



# Risk & Danger

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Spreading good practice: Risk management awardees at the IRM awards.

“ IT TURNS OUT THAT ONLY ONE OF THE 34 UK NHS TRUSTS AFFECTED BY THE WANNACRY ATTACK, HAD FORMALLY IDENTIFIED CYBER RISK AS A THREAT TO THEIR ORGANISATION ”

losing staff, how is it going to deliver good healthcare with fewer personnel?

The NHS does not have a clear agreed vision. Instead, successive governments temporarily fill the gap with their own visions, and with mixed results. While there is no clear agreed vision, there are seven principles. Five of these are absolute, such as making a comprehensive service available to all, patients being at the heart of the NHS, working across organisational boundaries, the NHS being accountable to the public and patients, and access based on clinical need. However, the remaining two principles are not absolute – that the NHS aspires to best standards and it is committed to best value. As things stand, these two

principles are seen as nice-to-do, rather than absolute requirements. This leaves most NHS Trusts in a quandary - they do not have clear agreed visions either.

There are some success stories of course. For instance, ten years ago, Salford Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust had one of the worst poor patient safety records in England. From this low starting point, they adopted a new bold vision - to be the safest Trust in the NHS. They have achieved and sustained their bold vision in the intervening years. Not every NHS Trust can be the safest in England and this is why NHS Trusts need to review their strengths and weaknesses before adopting a vision that suits the populations they serve and the people they employ.

Vision is very important for staff. It is essential to give workers a concrete picture of why they should get out of bed everyday and what they are aiming to achieve at work. Many NHS Trusts have done a mediocre job on vision and this is where enterprise risk management can help.

Risk management is about preventing downside risks and maximising opportunities. For the other risks, it is about managing them effectively. The aim of the IRM Health and Care Special Interest Group is to help healthcare providers around the world deliver better care.



Working internationally: the IRM forging an alliance with the Chartered Institute of Loan and Risk Management in Nigeria.

For example, referring to the Wannacry ransomware that hit organisations around the world in May this year, 34 NHS trusts were affected. I looked at the Strategic Risk Registers from all 34 trusts. These documents should have included information on top strategic (downside) risks, opportunities and mitigations. It turned out that only one of the 34 NHS Trusts affected by the Wannacry ransomware had identified cyber risk as a threat. There are lots of questions to be asked.

Therefore the IRM has launched a review of the NHS Board Assurance Frameworks taking into account best practice in other sectors and how this can help healthcare. We have found that current guidance could do much better. We will be publishing our review later in 2017.

### In which areas do you think health and care need to implement key risk management strategies?

We have picked up on different ways healthcare deals with risk. Prevention is the best way to deal with risk. The second option might sound counter-intuitive in the health and care contexts. That is not having to rely on people to do the right thing. Other controls include introducing policies and training, detecting the risk as it materialises and, finally, dealing with predictable risks. Detecting risk and dealing with predictable risks are still the two most common approaches to managing risk in healthcare. I want to see this change.

Most healthcare organisations are reactive rather than proactive. In order to mitigate risk, the CEO and executive team need to have a grip on what the risks and opportunities are, specialists need to be up to date

with patient safety, compliance and legal matters, the boardroom needs to be satisfied that there are robust processes in place to deliver timely reliable information on current residual risk. Internal audit can then be helpful in giving assurances on the reliability of risk management processes.

### What sorts of interest have you been attracting and from what types of organisations? What are the main concerns?

We have had a lot of interest from the UK and Ireland, Africa, Europe, India and Australia.

While patient safety is having an impact on healthcare, we are hearing about silos and the challenges of sharing what is happening in one silo with other workers, specialties and organisations.

Cyber security is a big area to focus on and the Institute has developed a training programme aimed at managing cybersecurity risks as well as budget management. Financial cuts can be necessary but they really do need to be intelligent too. This is not always the case. Information is key to making good decisions and, right now that information is not always available to the key decision-makers.

Increased spending is one of the often repeated mantra's for dealing with risk in healthcare but in my view, throwing more money at risks is not always the answer. Instead, healthcare needs to have a clear vision about how it will help to prevent, minimise and treat ill-health. It then needs to coach its workers to deliver the vision.

I am very excited about the impact the IRM Health and Care special interest group can have on vision and enterprise risk management in healthcare. ■

## KEY POINTS

- ✓ Life Expectancy in the UK stands at 81.4 years. This is 2.5 years more than in the United States and 2.3 years less than in Japan.
- ✓ Public and private healthcare costs \$3,971 per person per annum in the UK. This is 57% cheaper than in the US and 5% less than in Japan
- ✓ With a workforce of about 1.3 million, the NHS employs less than a dozen Certified Risk Professionals.
- ✓ Therefore The Institute of Risk Management is actively looking to help healthcare insurers and providers deliver better services. The Institute's health and care special interest group events are available free-of-charge to all professionals working in the healthcare and care sectors

