

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF MEDICAL ERRORS IN IOWA?

FINDINGS FROM A SUMMER 2017 SURVEY OF IOWA ADULTS AGE 18 AND OLDER¹

- ✓ **Respondents were given a list of 19 factors that might cause medical errors and were asked what they feel are the most important causes of medical errors in Iowa. Their responses were rated on a series of factors using a four-point scale where one means "not important" and four means "very important."**

- ✓ **Responses were then compared between those who indicated they experienced a medical error in the past five years with those who did not experience an error.**
 - Respondents who experienced a medical error gave greater importance to 16 of the 19 factors.
 - The top factor selected by respondents with medical error experience was medical staff not being organized well enough to make sure patients don't get the wrong drug or the wrong dose of a drug. This factor was selected as the fourth highest by respondents without medical error experience.
 - Respondents without medical error experience rated three factors as more important than those who experienced a medical error:
 - 1) Doctors and nurses who are overworked, stressed or tired.
 - 2) Doctors or nurses who are careless.
 - 3) Patients are given too many tests or drugs they don't need.
 - The top factor selected by respondents without medical error experience was staff were overworked, stressed or tired. This was the fifth highest factor selected by respondents with medical error experience.

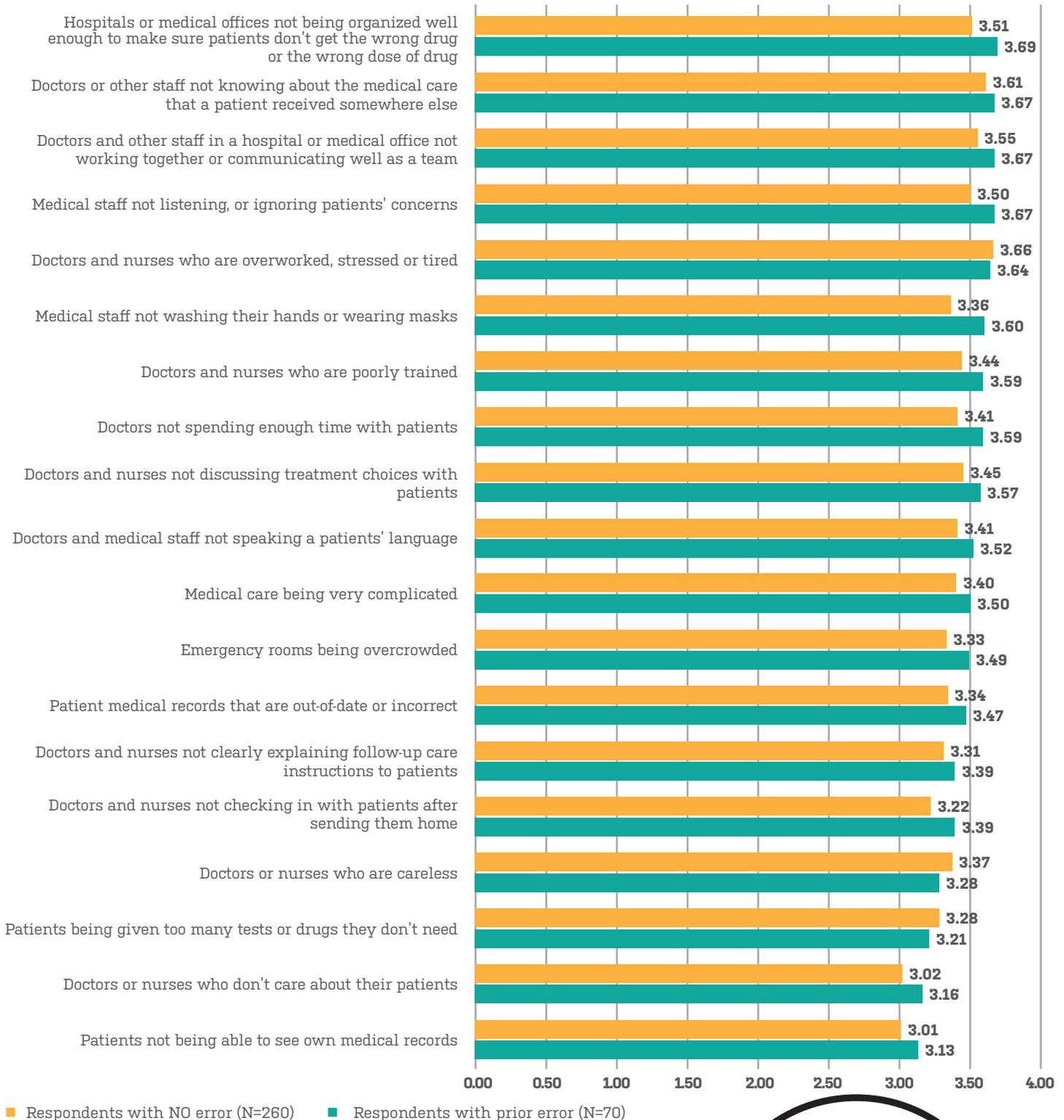
- ✓ **After the top factor, Iowans with medical error experience provided equal importance to the next three factors that include communication issues:**
 - 1) Staff not knowing about the medical care that a patient received somewhere else.
 - 2) Staff not working together or communicating well as a team.
 - 3) Staff not listening, or ignoring patients' concerns.

- ✓ **Overworked medical staff was also an important contribution to medical errors, according to respondents who experienced a medical error.**

FINDINGS FROM A SUMMER 2017 SURVEY OF IOWA ADULTS AGE 18 AND OLDER *(Continued)*

IMPORTANCE OF POTENTIAL CAUSES CONTRIBUTING TO MEDICAL ERRORS (Respondents with errors vs Respondents without errors)

Four-point scale: 1=Not at all important, to 4=Very important



■ Respondents with NO error (N=260) ■ Respondents with prior error (N=70)



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To read the full report: "Iowa Patient Safety Study: Iowans' Views on Medical Errors® 2017," please visit our Heartland Health Research Institute website.