Title: Qualities of effective leaders: A staff survey


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Qualities of Effective Leaders: A Staff Survey

Dr Shweta Mittal¹, Dr Aman Sardana²


Background

• We are new consultants passionate about effective clinical leadership to ensure a high quality health care system which consistently provides safe and efficient care.
• We are keen to gain insight into expectations of frontline staff from their leaders and any barriers to effective clinical leadership.
• We believe that effective leaders are supportive, honest, confident, consistent, fair, respectful, and compassionate.

Aim

• To enhance understanding of most desirable qualities in an effective leader.
• To understand expectations of staff from their leader and to work on deficiencies.
• To identify any training needs for staff with leadership roles and implementing changes for better staff experience which in turn has positive impact on patient care.

Methods

• We conducted an online survey in Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NOTTS) and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT) asking staff questions about their demographics and choices about most important qualities to be present in an effective leader along with their expectations from an effective leader.
• We also asked staff about what they find unhelpful in their leader and any suggestions to improve leadership in their local trust.
• Data was collected using Survey Monkey analysis specifically designed for this survey using MS Excel 2010.

Results

• 489 staff responded to the survey with 55% from Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.
• 2/3⁴ of responders were females with majority between 45-55 years of age.
• At SPFT around half and at NOTTS 1/3⁴ of responders were doctors, nurses or occupational therapists.
• There were striking similarities of qualities that staff preferred in effective clinical leaders with honesty and integrity being the top most followed by accountability and commitment.
• Most important characteristics staff expected are honesty, clarity, consistency and being able to stand up for the team.
• Lack of clarity, consistency and accessibility were mentioned as unhelpful characteristics in their leaders.
• Suggestions to improve clinical leadership included more clarity in communication, involvement of whole team, consistency in decision making, staff to have more opportunity to attend training to enhance their performance and acknowledging challenges faced by staff at ground level including ethnic minority staff.

Chart 1 shows Demographics of Profession of Respondents

Results (continued)

Chart 2 shows Qualities of an Effective Leader

Chart 3 shows Expectations of Staff from their Leaders

Conclusions

• As research demonstrates, most leaders are made by acquiring skills and not born with leadership qualities¹, this survey has been immensely helpful for us to understand frontline staff expectations and qualities they expect in their leaders.
• Focused clinical courses for new leaders can help improve leadership and management.
• We believe that more support is required in developing these qualities in new leaders and consultants to strengthen their skills which will improve their career as a leader eventually improving health care service to benefit our patients.

Recommendations

• We shall present these findings locally in our trust and recommend that staff should be able to avail more leadership and training opportunities including for frontline staff.
• Results of the survey will be disseminated to senior managers including team leaders and trust board to highlight suggestions about improving leadership in respective trusts.
• Specifically designed leadership courses for both medical and non-medical staff should be considered.
• This survey can easily be replicated in other trusts to improve management and leadership in NHS.

References


For further information, please contact:
Dr Shweta Mittal, Consultant Psychiatrist, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust - smittal@nottshc.nhs.uk
Dr Aman Sardana, Consultant Psychiatrist, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust - aman.sardana@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk