Title: An Interprofessional Approach to Pain Education in Schools of Nursing, Medicine, and Pharmacy

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References:


Abstract Summary: The purpose of this presentation is to share the early findings of a study that explored current practices in pain education within schools of nursing, medicine, and pharmacy. This presentation will include discussion of educational gaps and recommendations for interprofessional pain education.

Learning Activity:
LEARNING OBJECTIVES | EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
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Describe current practices in pain management education in U.S. nursing, medical, and pharmacy schools. | With a focus on nursing, a summary of current practices in pain management will be provided. This summary will include pain education topics covered, teaching strategies utilized, and specific opioid education provided.

Identify gaps in pain education in nursing, medical, and pharmacy schools. | With a focus on nursing, specific gaps will be identified and recommendations will be provided.

Discuss the need for interprofessional pain education for all healthcare professionals. | With a focus on nursing, recommendations for interprofessional education activities will be provided.

Abstract Text:

OBJECTIVES: Chronic pain is one of the largest health burdens, both personal and financial, in the United States. Approximately 50 million people in the U.S. suffer from persistent pain and the annual economic cost associated with pain is over $500 billion (Nahin, 2015). The Institute of Medicine (2011) identifies effective pain management as an interprofessional responsibility of the healthcare team and essential to patient-centered care. Despite huge strides in understanding the physiological aspects of pain, there is a major gap between that understanding and pain assessment and management. Those who teach on pain topics in schools of nursing, medicine and pharmacy agree that pain is a uniquely individual and subjective experience that depends on a variety of biological, psychological, and social factors. However, there is a lack of agreement on the quantity or scope of pain education topics to be covered within and among healthcare disciplines. The objectives of this study are to (1) explore current practices in pain education within U.S. nursing, medical and pharmacy schools, (2) assess educational gaps, and (3) provide recommendations for pain education.

METHODS: This descriptive cross-sectional study focuses on prelicensure programs in nursing, medicine and pharmacy. A survey, adapted from a list of learning objectives used by Mezei and colleagues (2011) to assess pain curricula at schools in the U.S. and Canada, was developed to determine the scope, quantity, and delivery of pain education. Part one of the survey focuses on general pain education topics and teaching methods used, while part two focuses specifically on opioid education. This two-part survey will be administered using a web-based platform to evaluate the depth and breadth of pain education taught at nursing, medical and pharmacy schools across the nation. School demographic information will also be obtained.

RESULTS: Descriptive statistics will be used to characterize the sample and examine individual survey items. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be conducted to examine potential differences between the schools. Qualitative survey data will be content analyzed. Findings will reflect opportunities for improvement in nursing, medical and pharmacy schools’ pain curriculums across the United States.

CONCLUSIONS: When designing a pain education curriculum, more emphasis should be placed on patient education, patient empowerment, and interprofessional collaboration. The consensus is that nursing, medical and pharmacy schools in the United States should establish formal integration of pain management education across curricula. This will enable graduating healthcare professionals to be well equipped to improve patient outcomes and reduce this public health crisis.