SAFETY PRINCIPLES: THE SAFROS STANCE ON PATIENT SAFETY

Contact Details:
M.C. Fiazza and Paolo Fiorini
Department of Computer Science
University of Verona, Italy

Email:
camilla.fiazza@metropolis.sci.univr.it and paolo.fiorini@univr.it

Abstract:
Patient safety (PS) is an emergent discipline and research field; it has attracted considerable attention in the past few years after publication of influential reports detailing the size of the phenomenon of medical error. The economic weight is enormous. Patient safety has in the past been associated mostly to surgical skill; medical error has been blamed almost exclusively on the medical personnel involved (surgeon, doctor, nurse, etc). After patient safety was placed in the spotlight, it has become apparent that PS cannot be treated as resulting solely from technical or medical skill. There is universal consensus that this notion is intrinsically systemic. What this means is that the entirety of factors characterizing the patient's medical environment have non-negligible repercussions on the final outcome of healthcare. Surgical or medical skill is not the only factor. Improvement on PS will not come just from demanding that medical personnel have even greater levels of skill. In fact, it is certain that improvements in PS can be realized by addressing factors such as teamwork in the OR, communication protocols between medical personnel of different qualifications and roles, more efficient information retrieval, information integration and operational conditions in general. EU reports have identified ICT-based solutions as the key to bring forth progress in PS. In this talk we will describe how this complex concept is addressed within the European Project SAFROS (Patient Safety in Robotic Surgery), which studies specifically robotic surgery. In fact, robotic surgery can potentially implement the integrated and monitored data flow that is essential to the improvement of patient safety during surgical interventions. Robotic surgery can support more efficiently the introduction and validation of new safety protocols than traditional surgery, and it is the natural candidate for developing new safety-based technologies.