The tipping point: trying to budge the 10% rate of harm frozen in time ... and the unexpected places we can find the answers

Abstract: Over the last 30 years, the rate of harm that patients experience in health systems around the globe, has been frozen at 10%. This is quite astounding when we think of all of the change, innovation and advancement that medicine and health science has undergone over the last three decades. So why are we stuck with this figure? The answer may lie in examining the other important fraction; we need to look at how things go right in the health system, rather than just what goes wrong. Considering that healthcare is the most complex system humans have ever made, it is really is quite something that we seem to get things right 90% of the time. This approach is the Safety-II approach, and by examining what goes right, we may help stakeholders, policymakers, clinicians, and patient groups understand how to tackle this figure frozen in time. We consider a key point here, too, in the context of this conference: where does diagnostic error, and diagnostic success, fit in to the Safety-I/Safety-II approach?