THE ECONOMICS OF PATIENT SAFETY: SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

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The OECD has been leading efforts to develop and establish internationally comparable patient safety indicators for over ten years.

An average of 1 in 10 hospitalisations in high income countries result in a safety failure or adverse event.

In developed countries, the direct cost of treating patients who have been harmed during their care approaches 13% of health spending. This amounts to USD 606 Billion a year, just over 1% of OECD countries’ combined economic output.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>The economics of patient safety: Strengthening a value-based approach to reducing patient harm at national level</td>
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| 2018 | The economics of patient safety in primary and ambulatory care: Flying blind  
Measuring patient safety: Opening the black box |
| 2020 | The economics of patient safety part III: Long-term care - Valuing safety for the long haul  
The economics of patient safety: Analysis to action  
Also:  
System governance towards improved patient safety - Key functions, approaches and pathways to implementation  
Culture as a cure - Assessments of patient safety culture in OECD countries |
| 2021 | The economics of patient safety Part IV: Safety in the workplace -- Occupational safety as the bedrock of resilient health systems |
The economic component of patient safety is relevant across WPSD themes.
COVID-19 crisis has… and is still… bringing recognition to the occupational hazards of health workers

- Health workers have been overrepresented in terms of COVID-19 infections and mortality, as well as physical and mental strain caused by the demands of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Percentage of health workers who had received two COVID-19 vaccination doses, selected countries [as of 05 May 2021]

Source: Vaccine Tracker, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), 2021.
Improving safety not only improves patient outcomes, but it also improves the **financial bottom line** for health systems

- Health and social care systems now employ **more workers than ever before**.
- Workplace injury and harm in health care settings include infection, interpersonal violence, physical injury, and mental ill-health.
- Improving worker well-being has intrinsic value, but it also **lowers the costs** of occupational harm (estimated at up to **2% of health spending**) and contributes to minimising patient harm (estimated at up to **12% of health spending**)．
- **But how do we get there…**
Creating the **right conditions** for a safe working environment across a health system

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<th>A focus on working conditions and culture</th>
<th>Models that empower workers with adaptive capacity</th>
<th>Aligning clinical risk management with corporate and professional risk</th>
<th>Measures of worker safety</th>
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| • Establishing the right policy and regulatory environment. | • Agency and capacity (within limits) to adapt how they carry out their tasks.  
• Noting that some aspects of health care will always require strict protocols, rules, and standardization. | • Foundational and structural domains such as culture, communication and governance influence procedural domains, which in turn affect the health and well-being of workers, as patient outcomes. | • Compliment to current commonly used patient safety and health care quality metrics. |
Investing in health worker well-being to enhance health system resilience

Investment in promoting health worker safety simultaneously addresses two sources of avoidable expenditure in health care systems. This super-additive effect means that much can be gained from placing healthcare worker safety within a patient safety governance and policy framework.

- Countries should adopt policies that enable a flexible workforce with appropriate safeguards.
  - putting parameters around local adaptability
- The health workforce needs to be supported through concrete policy actions and appropriate resources.
  - PPE, testing, and vaccination
  - legal protections, psychological support, and promotion of employee well-being.
- Furnish workers with the skills and knowledge needed to deploy change.
  - Teams equipped to successfully plan, implement and assess improvement initiatives.
- Promoting well-being and safety in the workplace—beyond preventing harm.
THANK YOU AND STAY SAFE