A complex adaptive system such as the operating room, consists of different safety cultures, sub-cultures and ways of working. Complex work processes including multitasking and interruptions are challenges with potential impact on patient safety. However, multitasking and interruptions may have positive impact on patient safety, but is not well understood in clinical work. Despite described challenges a lot of things go well in the operating room. This thesis evaluates an instrument for assessing safety climate, describes and compares perceptions of safety climate, and explores the complexity of work processes in the operating room. From the perspective of complexity, knowledge of how work is done by operating room professionals the findings will contribute to understanding for the development patient safety work.

In adaptive systems, yesterday’s solutions produce today’s surprises that become tomorrow’s challenge

- Woods, D. David (2009)