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Poster: Usage of the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist - Analysis of Compliance with a Safety Intervention and Possible Improvements

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77) Poster: Usage of the WHO surgical safety checklist -Analysis of compliance with a safety intervention and possible improvements.

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Background: Previous research shows that pre-operative checklists reduce the number of communication and medical errors as well as improve the safety attitudes among the operating theatre personnel. Previous research also indicates that the personnel's attitude towards different questions on the WHO checklist differs between questions. Despite this, previous research says very little about how the checklist is used in practice.

The purpose of this study was to determine compliance with the WHO checklist and to suggest possible improvements.

Method: 24 timeout procedures from four commonly occurring surgical procedures were video recorded. The procedures were analyzed according to a predefined observation protocol based on the checklist. In order to be able to explain deviations, qualitative notes were made regarding the nature of other activities occurring in parallel with the timeout.

Result: The percentage of answers varied between questions in the checklist. In 6 of the cases when the question of personal presentation was raised, the whole operating team presented themselves, in the other cases only parts of the team. In 5 cases the presentation was postponed until later. The anesthetist nurse and the surgeon dominated the timeout in the studied cases. The theatre nurse was not as active and it happened that the timeout was initiated while the theatre nurse was occupied with other tasks.

Discussion: The checklist is not always used as intended. We find it plausible that those questions getting the most attention are the ones perceived as the most important and of common interest by the team. For instance personal presentations could be perceived as unnecessary by those who know everybody. To make the whole team involved in the timeout calls for the addition of another question directed towards the theatre nurse that is perceived as relevant by the whole team. Such question could for instance discuss material and instruments.

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