

EDITORIAL

Organizational trust in team-based nursing – is it worth investing in its improvement?

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Nurses make up nearly 50% of the healthcare workforce, so it is safe to say that they hold a key position in the healthcare system. Nursing is the backbone of any healthcare system, and it is evident that the role of nursing now extends far beyond the immediate bedside care of the patient. International Council of Nurses (ICN) posits that health care in general is not just about acute care, medication, surgery or diagnostic tests; it is essentially about supporting the highest possible standard of health care to ensure patient satisfaction, and nurses are at the forefront of this. They provide the care that makes this possible (ICN, 2024). The nursing profession is, in many respects, autonomous. A modern-day nurse is a person who thinks, makes decisions and takes responsibility, rather than one who simply follows orders. However, in other ways, nursing also requires teamwork, with trust being an essential element of this. The simplest explanation of the acronym T.E.A.M. is: Together Everyone Achieves More. However, much more is needed to create “teamwork” than just “working together”. Some authors suggest that elements such as complementary skills, commitment to a common goal, and mutual responsibility, among others, should exist in a holistic team. Members of an interdisciplinary team should trust and rely on one another. When these relationships are based on mutual trust, with a very real willingness to cooperate, this leads to the best results, meaning better patient outcomes and higher-quality care (Chen et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2024). It is undoubtedly important that, in daily work, for example, doctors are able to trust nurses and depend on their observations in order to give patients the correct treatment. In the same way, it is also important that nurses trust doctors and feel that they can rely on their knowledge and clinical experience.

Organizational trust is, in general, a dimension that encompasses both horizontal and vertical relationships. Horizontal trust is built on the basis of the relationships between fellow workers

in the working environment. Ideally, this environment is based on teamwork, including good communication, mutual support in job tasks, an understanding of each other’s role, team members’ compliance and a willingness to volunteer for additional duties (Vatn & Dahl, 2022; Zawawi & Nazuridin, 2020). In turn, vertical trust is the relationship that an individual employee forms with a supervisor, senior manager, or with the overall organization. The nurse leader and the adopted style of leadership play a crucial role in promoting organizational trust. Those managers who are perceived as trustworthy are also seen as people who are eager to promote innovation and change. They are recognized as someone who is willing to invest much more in their employees, encouraging their development and promotion, and, in addition, frequently involving them in the management process. In turn, employees are much more likely to co-operate with and follow orders given by people they trust, and to feel more positive about any proposed solutions or changes they put forward. If an employee does not have trust in their superiors, they will not be convinced of the validity of the orders they are asked to carry out. This means that both subordinates and superiors need to trust each other in order to work together effectively (Hadi-Moghaddam et al., 2021; Lewicka & Szeliga, 2016).

It is undoubtedly worth investing in an organizational culture based on a high level of trust. Healthcare organizations should, therefore, create a supportive work environment that values relationships built on trust, encourages good communication, and fosters commitment among nursing staff, while not losing sight of the fact that this should be further positively linked with increased patient satisfaction and safety of care (Gavya & Subashini, 2024; Huang et al., 2024).

Changes are taking place in the entire healthcare system. In the area of nursing, this means changes to professional roles, including empowerment and the delegation of authority and the decision-making

process at all levels of the organization. All of this leads to a rapid increase in the importance of organizational trust. Thus, a better understanding of such a concept is essential to the effective delivery of health care (Hadi-Moghaddam et al., 2021).

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