Post Assessment CAPA-Is it an Eyewash?

Anil Kumar Mulpur

MBBS, MS(General Surgery),
MCh(Cardiothoracic Surgery)
FRCP(Edinburgh), FRCS(Glasgow),
FRCS(Edinburgh), FRCS C/Th(Edinburgh),
MBA(Hospital Management),
PGDMLE(NLSIU)

Joint Director and Head of the Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery

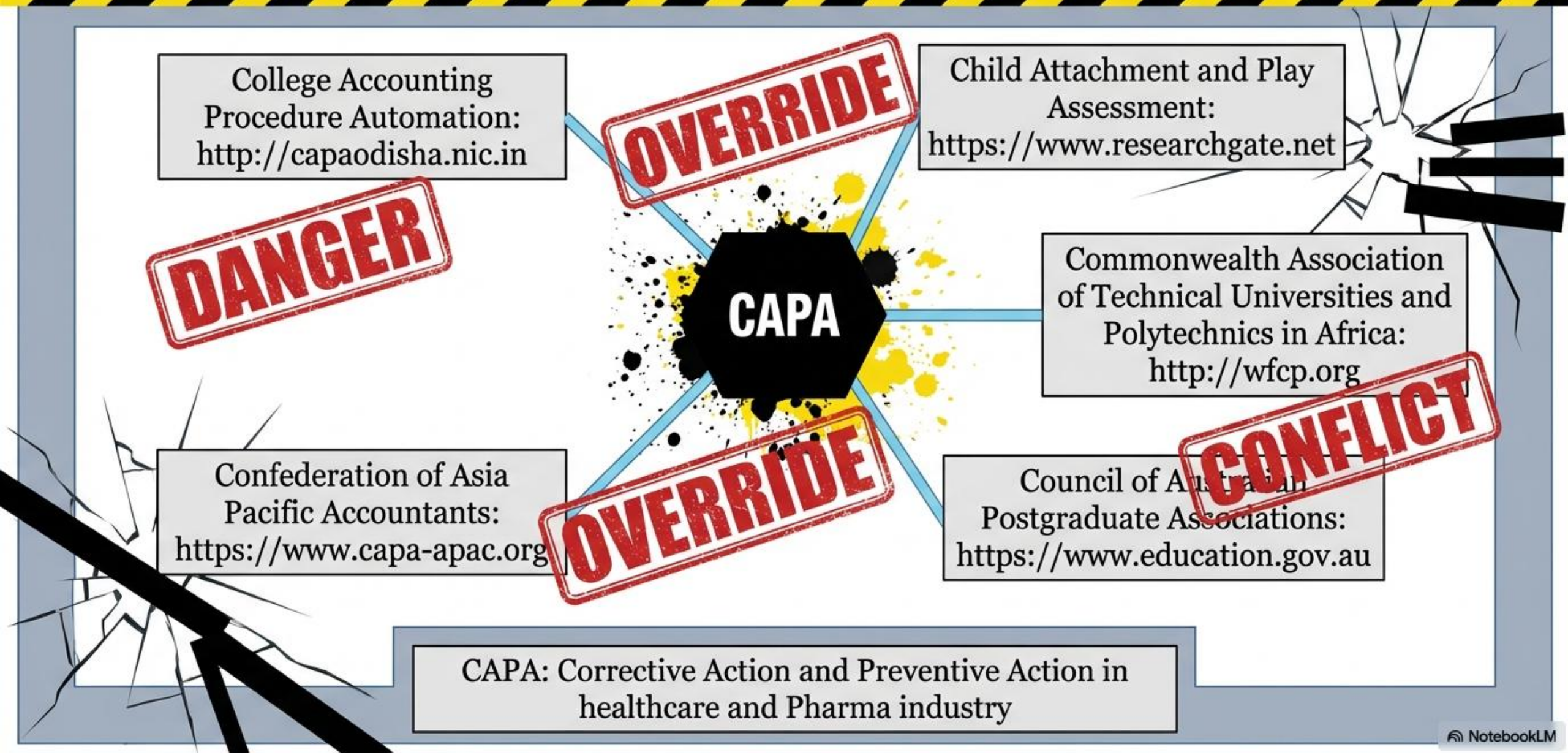
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prasanthinilayam, Puttaparthi

Post Assessment CAPA-Is it an Eyewash?

