



Examining the Need for Change by Describing the Attitudes and Perceptions of Team Communications Related to Patient Care and Safety Among Ambulatory Clinic Healthcare Staff



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Background

- Medical errors account for up to 250,000 patient deaths annually
- Research suggests medical errors are highly attributable to poor healthcare team communications.
- Miscommunication among the leading causes of sentinel events.
- IOM Report, "To Err Is Human" posited that communication and teamwork are essential components to safe and successful health care environments, emphasizing their importance to overall patient safety.
- According to TJC poor team communication considered the root cause of nearly 80% of all serious medical errors.
- DoD and AHRQ created *TeamSTEPPS®*, shown to reduce poor communication, while improving team performance, effectiveness, patient safety, satisfaction, and health outcomes in healthcare settings.

Problem

- Despite surmounting evidence supporting *TeamSTEPPS®*, one large family practice clinic is not practicing any standardized form of team communication.
- Thus, there may be an increased risk for failed communications, leading to increased medical errors, and adverse patient health outcomes.
- It is also important to consider the perceptions and attitudes of staff surrounding communication issues that may impair patient care and adversely affect health outcomes as well as their openness to change current communication processes.

Purpose & Aims

- Purpose:** project is to assess and describe the staff attitudes, perceptions, and intent to make change, regarding team communication as it relates to patient care and safety in an ambulatory clinic setting.
- Aim:** to conduct a systematic record review of questionnaire responses and evaluate the healthcare staff attitudes, perceptions, and interest to change by receiving team-focused and evidenced-based practice strategies training like *TeamSTEPPS®* to improve their teamwork, communication, and ability to reduce medical errors in their large, outpatient clinic setting

PICO(T) Question

- In (P) In healthcare team members who work in a family practice clinic setting, how does the introduction of a (I) systematic, team-based communication program like *TeamSTEPPS®*, compared to (C) the current practice using no standard communication process, impact the healthcare team's overall (O) attitudes, perceptions, and intent to change communications, related to patient safety and risk of medical errors?

