

# Setting the stage for high performance: Does culture do it?

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inspiring achievement

# Culture eats strategy for breakfast

Rand Corporation

What is it?

What do we know about culture and performance?

How can we use the idea of culture?

# So, 'change the culture'?

- the system requires 'a fundamental paradigm shift in healthcare management and thinking in Australia. Changing the way we think about quality and changing the culture of our hospitals, will not occur overnight'
- Eastman (**1992**). *MJA*, 157:219-220.

.....

'ultimately, we need to change  
the culture in healthcare'

Barracough (**2001**). *MJA*, 174:616-7.

# Still trying....

- ‘The following strategies have been identified to help ensure that engaging communities through consumer and community participation becomes part of the organisational culture and practice of Queensland Health’.
- Queensland Health Position Statement: Consumer and Community Participation, January **2003**

# Culture talk continues

- The key role of the Centre is to lead the development of a new culture for Queensland Health. There are three main components to this: Improve patient safety; changing the organisation culture and improving the performance orientation and transparency.  
(<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/rdd/default.asp>, September **2008**)
- Within this centre there is a Workplace Culture and Leadership Centre but no further information is available

# What is organisational culture?

- System of shared meaning
  - Not entirely conscious
  - Field not object
    - Lives in the white spaces of the organisation chart
  - Not the creature of management
    - Although leadership, and foundation, matter
  - Discussion began in 1980s, hit Oz health care in late 1980s

# Edgar Schein's definition

'a pattern of *shared basic assumptions* that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has *worked well enough* to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the *correct way to perceive, think and feel* in relation to those problems'

*Organisational Culture and Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1997  
(Second Edition) p12.

What I learned  
from my  
daughter:

Culture is  
enduring  
....and feral



inspiring achievement

# Climate is related but different

- Climate: the psychological ‘weather’
  - ‘Psychological safety’ for innovation, teamwork
- Culture belongs to the organisation
- Climate belongs to the team or unit
- And of course they affect each other

# Why is improvement so hard?

- Paradox: Change is all about us, but many problems are intractable, unresolved
  - relationships of clinicians & managers tense
  - work practices, professional cultures, focus on individual skills seem unchangeable
  - waves of policy and structural reform, without vision and feasible goals, have increased resistance to change (van Eyk et al 2001)

# Does culture influence healthcare performance? A review

- **Qualitative review: all empirical studies**
- **10 studies, variable design and quality**
- **4 found supportive evidence, 0 gave evidence against**
- ***So, maybe.* 'Simple relationships such as 'strong culture leads to good performance' are not supported**
- **Hard to study 'culture' and 'performance'**

Tim Scott, Russell Mannion, Martin Marshall, Huw Davies 2003

# Association of culture, climate and quality of care in PHC teams

- Measured climate, culture and quality of care
- Survey of 492 professionals in 42 general practices
- No associations of culture and quality of care
- Limited associations between climate and quality
- No evidence that culture and climate are predictors of quality of care
- Need more complex model of relationships between culture, climate and outcomes
- Mark Hann, Peter Bower, Stephen Campbell, Martin Marshall and David Reeves 2007

# Evidence for climate

- Team-work climate that enables constructive questioning and discussion of mistakes is associated with improved innovation and higher performance
  - in acute care and nursing homes
- EG introduction of balloon angioplasty
  - better outcomes in teams with climate enabling challenge and questioning

Edmondson, Bohmer et al (2001) 'Disrupted routines: team learning and new technology implementation in hospitals', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46:685-716.

