Public Abstract

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Title:Leadership, communication, and teamwork: Differences between high and low performing nursing homes.

The improvement of nursing home (NH) care is a national priority. Organizational elements of leadership, communication, and teamwork have been recognized as important contributors to improved NH outcomes. This comparative case study explored how the interplay among leadership, communication, and teamwork differed between the highest and lowest performing NHs from a previous AHRQ intervention study to explore technology and quality improvement teams to improve medication safety practices in five Midwestern NHs. Findings suggest nursing leadership in the highest performing NH encouraged open communication which led team members to share diverse perspectives leading to a cohesive, goal directed team where effective problem solving occurred. Importantly, nursing leadership sought team member input which led to team member empowerment to influence change. In contrast, nursing leadership in the lowest performing NH discouraged open communication which impeded cohesive relationships. Nursing leadership valued input and feedback from select team members rather than the entire team. As a result, team members disengaged from the team process, subsequently impeding team efforts to achieve improvement. As suggested by this study, nursing leadership was an influencing factor in improved NH performance and should be further explored as a key variable to organizational improvement across healthcare settings.