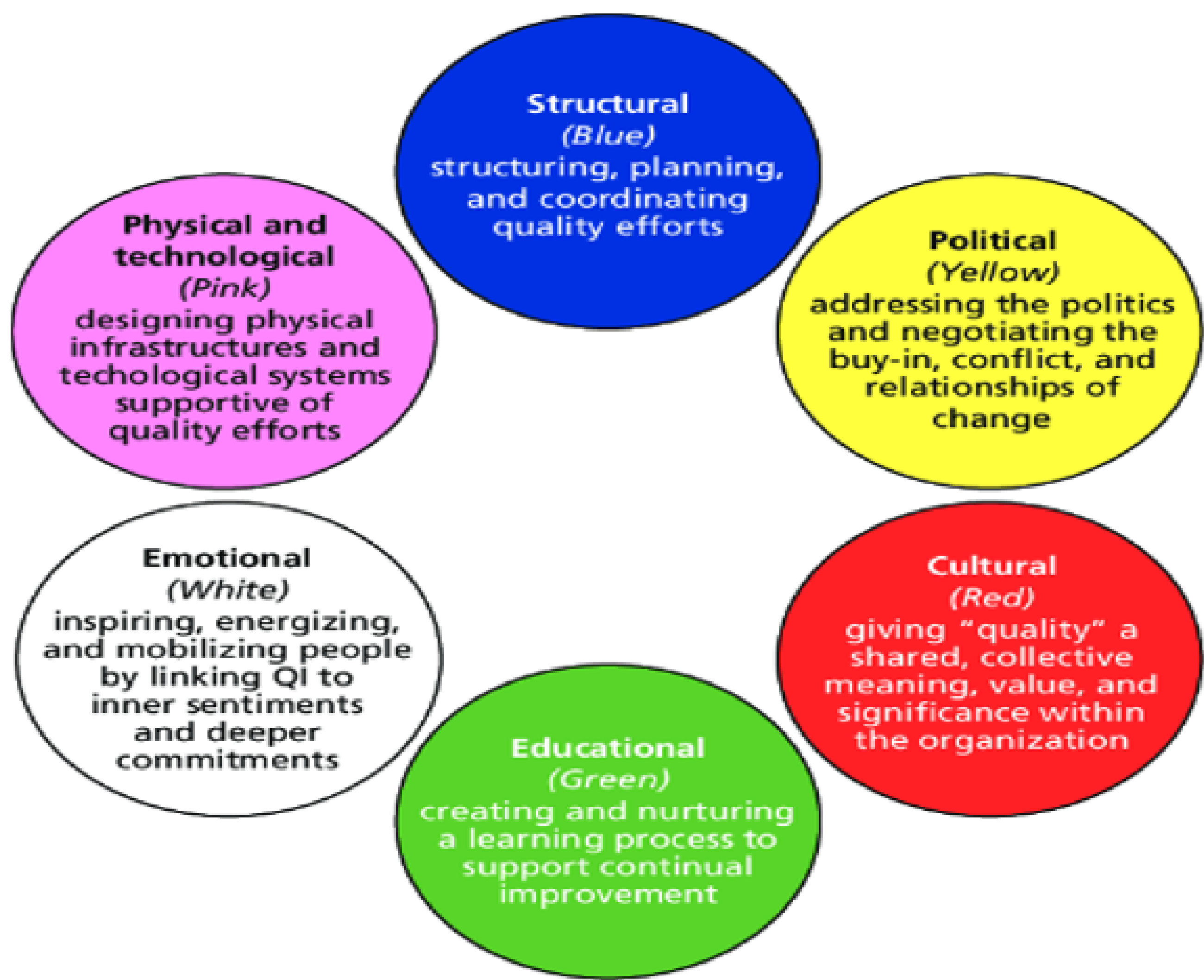


Introduction / background

- Patient participation is increasingly used as a strategy to improve patient safety ^{1,2}
- Recent research within the context of Obstetrics shows the added value of patient participation in in-hospital patient safety ³
- Despite the major benefits of patient participation, several studies suggest that patient participation in patient safety can also have negative effects:
 1. Asking patients to participate in improving their own safety can lead to anxiety issues ⁴
 2. Involving patients in their own safety can consume more of professionals ⁵
 3. Patients may be allocated more responsibility than their condition or ability allows them to cope with ⁶
 4. A more open discussion about errors could harm the relationship between patient and professional ⁷

Objectives

- To uncover how the negative effects of patient participation in patient safety manifest themselves in practice within an Obstetrics department
- To generate an overview of actions that could be taken to mitigate the negative effects of patient participation in patient safety within an Obstetrics department



Methods

- Design: Qualitative interview study
- Setting: Obstetrics department Erasmus University Medical Centre in Rotterdam, the Netherlands
- Respondents: N=16, 8 patients and 8 professionals
- Criteria: Between three and six weeks after childbirth, >6 months of employment, physician or clinical midwife
- Collection: Four areas with forms of patient participation, positive- and negative effects and actions
- Analysis: Literature review (negative effects), inductive analysis (causes) and deductive analysis (actions) ⁸

Results

Negative effects	Causes
Patients’ confidence decreases	Anxiety
The patient-professional relationship can be negatively affected	Negotiations with the patient about the treatment Unwanted insight Patient and professional cannot bridge the gap in the wishes and needs for treatment
More responsibility can be demanded of the patient than they wish to accept	Professionals hand over a lot of responsibility Patients feel a lot of responsibility
The professional has to spend additional time on a patient	Additional questions from the patient Overdiagnosis

Categories	Actions
Structure	Appoint a case manager Make time for adequate attention Provide information concerning responsibilities Prepare well for childbirth Clarify role of partner or family
Culture	Patient-centered culture change Encourage patient participation Actively listen to the patient Be transparent Work unambiguously
Educational	Improve negotiation skills Train on shared decision-making Ensure systematic feedback
Emotional	Share stories Demonstrate leadership Manage expectations
Physical and technology	Create app for patients’ questions Clarify the patient journey

Illustrative quotes

“Patient participation in some cases sometimes gives rise to constant negotiation, which is about what treatment they should or shouldn’t have. If the patient expresses it in such a way, I cannot provide good care. This is the opposite of what I would like, and what I think is medically justified.” (professional)

“You can also have some serious side effects from magnesium tablets. If I had known that in advance, I wouldn’t have been shocked anymore. My body felt like I was on fire and afterwards it turned out to be from the magnesium. I read that on Google. It made me very anxious at the time because I didn’t hear it there and I could not understand it myself.” (patient)

Take home messages

- It is important to be aware of the negative effects, in addition to the positive ones, to promote patient safety through patient participation
- The results highlight the need for a patient-centered culture change
- Successful implementation requires resources and structural integration

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