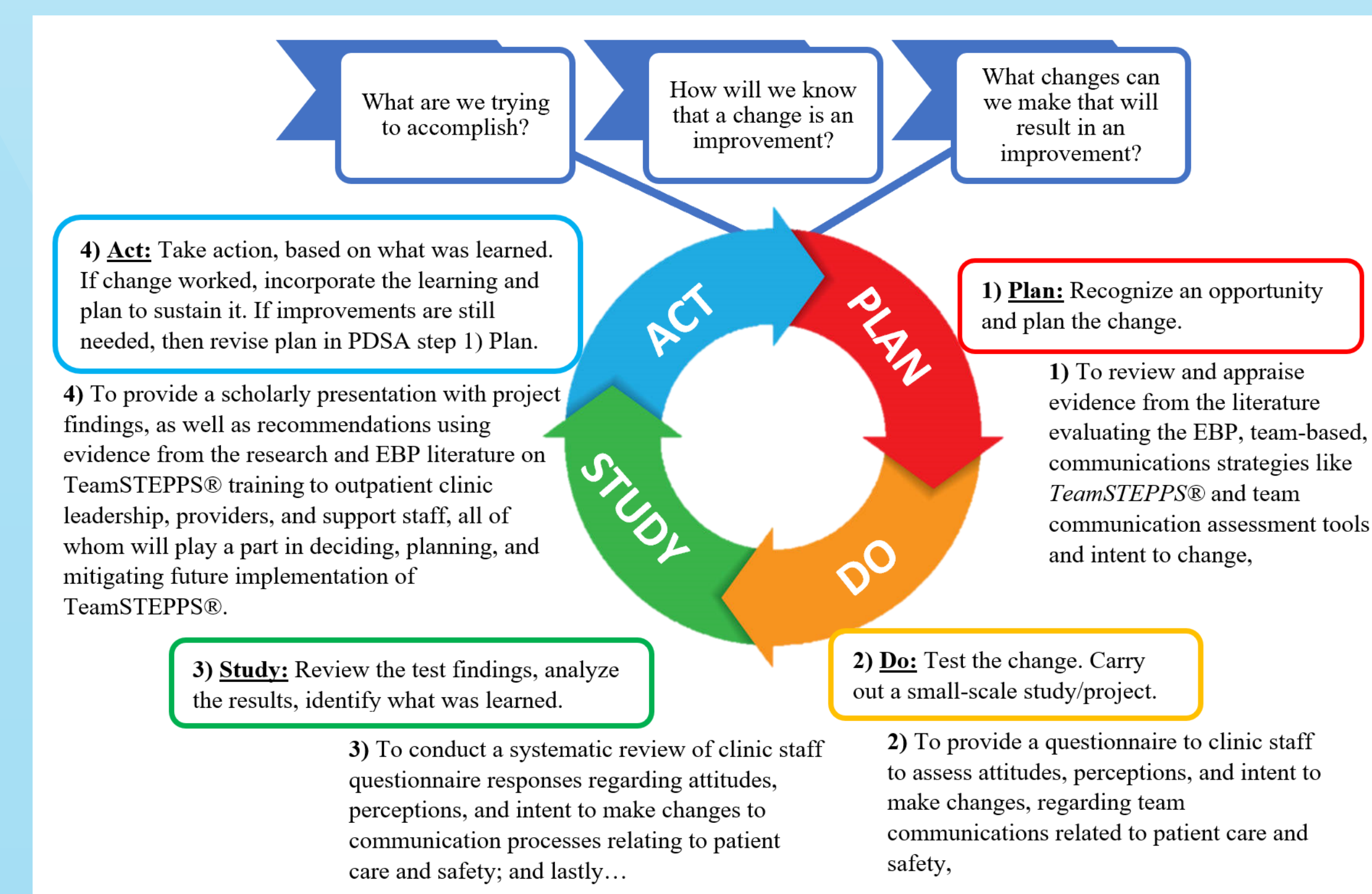
Methods

- Scholarly project will involve a non-implementation approach, focusing on staff questionnaire responses about perceived teamwork, communication, and intent to change communication processes in an outpatient clinic setting.
- The Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) Model for Improvement will guide this project. A systematic review of questionnaire response data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and securely stored with no private information.

**TeamSTEPPS® Teamwork Attitudes (T-TAQ) & Perceptions (T-TPQ) and Perceived Needs & Intent to Change Questionnaires*

Figure 1.

IHI Model for Improvement Framework & Project Objectives



Sample

- Participants:** five healthcare providers, two board-certified family physicians, three certified nurse practitioners, and 4 administrative and support staff personnel. Response Rate was 87.5%, involving 14 out of 16 staff
- Setting:** a large and busy ambulatory, primary care clinic which has a focus in family practice medicine, serving a patient panel of over 7,100 beneficiaries
- Protection of Human Subjects:** project reviewed and determined **APPROVED** in accordance with federal regulations and the Otterbein University **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD, (HS # 22/23-84) 4/10/23**

Results

Figure 1.

