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Understanding the Generation Gap in the Operating Room

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Goals

- Recognize and identify aspects of the five generations that may comprise the workforce
- Understand the diversity of the generations and methods of communication to bridge gaps
- Discuss the significant contributions each generation can contribute to the healthcare environment, with insight into the operating room

Concept of Ageism

- The concept of ageism, the systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people based on their age (Mayo et al., 2022), is alive and well in throughout the healthcare sector
- According to Mayo, "healthcare professionals, university students, employers, family members, long-term care workers, and even older adults themselves may harbor implicit bias against other older adults"

Concept of Ageism

- Ageism is correlated to a person's interaction (or lack thereof) with older people, as well as a misunderstanding, or limited understanding, of aging

Concept of Ageism

- Ageism impacts wellbeing, engagement in preventative health and self-care, and quality of life due to:
  - healthcare providers' attribution of certain health related issues as a part of old age
  - providing patients with "infantilizing treatment (i.e., being called "honey" and "dearie") and conforming to unconventional bathing, meal, and bedtime schedules" in long-term care (as quoted by Mayo)

Ageism

- Quotes on ageism from John et al., 2021:
  - "At 41 I was told that I was over the hill as a healthcare executive, and then I was laid off."
  - "It's a disregard for your basic self and your humanity when somebody comes across with a probably unconscious way of treating you"
  - "It's got to be what we see, the models that are out there and movies and TV and attitudinal things, and literature and the media because that so permeates our views of what we believe"

Five Generations

- In today's healthcare workplace and greater environment there can be up to five generations collectively (John et al., 2021):
  - Traditionalists
  - Baby Boomers
  - Generation X
  - Millennials: represent the greatest number of employees and are increasingly in leadership roles
  - Generation Z

Five Generations

- According to John, "miscommunication among the five generations can lead to friction and lower productivity, costing the healthcare industry as much as $213 billion annually"
  - high employee turnover
  - increased cost of recruitment
  - more training
  - reduced levels of employee retention

Five Generations

- According to John, "miscommunication among the five generations can lead to friction and lower productivity, costing the healthcare industry as much as $213 billion annually"
  - poor clinical outcomes
  - increased readmissions to hospitals

Generational Cohort

- A generational cohort is a group of people born during a similar time period who share the following (Rollin Oliviera et al., 2021) that create unified perspective, cohesion, and attitudes:
  - significant experiences, such as historical events
  - shared public heroes
  - exposure to similar entertainment, hobbies
  - similar work experiences

Generational Cohort

- A generational cohort is a group of people born during a similar time period who share the following (Rollin Oliviera et al., 2021) that create unified perspective, cohesion, and attitudes:
  - distinct values and attitudes
  - specific workforce norms

Generational Cohort

- **Examples of shared perspective amongst a generational cohort include:**
  - Traditionalists and some Baby Boomers are uncomfortable with technology (Rollin Oliviera)
  - Baby Boomers are comfortable with long work shifts and overtime, Generations X and Y seek balance and differentiation between work and family life

Generational Cohort

- **Examples of shared perspective amongst a generational cohort include:**
  - Generations X and Y see social determinants of health and social injustice amongst diverse population, Baby Boomers and Traditionalists see activism as a "central practice and a professional problem" (Rollin Oliviera)

Five Generations in the Workplace (John et al., 2021)

Generation	% of Healthcare Workplace	Global happenings that were formative	Work Attitudes	Preferred Means of Communication
Traditionalists (1928-1945)	2%	Great Depression World War II	Respect Loyalty Consistent Adherence to rules and scheduling	Face to face, letter
Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	25%	Cold War Vietnam Moon landing Woodstock	Loyalty to large companies/organizations Live to work Retirement plans Appreciate titles	Telephone and email
Generation X (1965-1980)	33%	Fall of Berlin Wall PCs and video games Higher divorce rates	Loyal to their profession/career not the organization Work to live Flexible schedule Family oriented Fair/equal pay	Email and text
Millennials (1981-1996)	35%	Helicopter parents 9/11 and increased global terrorism Invent of social media Google Increased reality tv	Digital careers Seek purpose at work Flexible time off Fair/equal pay	Text and social media
Generation Z (1997-)	5%	Economic downturn Mobile devices Global warming/climate change	Change and stimulation Place high value on free time Ecofriendly workplaces Fast promotions	Hand-held or wearable smartphones

Generational Differences

- It is important that healthcare leadership acknowledge the generational aspect of their respective workforce

Generational Differences

• John et al. (2021) suggests that generational differences should be:

– identified and addressed to reduce conflict

– appreciated, celebrate differences

– shared to adjust

– leveraged between the generations to improve communication and educational opportunities

Generational Differences

• John et al. (2021) suggests that generational differences should be:

– used as teaching resources to understand diverse communities

– recognized as a tool to find resolutions

– considered for diverse perspective related to the business

Generational Conflict

- Shaw, as quoted by John et al. (2021), identified "sticking points" of generational conflict:
  - communication
  - loyalty
  - feedback
  - respect
  - decision-making
  - fun at work
  - meetings
  - training
  - dress code
  - knowledge transfer
  - ethics
  - policies

Communication

- Communication throughout organizations, including areas of a hospital, such as an operating room, is reliant on effective communication (John et al., 2021)

Communication

- Adopting new technology is ongoing in the healthcare environment, platforms that promote collaboration can be HIPAA compliant, effective tools to bridge communication challenges amongst employees
  - team participants can obtain necessary information prior to surgery or other patient-centered processes
  - patient information is readily accessible to minimize errors and share information amongst the team

Communication

- Older generations can serve as mentors with wisdom, but need to be willing to learn from younger healthcare professionals for meaningful synergy and high-quality patient care and shared values

