

Prioritising Process:

A Grounded Theory on the Construction of Professional Identity

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Background

Interprofessional cooperation is central to the safety and satisfaction of patients and staff. The question arises: Who is the one who cooperates?

This question provided the impetus to explore professional identity construction in a multi-professional context.

The premise here: Interaction and identity construction are situational and context-bound.

Research question

How does interprofessional cooperation affect the construction of professional identity?

Subjects

The professional identity of the new occupational groups

Operating Theatre Assistants (OTA) and Anaesthesia Technical Assistants (ATA) in the context of the operating theatre (OR).

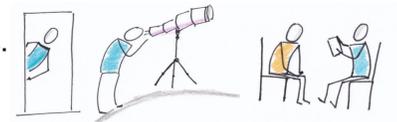


Methodology

Data collection: Comprises 60 hours of non-participatory open observation in the operating theatre, supplemented by 21 ethnographic interviews.

Analysis: A category-building approach *Grounded Theory*

according to Glaser/Strauss (1967), Strauss/Corbin (1996)



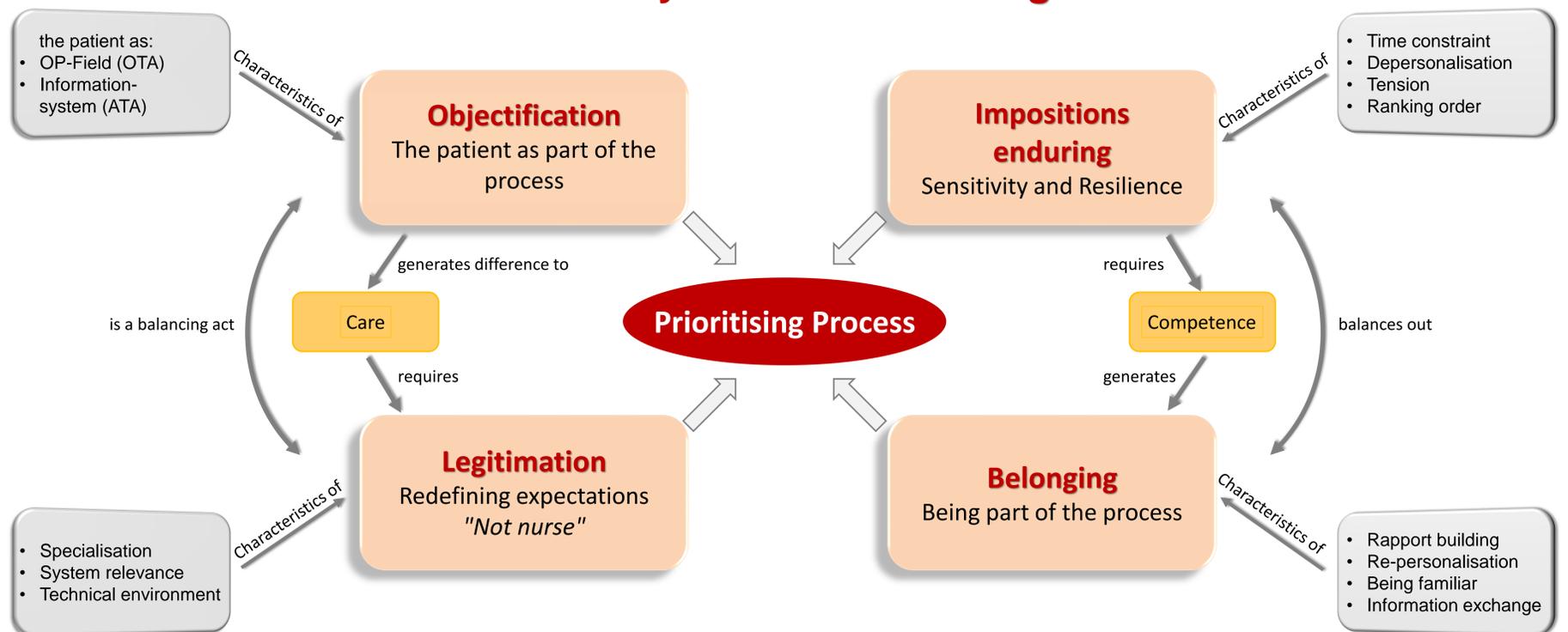
Findings

The main finding is that technical assistants in the multi-professional context of the operating theatre prioritise the (work) process both as the focus of their professional actions and as an internal navigation system.

Four categories - enduring impositions, belonging, objectifying the patient and legitimising the role - were derived from how technical assistants address social structures and normative expectations and integrate them into their professional identities.

Prioritising the process is thereby the anchor point of the behaviour.

Grounded Theory Model: Prioritising Process



Conclusions

Prioritising Process is an expression of an internal evaluation system and thus an expression of interprofessional identity of technical assistants. Constructed in a multi-professional context where crises are part of normality, it balances impositions and normative demands without damaging the "self".

Prioritising Process as an expression of belonging to and shared responsibility for the process can enable interprofessional cooperation. However, this requires exchange: A consensus is negotiated situationally between the poles of knowledge dominance and participation.

Prioritising Process is an expression of the diffusion of professions due to the changing socio-structural, economic and digital/technical structures in the health sector. Legitimation and positioning of new professions in an interprofessional team are inevitable.

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Limitation

Data collection and analysis took place between March 2020 and February 2022. We can not exclude the influence of the pandemic situation on both the participants and the researcher.

Observation and recruitment of participants were limited to two surgical centres of one university hospital.

References

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