



Resilient Health Care, Volume 2: The Resilience of Everyday Clinical Work (Ashgate Studies in Resilience Engineering)

Robert L. Wears, Erik Hollnagel

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Health systems everywhere are expected to meet increasing public and political demands for accessible, high-quality care. Policy-makers, managers, and clinicians use their best efforts to improve efficiency, safety, quality, and economic viability. One solution has been to mimic approaches that have been shown to work in other domains, such as quality management, lean production, and high reliability. In the enthusiasm for such solutions, scant attention has been paid to the fact that health care as a multifaceted system differs significantly from most traditional industries. Solutions based on linear thinking in engineered systems do not work well in complicated, multi-stakeholder non-engineered systems, of which health care is a leading example. A prerequisite for improving health care and making it more resilient is that the nature of everyday clinical work be well understood. Yet the focus of the majority of policy or management solutions, as well as that of accreditation and regulation, is work as it ought to be (also known as "work-as-imagined"™). The aim of policy-makers and managers, whether the priority is safety, quality, or efficiency, is therefore to make everyday clinical work - or work-as-done - comply with work-as-imagined. This fails to recognise that this normative conception of work is often oversimplified, incomplete, and outdated. There is therefore an urgent need to better understand everyday clinical work as it is done. Despite the common focus on deviations and failures, it is undeniable that clinical work goes right far more often than it goes wrong, and that we only can make it better if we understand how this happens. This second volume of Resilient Health Care continues the line of thinking of the first book, but takes it further through a range of chapters from leading international thinkers on resilience and health care. Where the first book provided the rationale and basic concepts of RHC, the Resilience of Everyday Clinical Work breaks new ground by analysing everyday work situations in primary, secondary, and tertiary care to identify and describe the fundamental strategies that clinicians everywhere have developed and use with a fluency that belies the demands to be resolved and the dilemmas to be balanced. Because everyday clinical work is at the heart of resilience, it is essential to appreciate how it functions, and to understand its characteristics.

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