Creating a Culture of Safety

One of the basic tenets of Medicine is first do no harm, and perhaps as an extension there is a large stigma associated with medical mistakes. Yet to err is human and we need to create a safe environment where members of the medical team feel comfortable bringing up mistakes and critically appraising them to prevent recurrence. We have strived to create such an environment in our residency program through several facets. We use a hospital-wide electronic reporting system in which any team member can report an adverse event, near-miss or “good catch,” encouraging the residents to use it more regularly. With events involving residents, we talk to each resident in a timely manner to discuss what may have contributed to the error, including communication issues, systems issues, and other common themes. Once a month, we hold resident morning reports where we discuss pertinent medical errors, using a structured format to perform a brief root cause analysis, often with a multidisciplinary approach including our Family Faculty members and nurses. Residents participate in weekly safety rounds with our Chairman, who goes to different units discussing safety. Finally, we are creating a Pediatric House Staff Council, which as a component will have a Quality Committee with members and a Vice Chair. This is our next step in lessening stigma and encouraging more open communication about how we can best create our culture of safety, particularly amongst the residents and their hospital colleagues.

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