Yes. It is a mere Eyewash.

Post NABH assessments, Many healthcare organizations have have Eyewash stations for CAPA Practice sessions.

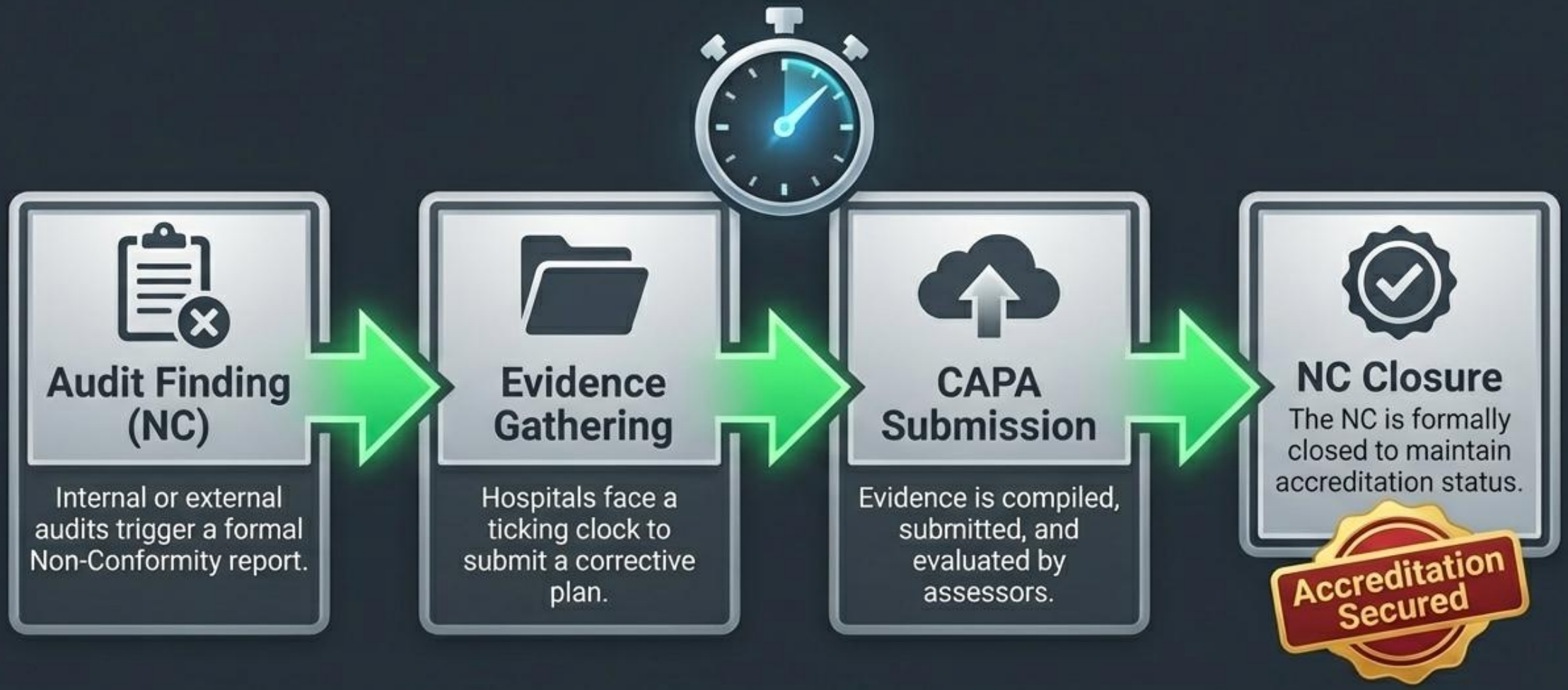
CAPA IS A BIGTIME EPA: ERROR PRONE ABBREVIATION : BEWARE!