Generational Values

- There are three types of values at work (Godlewska-Werner et al., 2020):
  - <u>intrinsic</u>: independence, finding work interesting and challenging, helping others, responsibility, sense of accomplishment and purpose
  - <u>extrinsic</u>: salary, sense of safety and security, titles, prestige
  - <u>relational</u>: atmosphere, workplace relationships, positive work environment

Generational Values

- Each generation has needs, values, and skills, however, Godlewska-Werner claims to have observed "no intergenerational differences in terms of relational work motives and in terms, or extrinsic motived associated with social security support"
  - all employees are typically motivated to have interaction with others
  - all employees seek a sense of security and stability

Generational Values

- Recognizing shared motivations, in addition to integrating different strengths will create a positive environment

Mentoring

- Clinical care is often lead in a hierarchical manner which can provide learning opportunities for all through programs including mentoring

Mentoring

- Mentoring creates opportunities for intergenerational support, learning, and enhanced patient care by (Coventry et al., 2021):
  - improving retention of clinicians
  - creating succession planning
  - increasing job satisfaction
  - improving patient outcomes
  - increasing patient satisfaction

Mentoring

- Mentoring creates opportunities for intergenerational support, learning, and enhanced patient care by (Coventry et al., 2021):
  - reduction of expenditures
  - supporting positive, effective working relationships
  - increasing skill and knowledge level

Mentoring

- Mentoring programs can address some of the differences between the generations with focus on (Stevanin et al., 2018):
  - job attitudes
  - emotion-related job attributes
  - clinical practice and leadership development

Mentoring

- Of note is:
  - Baby Boomers engage in work differently than Generations X and Y (Stevanin), impacting workplace balance and well-being
  - Baby Boomers typically display lower rates of stress and burnout that Generations X and Y
  - Generations X and Y, individually, are more sensitive to adversity but "more cohesive as a group" (Stevanin)

Mentoring

- Of note is:
  - Baby Boomers see themselves as more competent, while Generations X and Y are more comfortable with technology
- Finding the balance can create a strong functional employee foundation for all aspects of healthcare, including the operating room and other areas providing focused, patient-centered care

Generational Interaction

- Emotional aspects of professional healthcare jobs will strengthen with collaboration between the generations (Stevanin et al., 2018):
  - Generation X is shown to be more resilient that Generation Y
  - Generation Y requires more support in the workplace, stating their "primary stress source for them is bullying"(Stevanin) as new hospital staff members

Generational Interaction

- Emotional aspects of professional healthcare jobs will strengthen with collaboration between the generations (Stevanin et al., 2018):
  - Generation Y working in surgical environments report higher levels of stress

Generational Interaction

- Adapting to stressors in a surgical environment can be addressed with mentor programs that are cross-generational
- Simultaneously, encouraging Baby Boomers and Generation X to address mental health needs can be taught through cross-generational interaction
- Cross-generational interaction can improve self-concept and increase self-awareness (Coventry et al., 2021)

Generational Differences

- According to Coventry et al., (2021) "Some intergenerational differences in the workplace are identified as the gap between worldviews, the ability to relate, and the varied perceptions of clinical risk"

Generational Differences

- Addressing generational differences in healthcare provision can help to create a more tolerant environment and acceptance of personal characteristics while improving workplace harmony (Coventry) and the delivery of patient-centered care

Generational Differences

- Accepting generational differences and human factors is imperative for core values, delivery of quality patient care, improved outcomes, cost reduction, and overall health and safety (Johnathan Blair 2022)

Human Factors at Work

- Human factors are also known as ergonomics, or the "environmental, organizational, and job factors, and human and individual characteristics, which influence behavior at work in a way which can affect health and safety" (Johnathan Blair et al., 2022)

Human Factors at Work

- In clinical environments the human factor impacts:
  - teamwork
  - environment
  - safety
  - equipment
  - operational procedures
  - clinical performance
  - intergenerational communication

Human Factors at Work

- According to Johnathan Blair, more "senior" clinicians are expected to ensure that "junior" clinicians are exposed to training and procedures to improve outcomes in a clinical environment such as an operating room
- According to Coppola and Mondola (2018), "physicians should be fully aware of potential multigenerational consequences" of clinical interactions

Generations in the Surgical Unit

- **Efforts to improve healthcare requires buy-in from all clinicians and healthcare professionals (Du et al., 2022)**
  - **bundled payment programs require hospitals and providers to work more efficiently and improve care while reducing costs**
  - **performance measures impact reimbursements**

Generations in the Surgical Unit

- **Surgical units and operating rooms are "ideal targets for quality improvement work, as costs are measured per minute and revenue is measured per case. Bias in predicting actual time in the OR can lead to underutilization or overutilization of OR time and OR inefficiency. Delays in completion of the first case of the day in the OR can have a domino effect on subsequent cases, causing staffing inadequacies, patient dissatisfaction, and increasing costs." (as quoted by Du)**

Collaboration Amongst Generations

- Collaboration in multigenerational healthcare environments is key to address other factors that impact the functionality of an operating room (Du et al., 2022):
  - scheduling adherence
  - limiting delays
  - understanding complex processes for major surgeries
  - identifying ways to complete preoperative stages of care

Collaboration Amongst Generations

- Collaboration in multigenerational healthcare environments is key to address other factors that impact the functionality of an operating room (Du et al., 2022):
  - improving delivery of continuum of care (and coordination)
  - creating functional accountability

Collaboration Amongst Generations

- Preoperative team huddles done as a collective can create strong communication, exchange of pertinent information, and recognition of roles and appreciation for the collective
- Standardization of new learnings for effective management can be created with the diverse perspectives from the generations

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