Case Study: TeamSTEPPS®

Definition
Patients with neurological emergencies are often treated in high-intensity, complex environments such as emergency departments, specialized stroke units and neuroscience intensive care units. Multidisciplinary teams of healthcare professionals including nurses, physicians, advanced practice providers (nurse practitioners and physicians assistants), pharmacists, emergency medical technicians, and others often deliver care. Professional training is often deficient in teaching the teamwork skills required to function in this environment. The Joint Commission and Institute of Medicine, as an effective strategy for reducing medical errors and improving clinical outcomes, have recommended teamwork training. Team training has also been associated with improved staff satisfaction.

The TeamSTEPPS initiative focuses on designing and implementing interventions that enhance medical team performance. The U.S. Department of Defense in collaboration with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) designed TeamSTEPPS for healthcare professionals based upon experience and research in team training in other high-risk environments (military, aviation, nuclear power). The focus is on the following areas of core competency:

1. **Leadership:** Leaders have the ability to coordinate, resource, and facilitate optimal team performance.
2. **Situation Monitoring:** actively assessing and reassessing a situation to maintain an accurate awareness of the environment.
3. **Mutual support:** Team members help each other, and provide feedback and encouragement.
4. **Communication:** Process by which information is clearly and accurately exchanged. This includes conflict resolution. Ineffective communication is a root cause for most medical errors.

Case Presentation
A 47-year-old woman presents to the emergency department of a small community hospital with an acute left middle cerebral artery ischemic stroke. She is not a candidate for IV tPA due to a recent surgical procedure. She is transported by helicopter to a nearby comprehensive stroke center. She arrives in the neuroscience ICU where an ICU nurse, neurology resident, vascular neurology fellow, and acute care nurse practitioner meet her. Complex coordinated care must be provided with care transitions and information flow from the referring hospital to the emergency transport team to the ICU to the CT scanner to the angiography suite and back to the ICU.
Discussion
TeamSTEPPS offers a detailed implementation process aimed at developing a culture of safety. It has been successfully deployed and implemented in a variety of clinical micro environments.

Reference