

Social Science & Medicine
Special Issue Call For Papers:
New approaches to researching patient safety

Guest edited by Rick Iedema

The adverse impact of clinical incidents on patients' well-being is becoming an increasingly prominent concern for policy makers, clinicians and the public. Much research is therefore currently carried out to understand the most common threats to patient safety and the general nature of clinical incidents. However, this research tends to favour generalizing and numerical evidence at the expense of engaging with the in situ complexities of clinical practices and processes. This has led to a dearth in ethnographic, sociological and interventionist research in the area of patient safety.

This Special Issue of *Social Science & Medicine* will broaden the scope of existing approaches to patient safety and quality of care by inviting papers which report on research that engages with in situ clinical work, research that uses methods that are sensitive to clinical and organizational complexity, and research that displays awareness of the complexities created as a result of the research process itself and its impact on existing clinical work processes.

Social Science & Medicine is international in scope and we are keen to include papers from a wide range of countries, including non-western settings. Research foci might include the implications for patient safety and quality of care of: clinical communication, clinical team processes, inter-sectoral flows and tensions, inter- and/or intra-professional (dis)continuities, patients' care experiences and their relevance for clinical service and facility (re)design, individuals' resilience, 'error wisdom' and pragmatic foresight, the impact of technologisations of aspects of care, dealing with and learning from errors, and the challenge of disseminating 'what works'. Methods can include, among others, ethnographic observation; narrative and discourse analysis; visualizations of clinical work (photo/video/art); quick feedback and reflexive interventions, and (auto)biographical descriptions of researcher-researched encounters and transformative partnerships. In policy terms the special issue aims to contribute to a decreased reliance on reform initiatives and safety approaches transplanted from commercial-industrial settings and non-clinical management practices.

Authors who feel their work addresses the above methodological and contextual aims should submit their full manuscripts for consideration

to *Social Science & Medicine* at <http://ees.elsevier.com/ssm/> by 1st December 2007. When asked to choose article type, authors should stipulate "Special Issue Article", and in the "Enter Comments" box the title of the Special Issue should be inserted, plus any further acknowledgements. All submissions should meet *Social Science & Medicine* author guidelines (also available at <http://ees.elsevier.com/ssm/>).