Positive Deviance

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RICK HAMPTON, a passenger who frequently travels by plane, happened to be in the same plane at the right time when he experienced a stroke.
Time To Thrombolysis For Stroke
Run Chart

Baseline Performance
71 minutes from ED to Thrombolysis
1.9 million neurons dying every minute creates a quite a sense of urgency

How do we improve?
Negative psychology is the default approach to improvement in healthcare?
In the “Bad Apple” conceptual model the hospital seeks to identify and remove the problem individual in the hopes that mean performance will rise when the weak link is removed.
In the diagnostic conceptual model the core challenge is to correctly label the underlying problem (disease) based on problems with performance (symptoms) and thus develop a treatment plan (QI intervention)

“What is the problem”? 
Two New Tools to Approach Quality and Patient Safety

- Appreciative Inquiry
- Positive Deviance
Think of a concrete example of in which you took exceptional care of a patient, every cylinder was firing, exceeded your expectations.

Describe the story of the situation, what you did, and what happened.

How did it make you feel?

What could you do to get more of that feeling? What would we need to do for every case to go this well?
What allows us to be our best?

How do we do that more often?
What are the necessary elements to apply positive deviance?

What would you need to use this methodology to inform improvement on your own clinical microsystem?
Positive Deviance is applied in settings where certain groups or individuals solve problems better than others given the same resources.

Assumes that there is an answer out there but not widely known

It critically hinges on correct identification of true positive outliers
How do you find positive outliers?
Reputational Scores

- US News and World Report
- Award winners

Snowball methodology

Outcome Metrics

- Disseminated, Verified, Objective
- Vizient rankings
- Target Stroke Honor Roll
Create a semi-structured interview

- Open-ended questions

Look for uncommon behaviors not used by others which create better solutions
Better Adherence to the “Best practices” was not what makes Positive Deviants Exceptional
One deviant hospital did NOT have the same time goal as Target Stroke Benchmark.

It made the goal harder than benchmark.

Another deviant hospital did not perform lab testing faster than the Target Stroke Benchmark.

They treated without the lab results at all.

One deviant hospital did not wait for the CT to begin mixing tPA.
Thrombolytic treatment of stroke has a 6% risk of symptomatic intracranial hemorrhage.

Administering it without knowing the coagulation test results is inconceivable... except to deviants.
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“The leadership has established a culture and approach to quality care that is clearly embraced by all of the staff. They did, of course, save my life – but I entered as a patient and potential statistic, and left alive and well, and as a friend.”

-Rick
If you wanted to reduce time to treatment further. If you wanted to think like a deviant. What would you do next?
We can be positively deviant!