A study of the relationships among social capital, knowledge sharing and patient safety culture

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Objectives
Team resource management, TRM, has been applied in various medical institution to minimize errors and to enhance culture of patient safety through cooperating seamlessly and knowledge sharing among members recently. Based on social capital theory, this study aims to explore the relationship between individual social capital, knowledge sharing and patient safety culture among the registered nurses in a regional teaching hospital. We try to investigate the impact of individual social capital and willing to share knowledge on the patient safety culture.

Methods
The study was a cross-sectional survey using a questionnaires containing factors of individual social capital, willing to share knowledge and patient safety culture. The reliability of each factor was social capital Cronbach’s α=.860, knowledge sharing Cronbach’s α=.943, patient safety culture Cronbach’s α=.878. A total of 383 out of 414 registered nurses of a regional hospital in southern Taiwan responded. The valid response rate was 92.5%. Statistical analysis including descriptive analysis, reliability, student t-test, ANOVA, correlation analysis, and regression analysis was performed.

Results
Our results showed a significant and positive association between individual social capital and knowledge sharing (p<0.01, r=.582). Both individual social capital and knowledge sharing were significantly and positively associated with patient safety culture (r=.169, p<0.01, and r=.581, p<0.01). Individual willing to share knowledge mediated and moderated the relationship between social capital and patient safety culture (p<.001).

Conclusions
The higher social capital of registered nurses is, the more nurses willing to share knowledge and higher impact on the patient safety culture. The result provide an evidence for hospital administration to create an open, trustworthy environment for nurses to share their knowledge each other and better patient safety culture.