

Research Prioritization

ABSTRACT

Background: Traditionally, research agendas are set by the researcher. The Children's Hospitals Solutions for Patient Safety Network, a group of over 100 children's hospitals working together to eliminate harm due to healthcare, uses specific discoveries to eliminate harm to children caused by healthcare. Our objective was to identify research questions about patient safety that are the highest priority for key stakeholders, including healthcare system leaders, clinicians, patients, and families.

Methods: We prospectively employed a three-part consensus process, including a 4-item open-ended survey of SPS site leaders (doctors, nurses, and QI experts) and parents about research needed to improve pediatric patient safety, key stakeholder card-sorting and prioritization of responses, a second survey to SPS site leaders and parents asking them to rank the 24 responses resulted from the first survey and key stakeholder card-sorting, and interviews with senior health system leaders from pediatric health systems.

Results: 107 respondents to the first survey, including 40 parents, produced 49 unique research topics; 6 key stakeholders honed this down to the top 24 topics, which 74 respondents to the second survey ranked. After interviews with 7 senior safety leaders from different children's hospitals, our final results indicated that diagnostic error and delays, medication safety, outpatient safety, and early warning and patient deterioration were top priority needs for future research to improve pediatric patient safety. To support this work, a need for research on communication, reliability, and culture issues were highlighted by all key stakeholders.

Conclusions: Key stakeholders readily engaged in identifying and prioritizing research topics for pediatric patient safety. Stakeholders identified a need for research on specific topics, such as diagnostic delay, and also cross-cutting areas such as communication. Research grounded in this stakeholder driven agenda is needed to improve pediatric patient safety.