# The root cause analysis

Every organization faces recurrent and one-time problems. Solving these problems is possible by understanding what caused the issues. Identifying the root cause requires a detailed analysis of the symptoms and the events that lead to the problem. Therefore, root cause analysis is a problem-solving technique that identifies the original cause of a problem. This paper explores the core cause of pet deaths and the benefits of root cause analysis.

Root cause analysis identifies the foundation of a problem and provides a solution accordingly. A root cause is an initial source that leads to a situation or started a chain of events. It describes the depth of this series of actions that could be intervened to influence the outcome (Rooney & Heuvel, 2004). The root cause analysis provides three types of root causes. They include physical, human and organizational causes. The procedure has five basic stages.

The first stage is defining the problem. It describes the specific symptoms of the problem and evaluates the prevailing events (Rooney & Heuvel, 2004). According to the article, fourteen pets have been reported dead and more are likely to die too. The problem faced by the U.S. and the China government is the prevailing pet deaths which are likely to continue happening.

The second step is to collect data. These data shows the problem’s existence, the time horizon and its impact (Rooney & Heuvel, 2004). In the USA article, the FDA has reported that fourteen pets died after consuming recalled pet food and circumstantial information from veterinarians and pet owners point to higher numbers. Considering that the large pet population, the problem will adversely affect the pet population and cause panic to pet owners.

Thirdly, is determining the possible causal factors. At this stage, the analysis identifies the series of events leading to the problem, existing conditions and other circumstances that surrounded the primary problem. Next stage identifies the source of the problem. Various techniques are employed to identify these causes. The 5-whys method allows the investigation to acquire all types of causes and the depth of the sequence of events. The 5-whys system asks why until the root cause is identified (Nicolini, Waring & Mengis, 2011).

The death of pets is the existing problem. The first why? Because of pet food poisoning. The next why? The ingredients in the pet food. The third why? The existence of melamine due to poor food storage. The fourth why? Inadequate inspection of foodstuffs. The fifth why? Melamine shows high food protein content. This analysis shows the physical cause which was the existence of melamine in pet food ingredients, the human cause which is poor food storage by farmers, and the organizational cause which is the inefficiency of the inspection process.

After identifying the source of a problem, the root cause analysis makes recommendations on solutions based on the original cause and prevailing circumstances. In health care, the technique is important as it identifies the cause of past problems and helps to prevent possible risks in the future. Besides, the method beneficial as it provides an evidence-based solution established by identifying the relationship between the root cause and the symptom of the problem (Rooney & Heuvel, 2004). It provides the cause, its effects, and solution. The method provides a competitive edge of where an institution provides solutions to problems before they escalate rather that reacting to problems thus increasing risk reduction and avoidance.

Root cause analysis defines a problem, investigates the original cause and provides solutions to the problem. It is an important method used to prevent the recurrence of a problem by providing a means to mitigate the risks. Also, its solutions are based on evidence pertaining the problem.

## **References**

Rooney, J. J., & Heuvel, L. N. V. (2004). Root cause analysis for beginners. *Quality*

*progress*, *37*(7), 45-56.

Nicolini, D., Waring, J., & Mengis, J. (2011). Policy and practice in the use of root cause

analysis to investigate clinical adverse events: Mind the gap. *Social science &*

*medicine*, *73*(2), 217-225.