

Observations of Conformity in the Health Professions

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Abstract : Although research shows that interprofessional practice has desirable effects on patient care, its implementation can present challenges to its team members. In particular, they may feel pressured to agree with or conform to other members who share information that is contrary to their own understanding. Obtaining evidence of this phenomenon is challenging, as team members may underreport their conformity behaviors due to reasons such as social desirability. In this paper, a series of studies are reviewed in which several approaches to assessing conformity in the health care professions are tested. Simulations, questionnaires, and behavior checklists were developed to measure conformity behaviors. Insights from these studies show that a significant proportion of people conform either in the presence or absence of others, express a variety of verbal and nonverbal behaviors when considering whether to conform to others, may shift between conforming and moments later not conforming (and vice versa), and may not accurately report whether they conformed. A new method of measuring conformity using the implicit bias test is also discussed. People at all levels in the healthcare system are encouraged to develop both formal and informal.

Keywords : conformity, decision-making, inter-professional teams, simulation

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