Crew Resource Management or Crisis Resource Management: Which Term is Correct?

Healthcare providers’ training in crisis resource management has been linked to aviation’s crew resource management (CRM) training since the early 1990s. The terms are often used interchangeably and can be a source of confusion. Most anesthesia problems occur as the result of several mistakes that lead to a cataclysmic event, similar to aviation tragedies. However, CRM training is designed to detect problems on a regular basis, not just during emergencies, and the training is required at regular intervals by all crew members.

CRM training focuses on situation awareness, communication skills, teamwork, task allocation, and decision making within a comprehensive framework of standard operating procedures. The aviation industry realized that technical proficiency is a given requirement for flying safety, but most accidents have occurred due to failures in team coordination or ignoring standard operating procedures. The aviation industry has demonstrated that routine training has a positive effect on team performance during emergencies. By practicing routine skills during times of low stress, the likelihood of successful performance during emergencies is increased. Practice and feedback are best done using simulation; afterward, an instructor facilitates the debriefing and the crew critically analyzes its performance.

Crisis Resource Management has evolved in healthcare to train providers to perform in high stress, life-threatening crises. The training is typically conducted over a 1- to 2-day period involving interdisciplinary team members as well as the specialty members participating in a simulated crisis. Sheaw-Lewis found that 93% of their participants felt they had a better grasp of CRM principles when they encountered an emergency following training. Shea-Lewis found a significant improvement in patient outcomes and satisfaction in a community hospital over a 2-year period when team training was followed by team meetings and debriefings.

The similarity between these 2 courses is the value team training brings to communication clarity and error identification. However, CRM and crisis resource management are not identical. Perhaps we should change the name of healthcare training and use it on a routine basis so we can make a thorough critique of team behaviors during times of high workload and low workload to assess our shortfalls.

REFERENCES

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