Quality Toolkit | Five Whys

DESCRIPTION

The "five whys" is a quality tool used to drill down into an issue and to bring clarity and refinement to a problem statement and get to the root cause. The "five whys" technique was originally described by Taiichi Ohno at Toyota Motor Corporation. The goal of the five why technique is to determine the root cause of a defect or problem by repeating the question "Why?" five times.

Data from brainstorming sessions and /or fishbone diagram can be used to construct the "five whys".

STRENGTHS

Most useful when the problem involves a human interaction or factor. In addition, it is easy to use without utilizing statistical analysis.

WEAKNESSES

Users can potentially stop the "five whys" process before getting to the root cause of the problem.

APPLICATIONS

1. Identifying the root cause of a problem.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. Draw a box and clearly document the problem or solution to be explored.
2. Below the statement box draw five boxes in descending order.
3. Ask "why" five times and write the answers in the boxes drawn.
4. It may take less or more than five times to reach the root cause or solution.

EXAMPLES

Problem Statement: A FFP unit was issued and transfused instead of COVID-19 Convelescent Plasma (CCP), as indicated on the Blood Requisition Order.

WHY?

Transfusion Service staff did not follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

WHY?

Multiple SOPs were changed to improve processes in the Transfusion Service in a relatively short period of time and appropriate training was not performed.

WHY?

We had to implement CCP in a short period of time, with limited staff, to provide the product to our patients.

WHY?

The CCP product code was not entered into the hospital Electronic Medical Record (EMR) and the transfusion service Blood Establishment Computer System (BECS).

WHY?

Not all the elements mentioned on the validation plan were implemented prior to going live with the CCP process.