Abbreviation must be changed immediately.

CRAPA

The Trigger: How Accreditation Uses CAPA



Key Takeaway: Accreditation demands closure of the document, not necessarily closure of the systemic gap.

The Reality: Paper Safe vs. Patient Safe

The Plan

- Rigorous investigation of clinical near-misses.
- Cross-functional teams solving systemic vulnerabilities.

The Reality

- Backdating forms 48 hours before an NABH inspection.
- The Quality Manager working alone in an office to appease the auditor.

Key Takeaway: We have perfected the art of looking safe on paper while ignoring systemic risks.

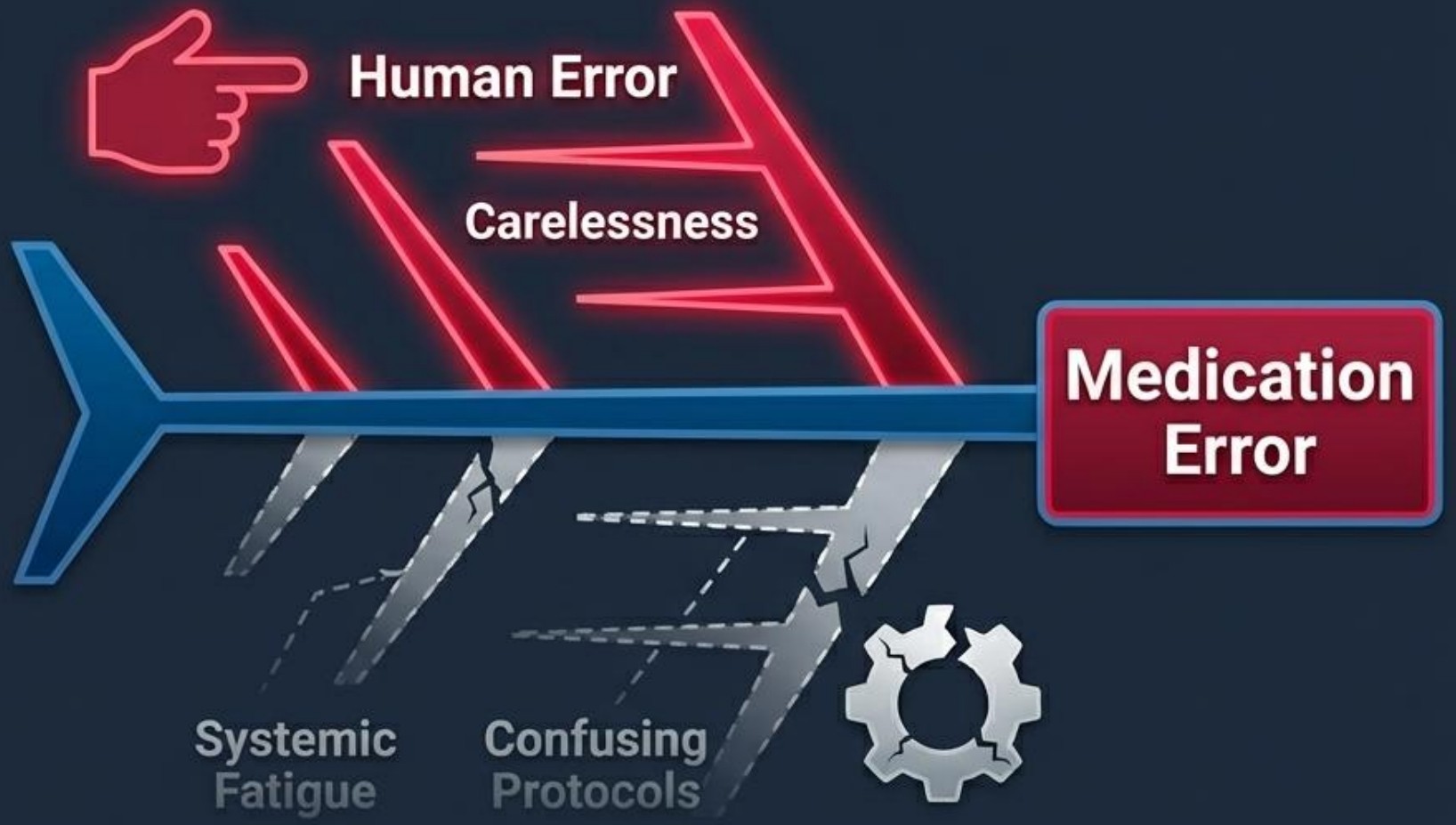
Problem 1: The ‘5 Whys’ That Stop at One

