

SAFETY ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE: FRONTLINE PERSPECTIVES FROM THE OBSTETRIC ANAESTHESIA TEAM

An Audit of Patient Safety Culture Amongst Anaesthesia Trainees

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Improving patient safety is a key priority for healthcare organisations. The **Irish National Adverse Events Study** reported that 12.2% of acute hospital admissions involved an adverse event, with no significant improvement over six years (Rafter et al., 2009; Connolly et al., 2015).

A strong safety culture fosters a shared commitment to safety across an organisation by promoting staff education, transparent reporting, a just and blame-free culture, and active involvement of all staff in safety initiatives.

The **Safety Attitudes Questionnaire (SAQ)** is a validated tool used to assess safety culture from the perspective of frontline healthcare staff. The nature of obstetric care demands effective multidisciplinary teamwork, well-structured organisational systems, and a strong safety culture to achieve safe and reliable patient outcomes.

METHODS

A cross-sectional, quantitative survey of Anaesthetic NCHDs was conducted over two weeks in October 2025 using the 36-item Likert SAQ. This validated tool assesses safety culture across six specific domains: Teamwork Climate, Safety Climate, Job Satisfaction, Stress Recognition, Perceptions of Management, and Working Conditions.

- Participation:** All Anaesthesia Trainees within the obstetric unit were invited. Responses were entirely anonymous and voluntary to encourage honest frontline feedback.
- Metric:** Scores were calculated for each domain. A score of ≥ 75 is considered high, representing a positive safety culture.
- Ethics:** Ethical approval for the survey and data collection was granted by The Coombe Hospital Research Ethics Committee.

RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

68% RESPONSE RATE	15 TOTAL RESPONSES
80% SHO GRADE	53.3% FEMALE

A total of 15 NCHDs responded. Grade distribution included 80% of SHOs and 58% of Registrars. Respondents were 53.3% female and 46.7% male.

MEAN SAQ DOMAIN SCORES

SAQ Themes/Domains	Mean (SD)	Benchmark
Teamwork Climate	76.9 (15.1)	68.5 (68.0, 68.9)
Safety Climate	73.7 (19.0)	65.9 (65.5, 66.3)
Job Satisfaction	82.3 (14.7)	63.6 (63.0, 64.1)
Stress Recognition	77.5 (20.7)	67.8 (67.3, 68.3)
Perceptions of Mgmt.	65.3 (19.3)	46.4 (45.9, 46.8)
Working conditions	77.5 (22.1)	55.9 (55.3, 56.4)

Results show high job satisfaction and teamwork climate. Perceptions of management and safety climate highlight areas for departmental growth.

DISCUSSION

Strong teamwork and high job satisfaction align with international standards and national data (O'Donoghue et al., 2024). NCHDs recognise stress and fatigue impacts, but moderate safety climate and working conditions scores suggest a need for enhanced feedback and resources.

Lower perceptions of management highlight the need for improved communication and visible responses to safety incidents. Leveraging high morale is key to driving safety initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The department exhibits a positive safety culture with clear strengths in teamwork and morale. The SAQ highlights successes and actionable targets for ongoing quality improvement.

Improvement Targets: Management engagement, incident reporting feedback, and visible leadership support.

References

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