The provocative opening statement containing one key word can mean two very different things and I suspect that we have all, at one time or another, veered between the two in our working lives when it comes to the daily bureaucracy that affects our perioperative careers. However, one thing that remains a constant in our daily workload is the patient who is, without question, in our care whether individually or as a team.

Delivering care is the responsibility of perioperative teams whatever profession you are: Nurse, ODP, support worker. Sometimes care can be intertwined with the word nursing and this can be attributed purely to that one profession. Recently many nursing colleagues have found themselves in the position of having to define why nurses are needed within theatre. This focus is not new to us, as it has been a bubbling question under the surface for a long time. I hope I can hear one voice answering that nursing and care fit together as one. In fact, it should be an inherent quality in all those who deliver care within perioperative environments. Nursing science has formed a basis for varied clinical educational curricula. Patients are patients, regardless of the healthcare environment within which they are treated.

Indeed we are fortunate that the perioperative team offers a multitude of skills that are imperative for safe patient care, and the training that you receive determines the skills you have. The patient benefits from these combined skills working within a highly technical environment and the creeping deconstruction of this team will effectively put the patient at risk.

David Pidduck, a former editor of JPP, wrote extensively on the role of nurses in theatre over 10 years ago and warned that if it wasn’t valued and nurses extended and championed in their role then it could disappear. What we didn’t know then was the fiscal time bomb that now seems to be an additional driver to jeopardising the nursing profession (and consequently others) working in theatres. His predictions are becoming a reality!

It is time to care about each other. We know teams are at their best when there is a range of skills and arguably the surgical checklist prescribes this diversity and its importance. Shout loud and relentlessly when the deconstruction starts in your workplace (if it hasn’t already) because you care about patients and each other.

Bibliography


Pidduck D 2003 The theatre nurse role: a review of the literature British Journal of Perioperative Nursing 13 (9) 374-379

To take care - watchful conscientious effort to do something exactly right, implies an effort that requires considerable amount of activity and exertion

Couldn’t care less - used to express indifference?
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