Root Cause Analysis (RCA) frequently defaults to human error or staff negligence.

Stopping at human error protects the system from financial or structural scrutiny.

Training/retraining is deployed as a lazy panacea for complex system failures.

True latent causes—understaffing, poor UI on equipment, fatigue—are ignored.



Key Takeaway: Punishing the sharp end of the scalpel ignores the hand that guides it.

Problem 2: Fixing the Leak, Ignoring the Pipe

Corrective Action
(Treating the Symptom)

Reactive approach: returning an expired drug to the pharmacy.

In a rush for compliance, hospitals implement corrective actions and mistakenly label them preventive.

VS

Preventive Action
(Curing the Disease)

Proactive approach: automating inventory alerts to prevent expiration.

Result of ignoring prevention: The exact same non-conformity appears in the next audit cycle.

Key Takeaway: You cannot mandate a systemic fix through a memo or an email.

Problem 3: The ‘File Closed’ Fallacy

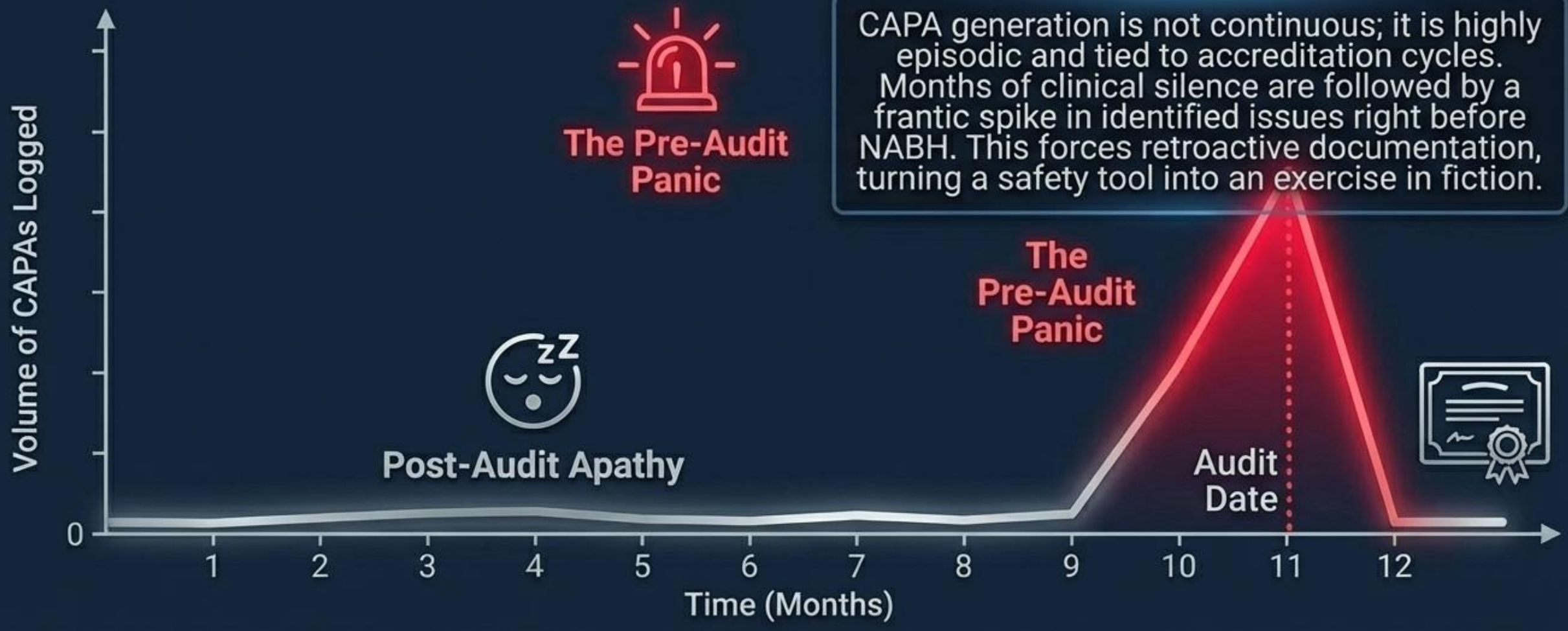
CAPA effectiveness is rarely tracked beyond the closure of the audit finding.