TeamSTEPPS® Teamwork Attitudes (T-TAQ) Data

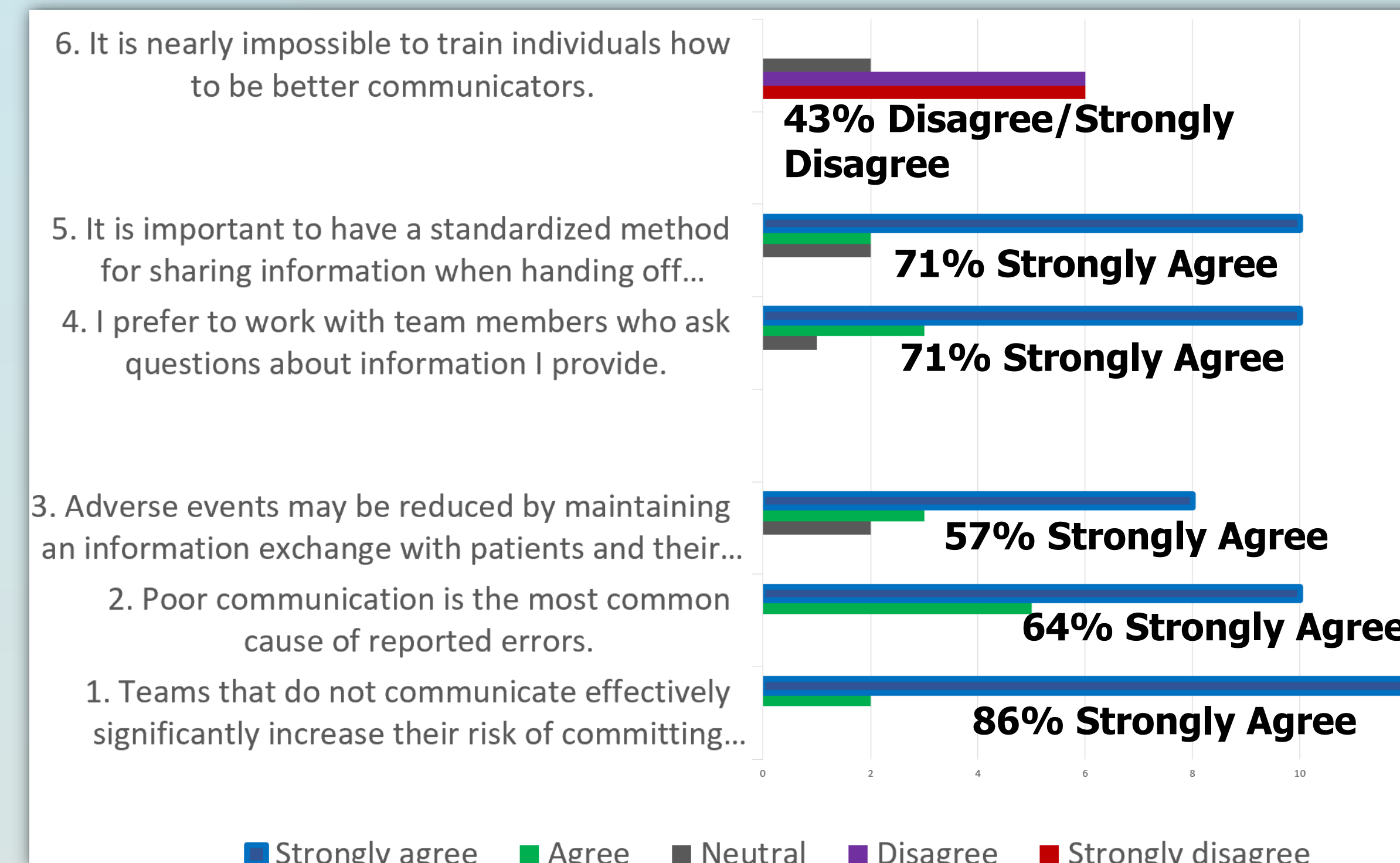


Figure 2.

