Emergency Department Leadership and Management

Best Principles and Practice

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For my family
S.K.

To Sophie and Kate
P.A.

With thanks to my family for their support
R.F.

To my parents
E.P.
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Foreword

In the Chicago Sun-Times, Ashley Montagu once said that “no history of art can be more dramatic than that of medicine, for there is hardly an aspect of life and society upon which it does not touch.” When he wrote those words, emergency medicine (EM) was not born, but in my opinion it is more appropriate to emergency medicine than to any other specialty.

The history of emergency medicine takes us back to Charak, an Indian physician of 300 BC, and to Iwty of Egypt, from the Nineteenth Dynasty. Whilst they both practiced what is now known as emergency medicine, however, there is no evidence to suggest that either of them could be thought of as providing pioneering leadership to modern emergency medicine.

I do not wish either to interpret the past or to forecast the future, because leaders, like historians, often get many things wrong when they interpret the past – and most things wrong when they forecast the future. However, there is now some evidence of what I said in the first George Podgorny lecture (ICEM 2002), that “the twenty-first century will be the century for and of emergency medicine.”

The twentieth century saw the development of a number of new disciplines and subspecialties in medicine. The first ever professional organization created for emergency medicine (then known as casualty medicine and surgery, or accident and emergency medicine) was the Casualty Surgeons’ Association in the UK, established in 1967, which staged the first International Conference on Emergency Medicine in London in 1986. I was fortunate to be one of the organizers. This subsequently led to the formation of the International Federation for Emergency Medicine (IFEM) in 1991, the foundation of which was due to the foresight shown by the leadership of the four founding members of IFEM, the Casualty Surgeons’ Association (now the College of Emergency Medicine in the UK), the American College of Emergency Physicians, the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, and the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians. It is believed that this initiative changed the perception of emergency medicine and the provision of emergency care worldwide. The founders acted on the principle of Mark Twain that if you do what you did, you get what you got.

Further progress by IFEM made it clear that for anything that needs progression, the leaders must provide leadership with sincerity and dedication, competency to manage, clear purpose, and reputable status. They require attending to all details and, if required, recreating a modern organization with some autonomy. This applies to any organizational and management aspects. For effective leadership, a leader needs to guide colleagues by persuasion, by appropriate and positive actions or opinions, because a leader holds a dominant or a superior position in the field and is able to exercise a high degree of control or influence over others.

There are two types of leaders. One is the type described by Confucius, easy to serve but difficult to please. Another is General Patton’s type: “Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way.” I suggest that the ideal is a mixture of the two, a leader who is easy to follow and also easy to help. In my opinion there are six principles of an effective leader: passion, art of presentation (communication), policies and actions, skills to deliver, ability to meet challenges, and clear goals for the future. As leaders, we need to remember not to associate with people we would not trust our lives to or give our lives for. A leader needs to identify the tasks, the teams, and the individuals for these teams. For effective leadership, one needs to have Gandhi’s humanity and humility, Mandela’s warmth and integrity, and Churchill’s vision and toughness. Because vision without action is a dream, and action without vision is passing time, but vision with action changes the world. Leadership is all about creating a vision to which others can aspire, and energizing them to work towards that vision.
In the modern world we need to appreciate that whilst we deal with the sick and injured, for further development and wider acceptance of the specialty there is a need for us to understand that we are influenced by local governments and politics. Cooperation from law makers will enhance our cause. There is a need to appreciate the usefulness of wider participation in international agencies such as the WHO and regional emergency medicine organizations. Understand that the politics, the usefulness of wider participation, and the uniqueness of our specialty make a distinguished triad. A leader cannot ignore the fact that there are different systems of delivering care, along with geographical and cultural variations, in the global society.

There are six C’s of success. Leadership needs to demonstrate a clear Conception, to have strong Confidence, to have focused Concentration on what is being done, and to do that with Consistency. Character and emotional Commitment of leadership will bring success.

In the culture of an ever-changing world, we need to remember that if it isn’t broken, don’t mend it. A leader is responsible for the success, as well as the failure, of a group. As Confucius once said, our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall.

This book is the first of its kind, totally focused on all aspects of leadership in emergency medicine. Very many distinguished leaders in the field have contributed to a detailed discussion of the principles of leadership, management, and organization in emergency medicine. The special topics are of particular interest. And I am confident that the book as a whole will provide material for all grades of emergency physicians, from specialist trainees to established leaders. Let us hope that the development of effective leadership in emergency medicine worldwide goes a long way towards the provision of high-quality emergency medical care for our patients.

I feel very honored and privileged to have been asked to write this foreword. I wish you and this book a great success.

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