

The Influence of Human Factors Education on the Irish Registered Pre-Hospital Practitioner within the National Ambulance Service

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Abstract : Background: Ever since it commenced its registration process of pre-hospital practitioners in the year 2000 through the Irish Government Statute Instrument (SI 109 of 2000) process, the approach to education of its professionals has changed drastically. The progression from the traditional behaviouristic to the current constructivist approach has been based on experiences from other sectors and industries, nationally and internationally. Today, the delivery of a safe and efficient ambulance service heavily depends on its practitioners' range of technical skills, academic knowledge, and overall competences. As these increase, so does the level of complexity of paramedics' everyday practice. This has made it inevitable to consider the 'Human Factor' as a source of potential risk and made formative institutions like the National Ambulance Service College to include it in their curriculum. Methods: This paper used a mixed-method approach, where both, an online questionnaire and a set of semi-structured interviews were the source of primary data. An analysis of this data was carried out using qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Conclusions: The evidence presented leads to the conclusion that in the National Ambulance Service there is a considerable lack of education of Human Factors and the levels in understanding of how to manage Human Factors in practice vary across its spectrum. Paramedic Practitioners in Ireland seem to understand that the responsibility of patient care lies on the team, rather than on the most hierarchically senior practitioner present in the scene.

Keywords : human factors, ergonomics, stress, decision making, pre-hospital care, paramedic, education

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