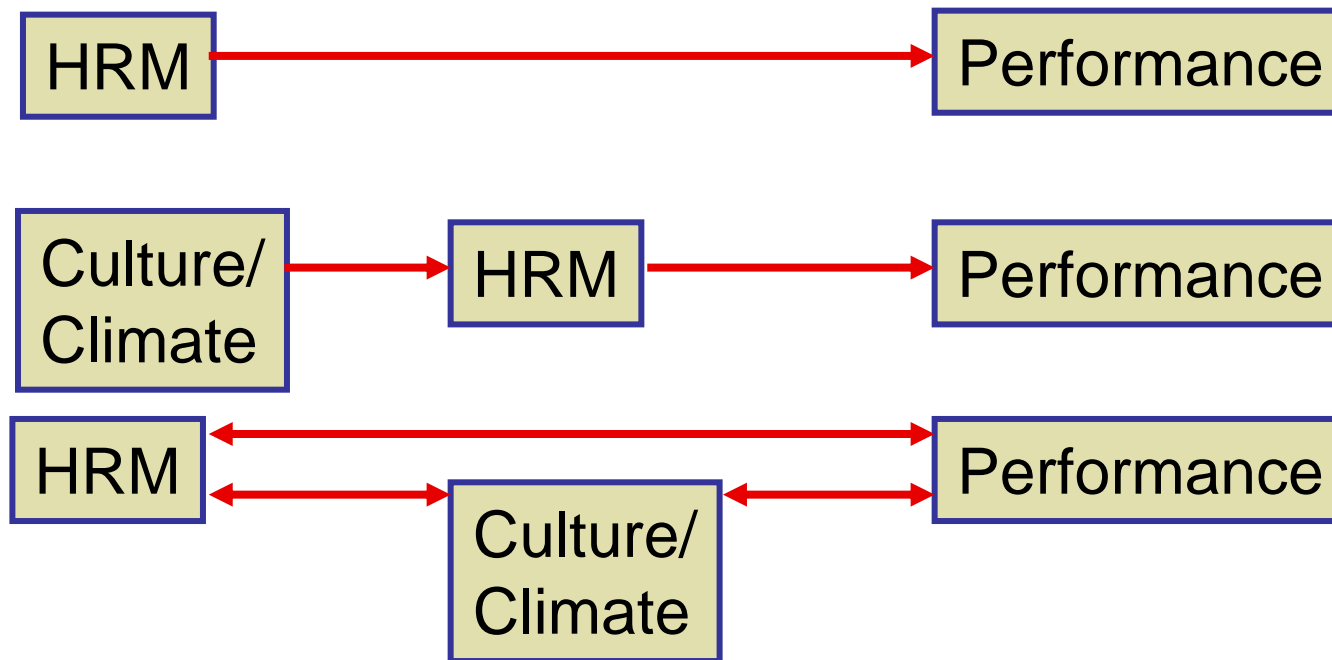
# CQI, QM & TQM

- Quality initiatives work in organisations that are oriented to performance
- Factors for success included:
  - Systematic problem-solving based on data
  - Participation by doctors in cross-functional teams
  - Employee involvement & empowerment
  - Explicit focus on internal & external customers
  - Focus on integrated processes
- Renhard (2001) *Evidence for Effectiveness for Quality Initiatives in Human Services: A Critical Review*. Australian Institute for Primary Care, Melbourne

# Human Resource Management

- In other industries, association between high involvement, progressive human resource practices and performance
- In health care, team work, appraisal and sophisticated training policies associated with lower patient mortality [West, Borrill et al (2002) 'The link between the management of employees and patient mortality in acute hospitals' *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13(8):1299-1310.]

# Note: Cause and effect are not clear



# Performance Drivers

- Performance is dependent on will, focus and capacity, but organisations typically:
  - Over develop capacity [emphasis on tools]
  - Under develop focus [the pain of deciding]
  - Do not develop will at all
- Smith and Sharma (2002). 'Developing personal responsibility and leadership traits in all your employees: part 1 - shaping and harmonizing the high-performance drivers.' *Management Decision* 40(8): 764-774.

# Three areas of focus for innovation and performance

- Approaches to team work
  - Climate of safety – capacity to challenge, question
  - Which requires respectful relationships
- Really managing performance
- Education so that people can ‘see’ the system of work; and know how to change it

# Our conclusions

- People call for culture change when they're not sure what to do
- Culture change is like relationships
  - Best worked on indirectly

# Cause:effect confusion

- Culture change is the result, not the cause, of improvement
- Managers need to focus on the business
- Better to work on change in HRM, in teamwork, in leadership at all levels

# Climate might be better focus

- Climate is easier and quicker to change
- Leaders need to get comfortable with shared learning, which means questioning
- Concept of evidence-based management?
  - It's about the best way
  - The best way is our way

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Culture is an important modifier of everything  
Culture change is perilous  
Know it, read it, find the best in it  
Settle in for the long haul