

Fatigue Intoxication

A Pilgrimage to Policy

Slide 2

In the later half of 2013,
I was the least member of an ACORN Review Committee
Charged with developing a new guideline on 'Fatigue'.

It was an amazing experience,
Not least because of the people I was working with
But also because I had my brains trust
Working on the problem behind the scenes.

And so it was that,
After the Guideline was released,
John and I wondered where the leverage points were
That would gain traction
For the guideline to get implemented on the ground

In other words, what would take us on a Pilgrimage to
Policy?

We considered all the cool arguments we had at our disposal

And calculated for each their '**game-changer**' potential.

Slides 3-7

- 3 We considered 'Personal Factors'
But as solid / an argument as it is,
It bore too weak a message
For people to take seriously
- 4 Team Factors?
Too subtle
- 5 Systemic Factors?
Too obscure
- 6 Systems architecture?
Too hard
- 7 Safety benefits?
Yawn. Too tired to even **THINK** about it

Slide 8

With all these crosses
We needed something that would deliver us a tick

Some consider nursing a science.

And it's within **science** that we found
A prospective pathway to policy

Slide 9

The science has been around for 19 years,

Ever since Dawson and Reid (SA) published their

Scientific Correspondence *dated the 17/7/1997* entitled:

'Fatigue, alcohol and performance impairment'

If you consider nursing a science,

Then you can't walk away from the evidence:

**17 hours of wakefulness
Equates to a performance equivalent
Of a Blood Alcohol reading
Of 0.05**

This is a boundary,
An irrefutable line in the sand

T1
T2

"Blow into this straw please sir"

"Get out of the car please, sir"

"But I feel fine!"

Slide 10

Then... whether you consider nursing a science or an art,

The NEXT research applies:

Ann Rogers 2004

The Working Hours Of Hospital Staff Nurses And Patient Safety

Rogers found...

The risks of making an error
were significantly increased...

When work shifts were longer than twelve hours,

When nurses worked overtime,

When nurses worked more than 40 hours per week,

**The boundary being that
After 12.5 hours of work,
The error rate increases by 200% -300%**

Slide 11

So in our pilgrimage, in our cognitive journey,
What we have done is nailed down the limits
Of effective human psychomotor performance
As they relate to high reliability and thus safety

Slide 12

And hopefully we make **plain** an argument

That in an environment that demands ineffability

The worst thing you can do
Is expect,
In the face of all scientific evidence,

That instead of investing in sustainability and do-ability
In order to create a culture of safety

That instead,

You simply expect ordinary people...
No matter how much they look like superheroes,
Despite all else....

To cope