

# Quality Improvement Training in Medical Schools: How Prepared Are Our Future Physicians?

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## Abstract

In 2000, a groundbreaking publication, "To Err is Human", discussed how the healthcare system in the United States (US) is flawed with death-resulting preventable medical errors. For the first time, it exposed a cause of death that is worse than commonly regarded frequent causes of death such as cancer and AIDS. A second report, "Crossing the Quality Chasm", provided global recommendations on redesigning a healthcare system that is evidence-based and patient-centered to improve patient care and safety.

The healthcare system in the US has since seen a change. For example, quality standards around patient safety and satisfaction have been enacted for hospitals and providers to meet. Part of their reimbursements depends on satisfying these measure sets.

With healthcare costs on the rise, dedicating sufficient resources to implement QI initiatives poses a significant challenge for hospitals. Many physicians lack the specific Quality Improvement (QI) education and training necessary to help their patients. Key to having practice-ready physicians is training in QI during medical school.

Many world organizations have emphasized the need for QI training among medical students. In 2011, the World Health Organization (WHO) endorsed that patient safety is a multidisciplinary effort and integration early in the training and education process is key. Prior to this, in 2009, WHO also developed a patient safety curriculum guide. In the United States, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) published an expert panel's report, "Teaching for Quality: Integrating Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Across the Continuum of Medical Education." Recommendations include integrating Quality Improvement/Patient Safety (QI/PS) concepts in a physician's education starting with medical school and throughout their medical career. The AAMC expert panel envisions this integrated, aligned, assessment-based, and lifelong QI/PS training to lead future changes in healthcare. Part of this will include collaboration with other healthcare professions.

Despite recommendations by national and international organizations, published studies around QI training in the medical school indicates variability in training and a need for improved QI training. This presentation will discuss the current training challenges, successes, and needs of tomorrow's physicians.