

Social capital and knowledge sharing: effects on patient safety
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Abstract

Aims. This article is a report on a study that empirically examines the influence of social capital on knowledge sharing and the impact of knowledge sharing on patient safety.

Background. Knowledge sharing is linked to many desirable managerial outcomes, including learning and problem-solving, which are essential for patient safety.

Rather than studying the tangible effects of rewards, this study examines whether social capital (including social interaction, trust and shared vision) directly supports individual knowledge sharing in an organization.

Methods. This cross-sectional study analysed data collected through a questionnaire survey of nurses from a major medical centre in northern Taiwan. The data were collected over a 9-month period from 2008 to 2009. The data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Graph v3.0 program to evaluate the measurement properties and the structural relationships specified in the research model.

Findings. Based on a large-scale survey, empirical results indicate that Registered Nurses' perceptions of trust and shared vision have statistically significant and direct effects on knowledge sharing. In addition, knowledge sharing is significantly and positively associated with patient safety.

Conclusion. The findings suggest that hospital administrators should foster group

trust and initiate a common vision among Registered Nurses. In addition, administrators and chief knowledge officers of hospitals should encourage positive intentions towards knowledge sharing.

Keyword : empirical research, knowledge sharing, learning, nurses, patient safety, social capital