

Overcoming the failure to manage within the NHS: Using SD hands-on exercises to convey the dos and the don'ts for outpatient service design

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The Hippocratic Oath reinforces the fact that doctors should 'do no harm' to their patients. And yet, in 2018 there remains patients deteriorating on Cancer Care pathways, waiting untreated and in pain when suffering from inflammatory arthritis and losing their sight on Ophthalmology waiting lists. No one would deliberately harm a patient. And yet do because the underlying dynamics of patient flows are often neglected and/or misunderstood.

In this session, we will offer a set of hands-on exercises (and invite the participants to put their hands on them) that are developed for NHS staff to truly explore outpatient systems and challenge some of the written and unwritten rules of its management. Among the patterns targeted by exploring a number of SD models are:

1. Reviewing the new-to-follow-up ratio,
2. The introduction of one-stop clinics,
3. Alternative ways of managing the follow-up load,
4. The effect of reductions in the number of patients who miss their appointments (so-called DNAs),
5. Running incentive clinics (in particular, waiting list initiatives to improve RTT times).

Dr John Boulton, MD, is currently Director of Continuous Improvement at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) in Wales. When working as a Rheumatologist John became interested in quality improvement methodologies, and was awarded a Health Foundation Quality Improvement fellowship at the IHI in 2012. He has previously worked in Qatar as Lead for Quality Improvement, working to support the patient safety and corporate flow work within Hamad Medical Corporation collaborative. Dr Boulton has presented extensively on Quality Improvement and modelling and is currently IHI faculty for the Improvement Coach Programme.

Dr Doris Behrens, PhD, is currently Principal Mathematical Modeller at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) in Wales and about to graduate from wave 48 of the IHI Improvement Advisor Programme. Since Doris joined the NHS full-time in early 2017 she has worked, among others, on the use of System Thinking to understand the relationship between patient flows, flows of information, interventions and human behaviour within an integrated Unscheduled Care system. Before Dr Behrens developed a taste for improvement in healthcare she had led the Eastern European Centre of Competence in Austria and worked as Assistant Professor and Senior Researcher on a multitude of modelling/improvement projects, e.g. in Environmental Economics and Drug Control at universities in Europe and Australia.