

# **Positive team culture: the importance of listening to your team**

**Baker, JE<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Melbourne Health, The Royal Melbourne Hospital, RMH, Victoria, 3050, jacinta.baker@mh.org.au

## **Background**

In November 2011 it was identified that the Aged Care Physiotherapy Team was displaying signs of poor team culture and effectiveness. Manager feedback and a staff satisfaction survey conducted at this time demonstrated that morale was low, job satisfaction poor and staff turnover high.

## **Methods**

The Aged Care Physiotherapy Team (N=12) at a large metropolitan teaching hospital were surveyed in November 2011 using a short seven question survey developed to establish the team's aims/roles, best features, most significant improvements, future advances, least satisfying aspects and suggestions for change. All responses were anonymous to minimise responder bias.

Results were collated and presented to staff at a team building and planning day held in February 2012. All themes were discussed and a multi-strategy approach developed to address the areas of concern. Key outcomes included developing an agreed team goal, increasing access and support provided by senior staff, providing opportunities for quality improvement, setting realistic therapy and caseload expectations and streamlining communication.

Members of The Aged Care Physiotherapy Team were re-surveyed in March 2015 using the original survey. Results were collated and responses analysed for key themes.

## **Results**

Results show significant improvements in the overall team culture and effectiveness in the Aged Care Physiotherapy Team. Staff reported united values and goals, a supportive and approachable leadership team and effective and efficient communication as key improvements. Additionally, there has been a notable improvement in morale, job satisfaction and decreased staff turnover.

## **Discussion**

Creating and sustaining a positive team culture should be at the forefront of any healthcare team leader's mind. A positive team environment has been shown to improve productivity and quality of work which are key performance outcomes in healthcare. Furthermore, listening to and addressing concerns raised by individuals equally in a team can lead to improved morale, job satisfaction and retention.