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PATIENT SAFETY NETWORK

Escalation of care and failure to rescue: a multicenter, multiprofessional qualitative study.

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Johnston MJ, Arora S, King D, et al. Escalation of care and failure to rescue: a multicenter, multiprofessional qualitative study. Surgery. 2014;155(6):989-94. doi:10.1016/j.surg.2014.01.016.
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This interview study examined escalation of care, the process by which a patient's deteriorating clinical status is recognized and acted upon, among surgical patients. Attending surgeons, trainees, intensivists, and rapid response team members believe that protocols for escalation of care lack clarity and that there is a dearth of supervision from senior clinicians. Similar to studies of handoffs, direct conversation—either in person or via mobile phone—was deemed preferable to hospital paging systems. Participants identified communication training, explicit and clear protocols, and increased supervision as key to improving the care of deteriorating surgical patients. Accompanying editorials highlight the importance of communication and the need for a safety culture that supports multidisciplinary teams.