BOOK REVIEW

PATIENT SAFETY CULTURE: THEORY, METHODS, AND APPLICATION.
PATRICK WATERSON (ED).

Review by Dr Adrian Smith

Patient safety culture: theory, methods, and application, edited by Patrick Waterson, provides a solid foundational understanding of the principles of clinical safety systems that can be established in hospitals and healthcare facilities. Much of the book leverages from the experiences gained pioneering work undertaken in the aviation and air traffic management systems over the years.

Aeromedical examiners and specialists in aerospace medicine are in the fortunate position of understanding the operational environments of both industries – aviation and healthcare. This text provides valuable understanding of how the safety systems used widely in the aviation industry can be implemented within a healthcare setting, working to improve the safety culture within a healthcare setting to ensure optimal patient outcomes.

Patient safety culture: theory, methods, and application is divided into four sections. Part 1 describes the background of organizational safety culture, and discusses the theories and practices of different industries. People familiar with aviation safety systems will recognize the concepts discussed in this section. Part 2 describes tools that can be used to assess and explore organizational safety cultures, and practical safety indicators that can help monitor advances in safety management. Part 3 provides practical advice on how to implement changes to improve safety outcomes for large organisations. Part 4 describes the safety management and safety culture in an air traffic management system, and directly compares this to the need to enhance patient safety culture in healthcare settings.

Aeromedical examiners and specialists in aerospace medicine often combine their experience in aviation medicine with other dimensions of clinical practice – including primary health care as well as hospital settings. By applying their experience and knowledge of safety management in aviation to other dimensions of clinical practice, aeromedical examiners and specialists in aerospace medicine can provide valuable assistance to improving patient safety culture. Patient safety culture: theory, methods, and application will provide the much-needed framework and tools to help transfer the safety lessons from aviation to other healthcare settings.

I would heartily recommend this book for ASAM members who are interested in promoting patient safety through enhancing the patient safety culture of the organisations they work in.

THE LEADING EDGE: INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA’S ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE.
BY STEPHEN LANGFORD.

Review by Dr Adrian Smith

Dr Stephen Langford is a well-known member of ASAM, and known widely in the aeromedical and retrieval communities. He is the longest-serving doctor in RFDS, having worked with RFDS since 1983, and is the Medical Director of RFDS in Western Australia.

His book The leading edge: innovation, technology, and people in Australia’s Royal Flying Doctor Service provides a warm review of the RFDS using the many technological innovations since the 1930s as the narrative that communicates the history of RFDS in a new and interesting way.

The story is populated by many personal anecdotes and tales of medical adventure, interspersed with countless stories of the challenges of providing medical support to the people of remote rural Western Australia – trying to communicate with, reach, treat, and transport the sick and injured in the days before the many technologies we enjoy today. The book tells the story of advances in aviation over the years, as well as advances in medical imaging and biological monitoring that allow critical care facilities to be easily taken forward to the point of injury, and provide critical monitoring during flight.

Aeromedical retrieval is the exciting interface between aviation and critical care medicine – both industries that are driven to explore innovations in technology to improve performance and safety. Stephen’s book provides an enjoyable and educational read, a book that illustrates the way the exciting advances in aviation and medicine have worked together to enhance the support RFDS can provide the many people who rely on the Service across rural and regional Australia.

I would heartily recommend this book to ASAM members interested in the history of the iconic Australian institution, the RFDS.