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The Implementation and Evaluation of Interprofessional Education (IPE) in the Graduate Nursing Program

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Purpose: Historically, healthcare students are educated within their own discipline. However, as patients have more complex health needs, more than one discipline is needed to address issues regarding their health status. The World Health Organization recognized that collaborations taught at the student level were more likely to achieve effective collaborative practice in the healthcare settings. Studies indicate that a collaborative approach to patient care have been shown to improve patient care, decrease costs, decrease patients' length of stay, and reduce medical errors. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an Interprofessional Education (IPE) project among graduate nursing, graduate communication disorders and undergraduate exercise science students.

Methods: A problem-based IPE project was developed by the faculty from the graduate programs of nursing, communication disorders and exercise science. Students were randomly assigned to teams and worked together to develop a comprehensive treatment plan for their assigned case study. Each team presented to the class after four weeks. The students completed the Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey (ICCAS) to evaluate the IPE experience. The ICCAS is a 20 item, self-report tool that measures students' skills in six domains: communication, collaboration, roles and responsibilities, collaborative patient family-centered approach, conflict management / resolutions, and team functioning. The ICCAS responses were on a 7-point Likert scale from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree. The tool utilizes a retrospective pre-test and post-test method.

Results: 51 students participated in the IPE experience: 24 nursing, 17 communication disorders, and 10 exercise science students. A paired samples t-test showed a significant increase ($p < .05$) in post-test scores in all 20 competencies surveyed. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all survey items was .98, indicating that the items have a relatively high internal consistency, similar to the original tool.

Conclusion: Incorporating IPE in the curriculum can promote interprofessional collaboration skills among graduate students. Implementing IPE as a component of the curriculum can positively impact future members of the health care team to value the benefits of collaboration and team work.

Title:

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References:

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Abstract Summary:

The World Health Organization regards IPE as one of the most promising strategies to achieve effective collaborative practice in healthcare settings. This presentation discusses the implementation and evaluation of IPE in the graduate nursing program. The results show improvement in the students' collaborative and teamwork competencies through IPE.

Content Outline:

Introduction

- IPE is defined, as “two or more professions who learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes” (Center for Advancement of Interprofessional Education, 2002)
- There is sparse literature on the use of IPE in graduate nursing programs.

Methods

- The faculty from the graduate programs of nursing, communication disorders and exercise science collaborated to prepare for the IPE implementation.
- The IPE activity was implemented to include graduate nursing students, graduate communication disorders students, and undergraduate exercise science students who were in their last internship course.
- A problem-based IPE experience was utilized. The students were randomly assigned to teams with at least one student from each discipline. The IPE experience culminated with a presentation from each team.
- The students were asked to complete the retrospective pre-test and post-test Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey (ICCAS) to evaluate the IPE experience.

Results

- 51 students participated in the IPE activity.
- The results of the paired sample t-tests show that the mean scores of all 20 competencies increased as the students reflected upon the IPE learning experience.
- Furthermore, a paired samples t-test was used to analyze the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. These results indicate a significant difference ($p < .05$) in all of the 20 competencies between the pre-test and post-test pairs of the ICCAS.

Conclusion

- An improvement in the perceived IPE competencies of graduate and undergraduate healthcare students was noted with one IPE activity.
- Incorporating IPE as a component of the curriculum can positively impact future members of the health care team to value the benefits of collaboration and team work.

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