There is no mechanism to verify if the new protocol is actually being followed 60 days later.

Without continuous feedback loops, newly introduced preventive measures silently decay. We measure the speed of closing the CAPA, not the impact on clinical outcomes.

Key Takeaway: An unmonitored solution is just a temporary disruption to old habits.

Problem 4: The Pre-Audit Panic



Key Takeaway: Quality is treated as an event to survive, not a standard to maintain.

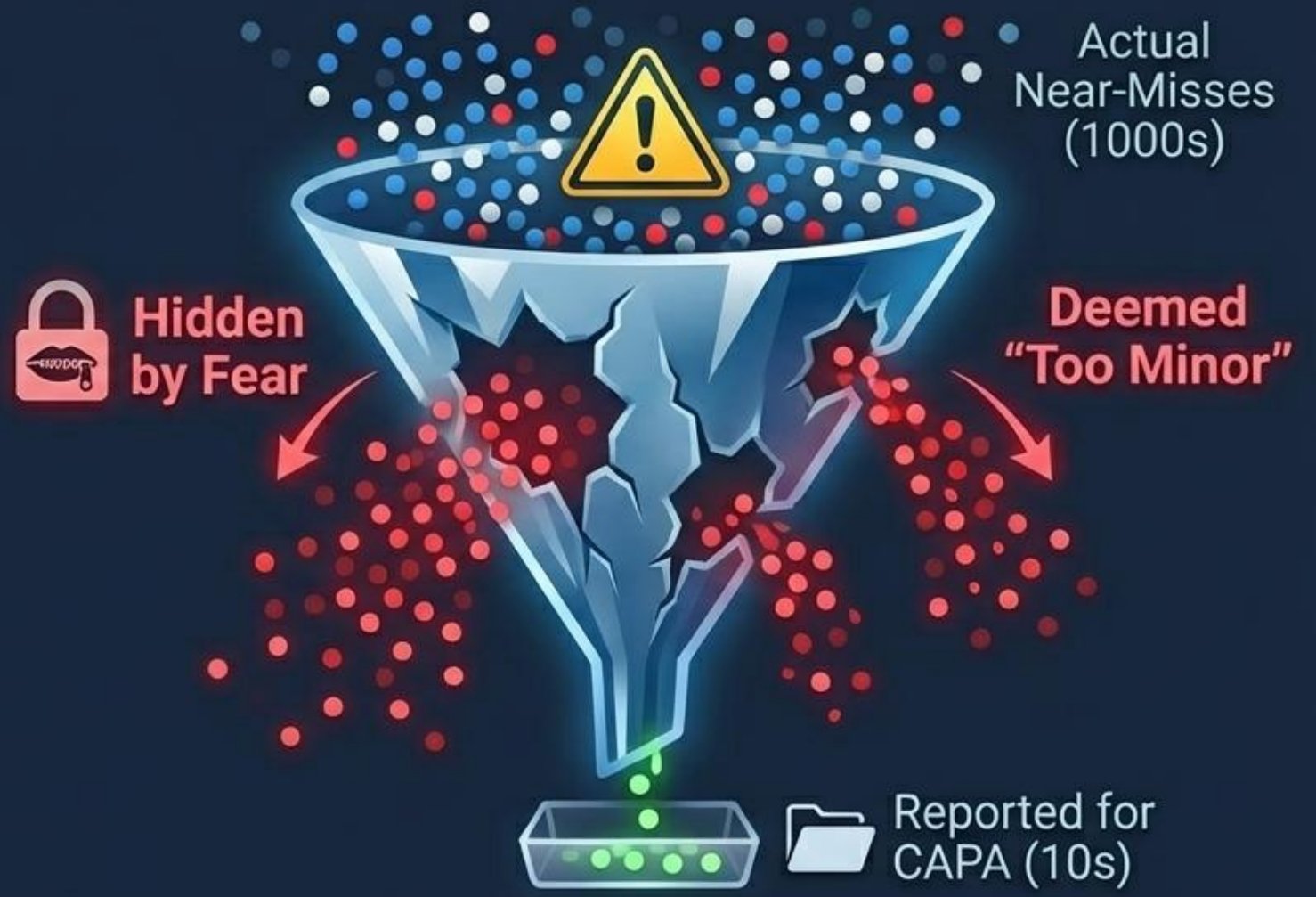
Problem 5: The Culture of Silence

In punitive environments, incident reporting is weaponized as a tool for reprimand.

Staff hide near-misses and errors to avoid HR action or public shaming.

Only undeniable sentinel events (the tip of the iceberg) enter the CAPA system.

You cannot fix a system if you are blind to 90% of its daily failures.



Key Takeaway: A flawless incident log is not proof of safety; it is proof of fear.

Problem 6: Administrative Ownership

CAPA is largely viewed as the exclusive headache of the Quality/Admin department.

Senior doctors and nurses are rarely engaged in the root cause analysis process.

Solutions engineered by administrators often fail in fast-paced clinical realities.

Without clinical buy-in, preventive actions are actively bypassed on the ward.

Quality & Admin
(Paperwork)

The Implementation Chasm

Clinical Floor
(Patient Care)

Key Takeaway: If clinicians don't build the solution, clinicians won't use the solution.

The Illusion of Improvement

Why CAPA is often an eyewash in healthcare accreditation, and how to fix it.

Deconstructing the gap between paper compliance and patient safety.

Diagnosing the **6 fatal flaws** in current hospital quality systems.

