

Clove room
2.40-3.05pm

Can collaborative learning develop competencies for interprofessional collaborative practice to enhance patient health outcomes?

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Evidence has shown that more holistic health outcomes can be achieved through interprofessional collaboration among health professionals (Barr, Koppel, Reeves, Hammick, & Freeth, 2005). In 2010, the World Health Organization (WHO) advocated closer links between education and health systems so that readiness for interprofessional collaborative practice is an integral part of the core educational goals for health and social care students (WHO, 2010). In 2013, the WHO published eleven recommendations for transformative education for health professionals (WHO, 2013), one of which is the inclusion of interprofessional education (IPE). Therefore, the message is clear; interprofessional collaborative practice will become the mainstream care model for better patient outcomes and safety.

The National University of Singapore (NUS) implemented IPE in 2010 with five health and social care programmes (namely dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and social work) joining forces to offer IPE to their undergraduates. The students participate in the interprofessional core curriculum (ICC) and interprofessional enrichment activities (IEAs) to develop their competencies for collaborative practice. IPE takes place when students from at least two professions come together to learn about, from, and with each other.

Collaborative learning theory postulates that as students learn how to work together and support each other, instructors should encourage brainstorming, reflection, and participation. By having a shared educational experience, students can learn from each other, utilise each other's skills sets and resources, and eventually translate the learnings to the workplace. According to Barr *et al.* (2005), collaborative learning could enhance motivation to collaborate by enabling learners to have productive learning relationships. It is therefore not surprising that the design of many of the NUS IPE activities involve collaboration learning. For example, the "Patient Safety Workshop", which is undertaken by all medical, nursing, and pharmacy students offers a platform for the mixed group of students from the three professions to work together on cases where a safe and effective clinical outcome is the goal for the patients. "Public Health Service" is a voluntary IEA that involves collaboration among medical, nursing, pharmacy, and dental students to provide health screening to the general public. These activities help students to understand the roles and responsibilities of the various health professions; appreciate and solve health issues in the community, acquire values for ethical practice, develop effective communication skills, and work together as a team.

Since its implementation in 2010, several batches of NUS undergraduates have undertaken IPE. It is timely that the programme needed to be reviewed so that the research findings can inform about the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching. A longitudinal study was started in 2016 where baseline reactions, attitudes, and perceptions (RAP) towards IPE and collaborative practice of the AY2016/17 cohort of students from the five professional programmes were gathered. This study will follow the changes of the same cohort of students' RAP as they journey through their professional education and training. A mixed-method approach will be used where semi-structured group interviews will be conducted to triangulate the data from the survey findings. Concurrently, the educators who offer the ICC and IEAs will be interviewed to find out their observations of students' attitudes towards working with other health professionals. Similarly, practitioners who have supervised this cohort of students during their clinical attachments will be interviewed to determine whether this cohort of students have acquired interprofessional competencies through IPE. Therefore, this presentation will illustrate how the investigational approach is used to elucidate the effectiveness of the learning style and teaching pedagogy in transforming the health and social care students into collaborative practice ready graduates.

Keywords

interprofessional education, interprofessional collaborative practice, collaborative learning, interprofessional core curriculum, interprofessional enrichment activities

References

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