How does Leadership Emerge in the Inter-professional Workplace? A PhD Study Employing Visual Methodologies

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Leadership development of medical trainees has come to the fore in recent years alongside a changing workplace and workforce.¹ Historically leadership theory favours an individualistic approach.² However, current social psychological theory proposes that social identity (SI) makes leadership possible through shared understanding and championing of group goals and visions.³ Current leadership development practices and research tends to focus on individual competence and training despite espousing shared leadership.

This research will explore the emergence of leadership involving medical trainees within the inter-professional workplace. Using a social constructionist⁴ approach this research will be undertaken in 2 stages:

Stage 1: Data will be analysed from a series of focus groups undertaken with medical trainees to answer these questions:

1. What do medical trainees understand by the terms “leadership” and “followership”?
2. What are medical trainees’ experiences of leadership and followership?
3. What are medical trainees’ perceptions of need in relation to leadership development?

Stage 2: Video-reflexivity methodology is proposed for Stage 2. Data from Stage 1 will influence the final design of this study but it is likely that participants from the whole inter-professional team will be filmed in the clinical environment and the film will then be used to stimulate team discussion sessions to answer these research questions:

4. How does leadership emerge within inter-professional workplace learning, and how do individual, relational, contextual and material factors influence this emergence?
5. To what extent do video-reflexivity techniques facilitate leadership development within inter-professional workplace learning?

By November 2012, Stage 1 data will have been collected and final methodological design of Stage 2 will be underway.

It is hoped that this study will provide unique insight into how leadership emerges within the inter-professional workplace. This conference provides a unique and timely opportunity for peer and expert discussion of the methodological approach proposed for Stage 2.

Questions for the Doctoral Discussant Session

Using innovative visual methodologies to research the healthcare workplace raises challenges technically, ethically and epistemologically⁵; my questions hope to stimulate discussion in order to identify and address some of the pros and cons of the use of these methodologies within my study:

1. How do I get a video camera into the clinical environment?
2. What are the ethical challenges unique to using video methodologies?
3. How will the researcher/participant relationship differ if I use video reflexivity methodologies?

References

5. Ajjawi R, Rees CE, Monrouxe LV, Visual methodologies to research workplace learning: Utilising video to visualise power in bedside teaching, Seminar presentation; Workplace based learning seminar day: May 2012, Cardiff: Higher Education Academy