Communities of practices as means to develop creativity at work

To cope with the frequent changes healthcare professionals must be creative. A Community of Practice (CoP) is a relational work community based on voluntary participation by practitioners of a particular work (e.g. intensive care unit nursing or maintenance of machine X) that interact and improve their practice. CoP are known for inducing a propensity to develop knowledge and foster creativity as practitioners interact and build relations, share ideas and discuss experiences. Communities of Practice are often developed as a part of knowledge management initiatives. However, knowledge about how to develop CoP is still incomplete. This papers reports on an intervention study that contributes to the CoP field through the design and test of a method for CoP development within operations. The study contributes with knowledge about the design of a CoP start-up process and about connecting the CoP with the organization. We propose a method to develop CoP and the method is tested in a blood analysis unit at 'Nordsjællands Hospital' in Denmark and the effect on creativity is evaluated. In order to develop the CoP the following interventions took place: The manager was introduced to CoP theory. The practice was operationalized narrowly as employees performing a specific operational task frequently and experiencing recurring problems. A voluntary CoP facilitator was identified and introduced to CoP theory. She then invited her colleagues to participate in the CoP. The facilitator arranged the start-up workshop where CoP participants were introduced to the timeline, the purpose of the CoP and templates to support collaboration. The facilitator arranged the following CoP meetings.

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