TeamSTEPPS® Teamwork Perceptions (T-TPQ) Data

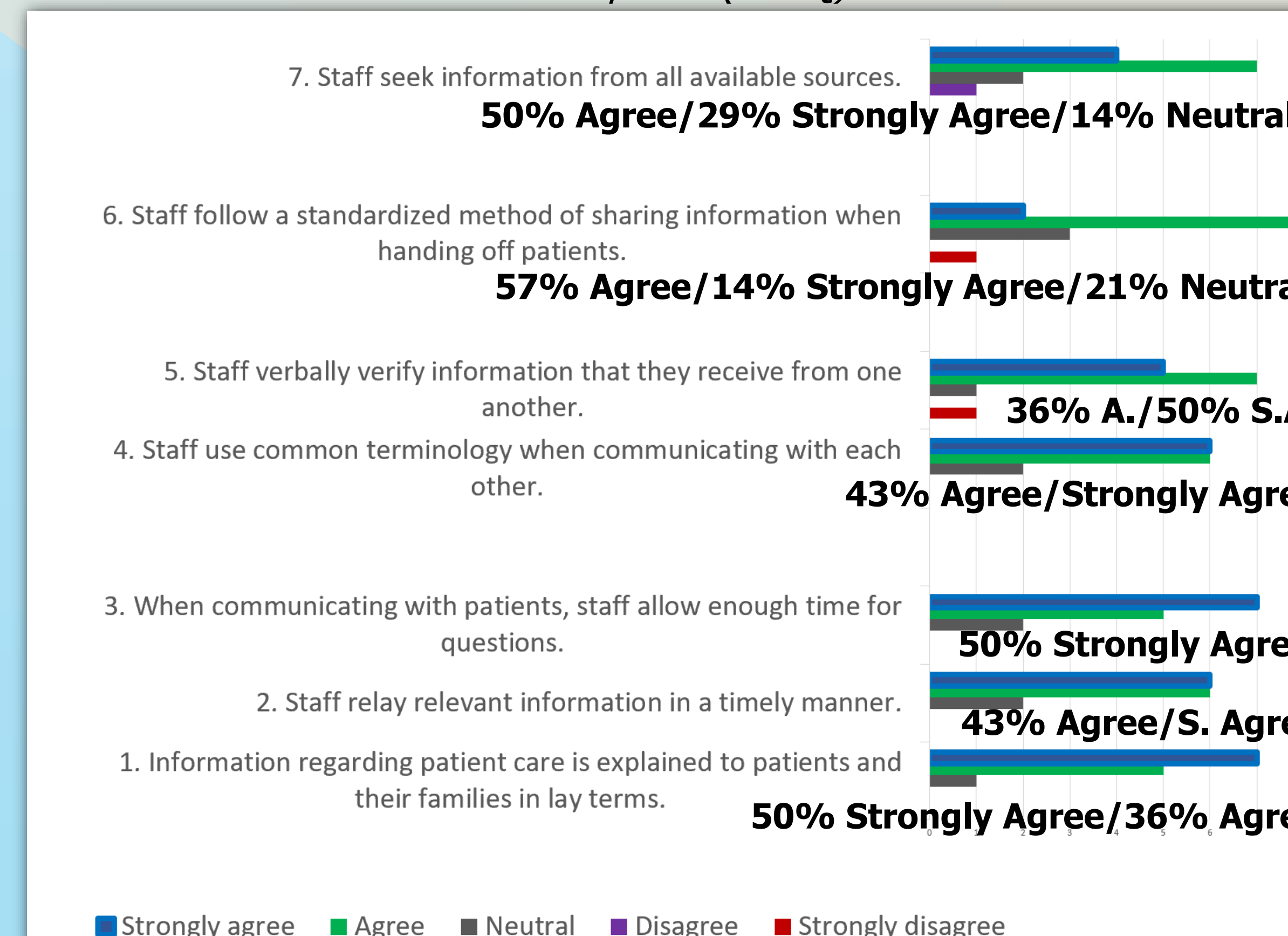
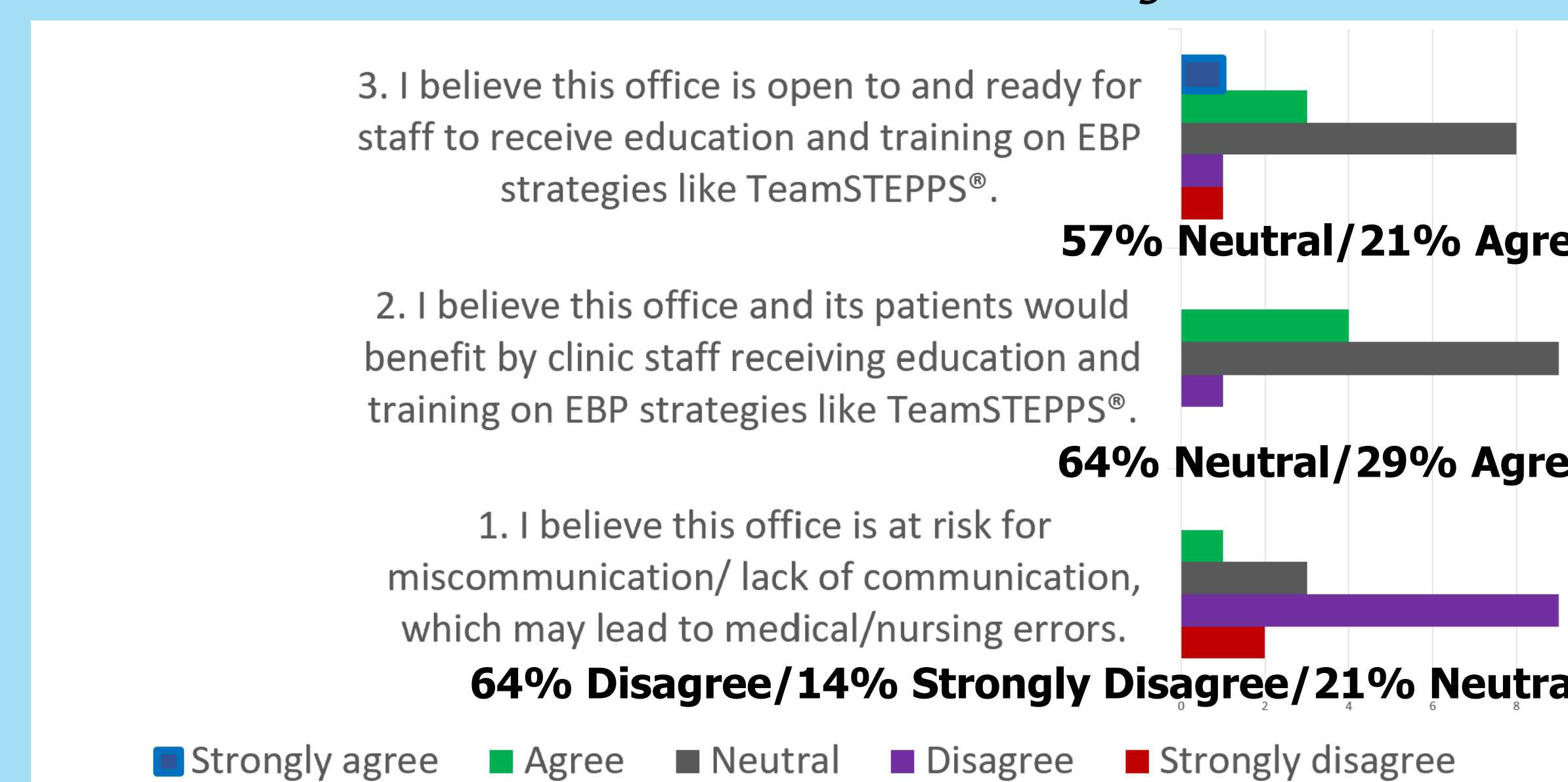


