2019

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Using A Mixed Methods Approach to Explore Perceptions of Early Learners in Classroom-Based Interprofessional Education Experiences

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BACKGROUND

• Interprofessional education (IPE) is a global imperative1
  • Health profession education programs, motivated by accreditation requirements1, have added IPE activities into their required curricula.
  • Curriculum development varies considerably across institutions and debate exists regarding appropriate timing for introducing learners to IPE in order to optimally improve health outcomes2,3
  • Some evidence shows benefit of early learner IPE in professional identity development, interprofessional socialization and positive attitude development toward interprofessional practice4,5,6
  • At Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), IPE is integrated longitudinally through the curriculum for several of the health professions programs via IPE courses

OBJECTIVES

• To explore attitudes and learning outcomes among early-level health professions students who completed foundational IPE courses at VCU

METHODS

• Mixed methods approach to examine assessment and evaluation data from two one-credit, semester long IPE courses taught in 2017

RESULTS

• 506 students completed IPEC 501; 490 students completed IPEC 502

QUANTITATIVE

• Students reported having significantly more positive perceptions about IPE after completing IPEC 501 than prior to the course,
  • Moderate effect size
  • Greatest change in attitude about roles and responsibilities for students across all degree programs

QUALITATIVE

• Five themes emerged reflecting facets of interprofessionalism:
  1. Interprofessional attitudes: “Our perceptions of the other professions have changed, and we see how important it would be in real-life scenarios...we see the value of interdisciplinary, rather than just our own understanding.”
  2. Professional identity: “We realized that although our roles seem to be different, there are many similarities, and ultimately we are all working toward the same thing and improving healthcare for the patient.”
  3. Communication/Teamwork: “We learned how to effectively communicate and collaborate across disciplines...these difficult conversations with our colleagues.”
  4. Interprofessional behaviors: “We are open-minded interprofessional collaborators...we worked together in a manner that helped us to feel comfortable.”
  5. Students sub-themes across reflections included: patient-centered care and a culture of safety

RESULTS

One-Way ANOVA for Effect of Program on Change for Overall Scale

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*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

• General attitudes toward IPE are more positive following a foundational IPE course
  • Variations exist between professional degree programs that may be related to differences in degree progression at time of exposure to IPE courses
  • Qualitative analysis indicated students’ emphasis on patient-centered care and a culture of safety as driving factors for interprofessional development and practice
  • Reflections identified a need for role/identity understanding and open and honest interprofessional communication
  • Course evaluation comments revealed that students perceived real-life application of course concepts as the best way to learn interprofessional behaviors
  • Desire for content relevance presents a curricular challenge when designed as a first-semester, early-learner course

CONCLUSIONS

• Student attitudes toward interprofessional learning are more positive following a foundational IPE course
• Qualitative analysis of reflections indicated presence of learning related to several key concepts of interprofessionalism and collaborative care which may help shape future interprofessional curricula for early learners
• Further research is needed to explore variations in learning and attitudes related to individual professional degree programs

REFERENCES


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Emswiller Interprofessional Symposium, Glen Allen, VA, February 2, 2019