The main aim of this thesis was to obtain insight and provide potential improvement strategies in safety issues within the healthcare chain using novel ways to investigate these matters.

The acute healthcare chain is increasingly under pressure due to changing demography (ageing population) and healthcare policy changes. This has led to an increased work burden for healthcare workers and has negatively affected communication and coordination within the chain resulting in poor handovers and inadequate teamwork. It is important to address these issues since they can eventually result in serious adverse events such as unplanned readmission, ICU admission, and death potentially jeopardizing the patient safety and adversely affecting the clinical outcome. In every ten patients, one is still harmed while receiving hospital care. To enhance patient safety, we must change the mindset and culture in hospitals. In order to do so, creating awareness for patient safety issues in healthcare workers is needed. In addition, the healthcare workers should be stimulated to take an active role in these matters with the aim of increasing their intrinsic motivation so that they can actually contribute to improving the patient safety on the workfloor. This thesis aimed to focus on this awareness by addressing bottlenecks within the acute healthcare chain by working on research questions originating from daily issues on the floor. The ideas for these projects originated on the workfloor using healthcare worker point of views aiming to concentrate on ‘real’ systems rather than ‘ideal’ systems so that our results would be applicable in the real-life settings. In addition, we hypothesized that the recognition and tackling of these well-known (clinical) problems would attract the attention of the healthcare workers and thereby help change their mindset. Therefore, the research presented in this thesis was performed on the frontline using healthcare worker perspectives. In addition, since the patient is in the centre of the healthcare chain, and the only one who sees and experiences all aspects of it, we deemed it valuable to incorporate his/her opinion when formulating research and improvement strategies. We hypothesized that using the perspectives of all stakeholders in the acute healthcare chain to assess daily safety issues faced in the field would create new insights, awareness and potential strategies to improve patient safety.