Figure 3.

TeamSTEPPS® Perceived Needs and Intent to Change Data



Conclusion

- Poor communication is a major contributing factor of medical errors.
- Teamwork and effective communication are critical elements relevant to the delivery of safe, quality healthcare.
- Most healthcare facilities are continuously at increased risk for failures in communication → increased medical errors, and adverse patient outcomes.
- Outpatient care settings have a considerable opportunity to decrease medical errors and provide safe patient care, by incorporating strategies to improve communications like *TeamSTEPPS®*.
- To achieve organizational consensus and buy-in for effective change, also important to consider perceptions and attitudes of staff.
- This project team undertook an integral first step in assessing and describing an ambulatory healthcare staff attitudes, perceptions, and intent to make change, regarding team communication as it relates to patient care and safety in an ambulatory clinic setting.
- Project findings are anticipated to help increase healthcare leadership's awareness of their clinical team's readiness to make improvements in teamwork, communications, patient care and safety through use of evidenced-based practice change and highly effective team-based training programs like *TeamSTEPPS®*.
- This DNP Final Scholarly Project, which utilizes best practices from the literature and a systematic approach can serve as a beginning point for future projects which seek to ensure safe, quality, and evidence-based practice care though the bolstering of teamwork and effective team-based communications among healthcare professionals in other similar outpatient clinic settings.

Abstract & References

