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Facilitation of Value Stream Mapping (VSM) processes: significance of first line hospital manager participation and staff perception of servant leadership

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1. Background

Numerous studies show that support at work from the organisation, inclusive management practices and support from coworkers are associated with improved outcomes for work processes and staff wellbeing. Servant leadership is linked to positive staff outcomes and continuous improvements and is founded on leader's awareness, supporting behavior and ethics which fosters intrinsic motivation and democratic decision making. Based on previous research it is hypothesised that the level of servant leadership and management engagement in VSM processes may facilitate the VSM process as well as the subsequent implementation of proposals. This study is part of a Nordic Multicenter Study investigating VSM processes.

2. Aim

To investigate if the staff perception of servant leadership and 1st line manager participation in the VSM process had an impact on the completing implementation of VSM processes.

3. Material and method

Baseline questionnaire data, before process implementation, was gathered from nine clinical wards in four different hospitals in Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden by measuring total score for Servant Leadership. Qualitative data was collected on clinical ward managers' views regarding their experience on the VSM processes. Two of the 9 wards decided not to finish their VSM processes. Servant leadership data from the two wards that did not finish was compared to data from the seven wards that finished.

4. Findings:

The analyses did not show a statistical difference in staff perception on servant leadership when comparing wards finishing the VSM processes and not finishing. Qualitative data shows signs of limited participation of managers in the VSM processes in a ward not finishing the implementation process which may provide some explanations to why the implementation was not successful. Other possible explanations are not available.

5. Discussion

Contrary to expectations findings do not show different scores of servant leadership across

wards finishing and not finishing implementation. Here, issues, e.g. cultural and linguistic, regarding the SL instrument may be of importance. Also, in this study there may be other factors than servant leadership that may contribute to the success of VSM implementation, e.g. ownership, accountability, trust, autonomy, but these are closely linked to the practice of servant leadership. The qualitative data shows limited engagement of ward management in the VSM process which raise questions about their actual potentials to influence the VSM processes in general.

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