

A PROJECT TO EXAMINE AND ENHANCE CLINICIAN MANAGERS' CAPACITY AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Funding Source: Australian Research Council SPIRT Grant, South Eastern Area Health Service (NSW)

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Duration: 2000 – 2003

Description: The Project “To Examine and Enhance Clinician Managers Capacities as Agents of Change in Health Reform” has now been completed. The project has produced several outcomes to date.

First, an interim report was produced on the forms of talk which constitute the formal 'face' of the hospital, that is, talk which takes place at formal gatherings ranging from ward meetings to management and clinical services meetings. This report suggested that there are disjunctions among the ways in which the clinical work is talked about at different sites across the hospital. More specifically, while individual patients and their immediate past are the focus of information exchange at the ward level, and while professional concerns provide the focus for discussion at nursing and medical meetings, the mode of information exchange becomes highly abstract and future-oriented at managerial and executive levels. The relationships among these modes of talk are tenuous, and the required 'translation' of top-level into ward-level information (and vice versa) remains chancy.

These findings and others were then discussed with selected hospital staff and amended and expanded where considered necessary. Following these discussion, three workshops have been held, one based around Degeling and Hindle's 'Clinicians Taking the Lead' case studies, and the subsequent two around materials and data directly derived from the research done at the hospital in question (including questionnaire survey data, ethnographic and discourse analysis research data). On each occasion 30 to 40 staff members were present.

In addition, the principal researcher attended numerous pathwaying groups, with the aim of mapping how these groups progress from negotiating and planning the pathway to implementing it in their daily practice. Information was gathered on how the different groups conduct these pathway construction tasks and an assessment has been made of how the different teams conceptualize and achieve their ends. The pathwaying effort was tracked horizontally across meetings and meeting

sites and vertically from the working groups to the management and steering bodies that support, give direction to, and validate the work of these benchmarking teams.

Finally, in the last stage of the project, the researcher moved to the clinical settings where this work is enacted. By observing clinical interaction and care in a range of settings across the hospital, as it practiced on a day to day basis, it was possible to begin to determine the range of structures and supports that are required to facilitate effective clinical care. During this phase it became possible to discover how staff construe the relationship between the clinical, organizational, professional and resource dimensions of care. From this, a detailed description of the managerial and clinical issues which are seen to face to organization has been derived.

Output: The project has produced various conference papers and published peer-reviewed papers. Aspects of the research have informed a book that has also been accepted for publication by an international publisher.

Selected Publications and Presentations

Iedema R, Degeling P, **White L** (1999). Professionalism and Organisational Change. In WodakR and Ludwig C (eds). *Challenges in a Changing World: Issues in Critical Discourse Analysis*, Passagen Verlag, Vienna, 127-155.

Iedema R, Degeling P (2001) Quality of Care: Clinical Governance and Pathways *Australian Health Review*, Vol 24 (3), pp.12-15

Iedema R Scheeres H (2003) From Doing to Talking Work: Renegotiating Knowing, Doing and Identity. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, Vol 24, pp.316-337.

Degeling P, **Iedema R** et al (2003) Accomplishing Leadership in the Context of Health Reform. In Dopson S and Mark AL (eds). *Leading Health Care Organizations*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, pp.113-133.

Iedema R, Degeling P, **Braithwaite J**, **White L** (2004). 'It's an interesting conversation I'm hearing': the doctor as manager. *Organization Studies*, Vol 25, pp.15-34.