



Opportunities for interprofessional education in neonatal healthcare: an integrative review



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Summary

Neonatal care is an area which offers opportunities for interprofessional education and collaboration. The healthcare team share several competencies and the members are working interdependantly. Coordinated care and communication can enhance outcomes for neonates and their families, which can be developed through interprofessional education.

Introduction / Background

“Interprofessional education occurs when students from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes. Once students understand how to work interprofessionally, they are ready to enter the workplace as a member of the collaborative practice team. This is a key step in moving health systems from fragmentation to a position of strength” (WHO 2010).

Neonatal care is an area which offers opportunities for interprofessional education and collaboration. This is not a new concept in neonatal nursing, however, renewed efforts should be made to ensure holistic care of the infant and family. The healthcare team share several competencies and the members are working interdependantly. Coordinated care and improved clear communication can enhance outcomes for neonates and their families, which can be developed through interprofessional education.



Methods

Design: An integrative review was done to explore opportunities for interprofessional education in neonatal practice.

Data sources: CINAHL, EBSCOHOST, Ovid MEDLINE, Libraries Worldwide, Worldcat.org, Academic Search Complete electronic databases, keywords and inclusion and exclusion criteria was utilised in the search. Twelve studies published between 2016-2019 were included.

Review methods: A search of literature was undertaken and studies was critically appraised and thematic analysis was performed.



Results

Themes that were identified included but was not limited to the acknowledgement of diverse skills and expertise among the different professionals, shared responsibilities, communication, accountability and adapted educational curricula.

A common interprofessional language related to neonatal care needs to develop to facilitate interprofessional education.

The teaching of interprofessional competencies by integrating theory and practice into the curricula or educational modules is essential.

The competencies include:

- (1) patient/family centeredness;
- (2) community/population orientation;
- (3) relationship focus;
- (4) process orientation;
- (5) linkage to learning activities, educational strategies, and behavioural assessments that are developmentally appropriate for the learner;
- (6) integration across the learning continuum;
- (7) sensitivity to the systems context and applicability across practice settings;
- (8) applicability across professions;
- (9) stated in common and meaningful language for all professions; and
- (10) outcome driven.

Self-awareness and respect for other disciplines and the value of the differences must be realised. Group dynamics and issues around hierarchy and power play must be resolved when planning interprofessional education.



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Conclusion

A deep understanding and appreciation of every discipline's unique contribution can influence interprofessional education in a positive manner. The power of effective communication and mutual respect in the neonatal care environment is invaluable.



Implications / Take away message

- Improved quality care and neonatal outcomes is possible in most settings if neonatal education can grow to include interprofessional learning opportunities and collaborative plans for neonatal care.

Questions I would like audience to respond to

- What opportunities for interprofessional education exist in your context?
- What topics in neonatal care is critical to include in interprofessional education?
- How do you use simulation and debriefing in clinical education of neonatal care to enhance interprofessional collaboration?

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