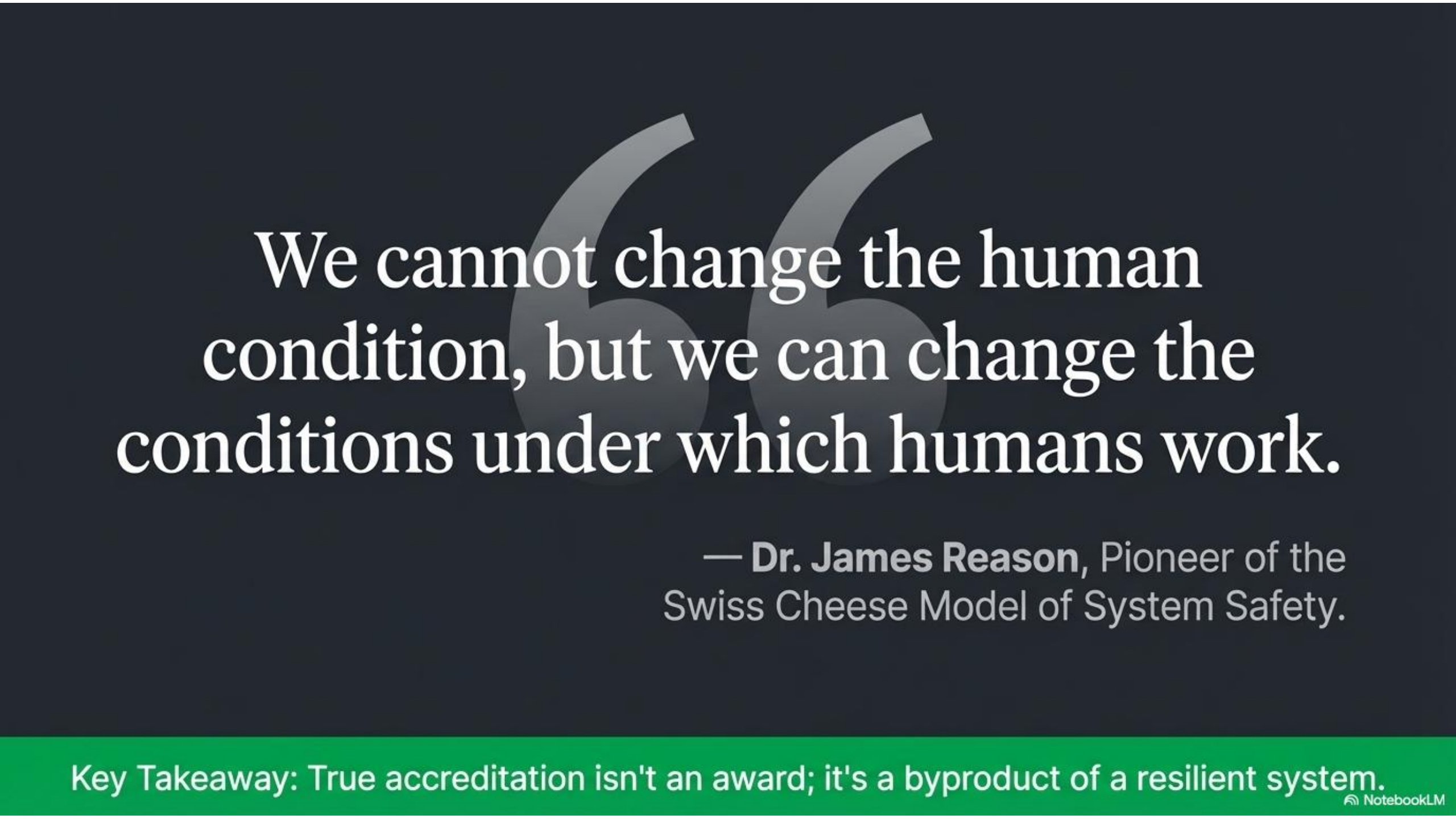
Transforming corrective actions from an administrative chore to a clinical culture.

True quality improvement happens at the bedside, not in a binder.

Why CAPA Becomes Eyewash: The Anatomy of Eyewash

	Checklist Culture (Eyewash)	Impact Culture (True Quality)
Focus	Pleasing the assessor	Protecting the patient
Metric	Time to close the file	Time between failures
Accountability	Signatures on a form	Behavioral change on the floor
Result	A pristine paper trail masking a fragile, error-prone clinical environment.	A resilient environment designed to intercept errors before harm occurs.

Key Takeaway: We are confusing the map (compliance) with the territory (patient safety).


We cannot change the human condition, but we can change the conditions under which humans work.
— Dr. James Reason, Pioneer of the Swiss Cheese Model of System Safety.
Key Takeaway: True accreditation isn't an award; it's a byproduct of a resilient system.
NotebookLM