
Textbook of Patient Safety and Clinical Risk Management

Liam Donaldson • Walter Ricciardi
Susan Sheridan • Riccardo Tartaglia
Editors

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 Springer

Editors

Liam Donaldson
London School of Hygiene and Tropical
Medicine
London
UK

Walter Ricciardi
Department of Hygiene
and Public Health
Catholic University of the Sacred Heart
Rome, Italy

Susan Sheridan
The Society to Improve
Diagnosis in Medicine
Evanston, IL
USA

Riccardo Tartaglia
Italian Network for Safety in Healthcare
Florence, Italy



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Foreword

As a member of the 17th legislature of the Italian Parliament, I was Speaker for the Chamber of Deputies for the establishment of Law 24/2017 on care safety and professional responsibility in health matters. It is a great pleasure for me to present this publication because it is the result of the valuable work of many colleagues all over the world. Together, we have animated the cultural debate and fostered a consolidated and professional network of “clinical risk managers” aimed at improving the quality of care in health services.

With this goal in mind, I founded the “Fondazione Italia in Salute” in 2018, at a time when the sustainability of our Healthcare System seemed to be at risk for various factors, in the face of new health needs. The Foundation chose to promote this book because it is consistent with its mission: to support and strengthen the protection of the right to health and the culture of error prevention through public initiatives, medical-scientific and technical-legal research, national and international networking activities with the aim of establishing a system of recognition and validation of Clinical Practice Guidelines in Italy.

In this book, you will find interesting observations and professional experience provided not only by senior experts but also by medical post-graduates from 30 foreign countries who participated in the First International Meeting “Patient Safety for New Medical Generation” held in Florence on September 3, 2018. The dialogue between senior experts and post-graduates in medicine and nursing sciences is always useful; the surprising participation in this meeting allowed the WHO to present the point of view of the younger generations of doctors on the safety of care. It is no coincidence that “teamwork training” is the cross-cutting theme of all chapters of this book: it is important to overcome the often still too individualistic view of hospital work.

This publication therefore becomes an important educational tool, particularly for young colleagues, to broaden their knowledge of clinical risk and the importance of the human factor in healthcare. In fact, “clinical risk management” has only recently been included as a subject of study in medical degree courses; some years ago, the WHO published some important documents to guide training in care safety.

I believe that having a culture of patient safety is fundamental, and that the change in the professional behaviours becomes effective when knowledge is shared and risk awareness is instilled in all healthcare professionals. To this end, we need to start training new generations of professionals, certainly more open to change, and to promote a culture of care safety.

I would like to thank all the authors of this book because I believe that their excellent work will be very important for the future of international health. Special thanks to Liam Donaldson, Walter Ricciardi, Susan Sheridan and Riccardo Tartaglia for their willingness to produce this book. They represent all the stakeholders in the health security system: Liam, our institutions, Walter, our universities, Susan, our citizens and Riccardo, our health workers.

Enjoy your reading!

Federico Gelli
Fondazione Italia in Salute
Rome, Italy

Preface

Despite the extensive attention and public commitments towards patient safety over the last two decades, levels of avoidable harm in healthcare around the world remain unacceptably high.

By creating a book with broad scope and clear descriptions of the key concepts and thinking in patient safety, we have aimed to connect with a much wider readership than those with a professional or academic interest in the subject.

We have not limited ourselves to theoretical models or risk management methodologies. We have aimed to address safety in various medical specialties. For example there is a discussion of the causation and solutions in conditions such as infantile cerebral palsy; today in many health systems this has a high human and economic cost, some of which are preventable.

We have also dealt with how the structure, culture and leadership of healthcare organizations can determine how many patients suffer avoidable harm and how safe they and their families should feel when putting their trust in local services. Safety problems relating to non-technical skills are also discussed; this is a topic of great importance but under-represented in medical and nursing educational and training curricula.

Any assessment of the prospects for creating much safer healthcare systems and health facilities everywhere will be bound to conclude that it will be a long journey. A clear consequence of this is that it cannot be entirely achieved by the current group of senior patient safety leaders. Their successors need to be grown, mentored and inspired to take up the mantle of future leadership as well as guiding those in day-to-day clinical practice where harm is generated but where it can also be prevented.

That is why this new book has embraced the next generation of health professionals with such warmth and enthusiasm. The idea to write it came as a result of an international meeting on patient safety for young doctors held in Florence, Italy, in 2018. Such doctors came from over 40 countries. Representatives from that meeting have been involved in the chapters in Part III of the book.

The book was conceived and commissioned in a pre-pandemic time, but by the time it was coming near completion COVID-19 was the dominant feature of health and healthcare across the world. This has only served to heighten awareness of patient safety as the pandemic has swept across continents and led to seriously ill patients threatening to overwhelm acute care

facilities and care homes in many countries. We have added a chapter that summarizes the safety recommendations developed by the International Society for Quality in Health Care in collaboration with the Italian Network for Safety in Healthcare.

It is encouraging also to see that World Patient Safety Day 2020 had as its theme health worker safety, which, of course, is closely intertwined with patient safety.

We are grateful for the support of the *Fondazione Italia in Salute* (Healthy Italy Foundation) to allow this text to be *open access* in order to be available to the greatest number of interested people. We hope to see it in the hands of young health professionals everywhere, thus giving it a global reach into the next generation of patient safety clinical leaders and practitioners.

We express our deep gratitude to the authors for their work. We also thank those many friends and colleagues who have made themselves available to review the chapters from a technical and linguistic point of view.

We dedicate our work on this book to the memories of all those patients and families who have suffered or died through avoidable harm in their care. It is on the foundation of a safer future for all patients, everywhere in the world, that the goal of universal health coverage should be built.

London, UK

Rome, Italy

Evanston, USA

Florence, Italy

Liam Donaldson

Walter Ricciardi

Susan Sheridan

Riccardo Tartaglia

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