

NC Quality Highlights

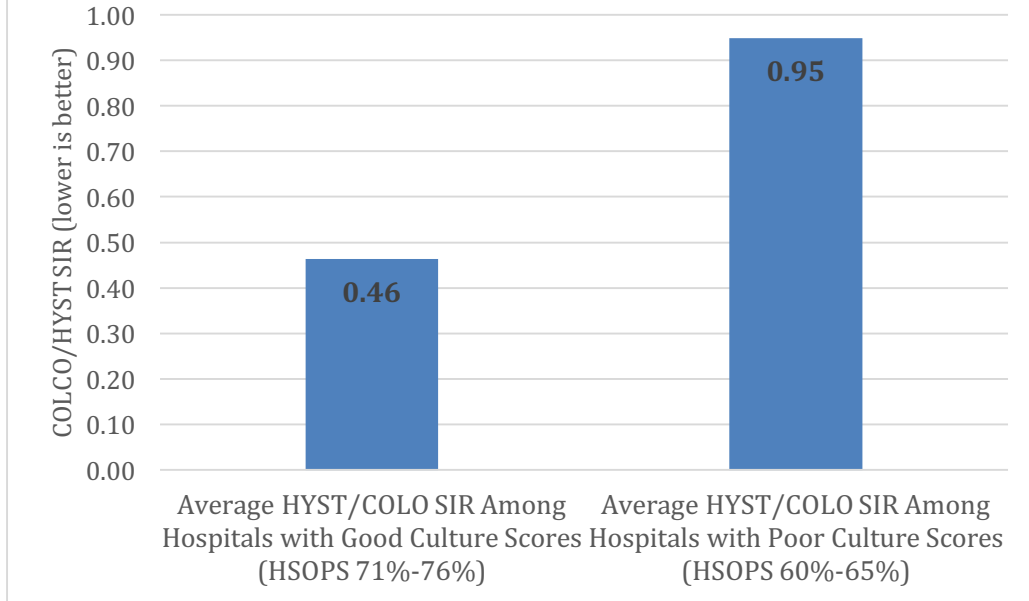
Safe Culture Associated with Fewer Infections In NC and National Data

The North Carolina Quality Center has always seen the culture of health care organizations as a key component of patient safety. A national study, *Association of Safety Culture with Surgical Site Infection Outcomes* that appeared in the Journal of the American College of Surgeons, November 2015 concluded, "These data suggest an important role for positive safety and teamwork culture and engaged hospital management in producing high-quality surgical outcomes." The NCQC investigated to determine whether a similar association between patient safety scores and lower surgical site infection ratios exists in North Carolina.

NCQC compared performance on the Agency on Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) Hospital Survey on Patient Safety Culture (HSOPS) and the standardized infection ratio (SIR) for surgical site infections (SSI) following colon and abdominal hysterectomy surgeries. Data was pulled for 26 hospitals that had completed the HSOPS survey between January-December 2015. Infection data was taken from the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).

Our analysis demonstrated a very strong tie between a hospital's culture and patient safety. Hospitals with strong patient safety culture have lower infection ratios. Hospitals with poor HSOPS scores, on average, had SIR values almost twice that of hospitals with good HSOPS scores.

Hospitals with Strong Patient Safety Culture Have Lower Infection Ratios (COLO/HYST SIR)



Although strong correlation does not necessarily indicate a causal connection, the results of this research, as well as other evidence, point to critical role of hospital culture in keeping patients safe. They also affect the cost of caring for patients, as a surgical site infection after colon or abdominal hysterectomy surgeries is estimated to average \$21,000. NCQC continues to offer programming to assist hospitals who are working to improve their patient safety culture and reduce infections. For more information about this analysis, please reach out to Elizabeth Mizelle (emizelle@ncha.org). For more information about resources to assist your hospital with its culture, please reach out to Latoshua LeGrant (llegrant@ncha.org).