

# Work Environment and Interpersonal Skills in Surgical Training: A Different Perspective

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Interpersonal relationships and organizational climate in a general surgery service influence patient safety, professional satisfaction, and resident training performance. A positive climate based on effective communication, respectful leadership, role recognition, and interdisciplinary collaboration is described as improving team cohesion, reducing errors, and promoting retention. In contrast, negative environments generate conflict, overload, burnout, and a higher risk of adverse events. Critical dimensions of the operating room are detailed: communication, collaboration, leadership, and emotional management.

**Methods:** This approach is a conceptual synthesis based on a literature review and clinical observations, integrating findings from studies on organizational work climate and specific evidence from the surgical environment to identify determining factors and practical recommendations.

**Discussion:** The interaction between leadership, communication, and resources conditions the quality of care. Interventions such as communication training, briefing/ debriefing protocols, non-punitive reporting systems, and psychosocial support can mitigate risks and improve learning. The operating room requires specific strategies to manage emotional burden and promote interdisciplinary coordination.

**Conclusions:** A positive organizational climate in general surgery is essential to optimize patient safety, training, and team sustainability; its improvement requires integrated actions in leadership, communication, resource management, and psychosocial support.

**Keywords:** Work environment; Surgery; Interpersonal relationships

## Introduction

Interpersonal relationships in the workplace are the invisible network that binds teams together. Bonds are established through respect, empathy, collaboration, and effective communication,

which not only benefit individual well-being but also boost group performance. Research has revealed that a positive organizational climate, based on healthy relationships, optimizes motivation, reduces stress, and strengthens commitment to institutional goals. Technical competence is not the only factor that determines

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effectiveness and harmony in a surgical department, which is complex due to continuous exposure to pressure and difficult, rapid decision-making. The quality of the work environment and the interactions between people also play a significant role.

## Methods

The approach is a conceptual synthesis based on a literature review and clinical observations, integrating findings from studies on organizational work climate and specific evidence from the surgical environment to identify determining factors and practical recommendations, in different scientific search engines such as Google scholar, Medline, Pubmed, Scielo, to collect the respective information (Table 1).

**Table 1:** *Impact of work climate on surgical performance and patient safety.*

Positive work environment	negative work environment
Effective and clear communication	Poor communication
Participative leadership	Authoritarian or absent leadership
Teamwork and collaboration	Individualism and conflicts
Recognition and support	Lack of rewards and support
Adequate and equitable resources	Resource scarcity and excessive workload
Reduction of errors and complications	Increased errors and adverse events
Employee satisfaction and retention	Burnout, turnover and absenteeism
Improvement in patient safety	Increased risks in highly complex procedures

It is emphasized that workplace productivity is fundamental because it motivates employees by fostering specific dedication to the provision of goods or services, and at the same time promotes individual participation to optimize performance, which facilitates the relationship between managers and workers [3]. The work environment, by taking into account and valuing the individual perceptions and interests of employees in relation to organizational goals, is gaining significant importance in the management strategies of different companies. This results in important benefits for both parties. Over the years, studies have shown how the work environment and interpersonal relationships directly impact the short- and long-term results of companies, from different perspectives, viewing people as an essential resource for a company's success [4,5]. The reality of healthcare is no exception. The work environment in hospitals, especially in the operating room, has emerged as a crucial element for the quality of care, the functioning of surgical teams, and patient safety. The importance of a healthy work environment for achieving optimal clinical outcomes has been evidenced by the increasing complexity of surgical procedures, the pressure on healthcare services, and the need for effective interdisciplinary coordination. The motivation,

## Interpersonal relationships in general surgery

Organizational climate is defined as the prevailing atmosphere among members of an organization, closely related to employee motivation and reflecting the motivational characteristics of the work environment. Similarly, it is proposed that the work environment reflects the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the organization's members, which in turn affect how people behave in their workplaces and how they perceive the company [1,2]. Productivity is affected by the work environment, which in turn is influenced by the manager's experience, employee performance, interpersonal relationships, and working conditions, as well as demographic and economic conditions.

satisfaction, and retention of healthcare personnel, as well as the incidence of errors, complications, and adverse events in surgery, are directly affected by the organizational climate, as demonstrated by a variety of studies [3,5].

**But what is truly considered a healthy environment in a surgical service? Therefore, certain key elements are considered for its development**

1. Recognizing and valuing the role of each professional in the surgical team raises morale and commitment.
2. Fostering coordination and interdisciplinary work promotes a frictionless workflow
3. Respectful leadership, with clear and empathetic communication, sets the tone for the entire team.
4. Training in communication skills and conflict management offers practical tools.
5. Promote an environment of respect and mutual support to reduce tensions and build trust [6,7].

The operating room is a highly specialized and technologically advanced environment, distinguished by the need for precise coordination, rapid decision-making, and working under pressure.

In this context, the work environment presents specific characteristics that arise from the interaction between various professional profiles (technicians, nurses, anesthesiologists, and surgeons), the operational hierarchy, the pressure of care, and exposure to critical circumstances [8].

### **The dimensions of the work environment in the operating room could depend on**

- Effective communication: with clarity, feedback and two-way communication between team members.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork: trust, synergy and mutual support.
- Surgical leadership: ability to coordinate, decide and manage crises.
- Managing emotional burden and stress: coping with difficult circumstances, managing burnout, and providing psychosocial support [6].

According to the literature, a positive work environment in the operating room is linked to greater team cohesion, fewer errors, better emergency management, and greater job satisfaction. Conversely, a negative environment has the potential to cause conflict, tension, stress, and increase the likelihood of adverse events [9]. Work has the capacity to play a positive role if it fosters recognition and appreciation in the social sphere, leading to job satisfaction; however, it can also be a source of dissatisfaction and psychological suffering. There are situations in which teams experience interpersonal relationships that generate dissatisfaction, especially in those where the aforementioned premises are neither present nor developed [9].

### **Among the benefits of a healthy work environment and interpersonal relationships within the general surgery department, we can mention**

- Patient safety, increases safety and quality in patient care, minimizing errors and improving outcomes.
- Professional growth: creates an environment where everyone wants to work and grow professionally, attracting top talent.
- Staff retention: creates better, more stable and experienced teams, reduces burnout [10].

## **Conclusion**

The work environment in general surgery comprises the relationships, perceptions, and organizational conditions that influence how the surgical team works, communicates, and makes decisions. A positive work environment fosters professional satisfaction, improved training performance for residents, staff retention, and patient safety; conversely, a negative one leads to higher staff turnover, burnout, and errors. Some key aspects for developing this environment include the leadership of the head of

department, the culture of learning and reporting, communication in the operating room, the balance between workload and resources, educational support for residents, and fairness and recognition at the organizational level. The work environment is strongly linked to residents' job satisfaction and motivation; more favorable conditions increase commitment, quality of care, and learning, while poor environments reduce the quality of training and satisfaction.

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