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Does IPE Improve Patient Safety?

Katie Henson

INTRODUCTION

Inter-professional education is when students from two or more professions learn with and from one another. This enables effective collaboration and improve health outcomes (World Health Organization, 2021).

According to the World Health Organization (2021), inter professional collaboration is recognized as an innovative strategy that plays an important role in mitigating the global health workforce crisis.

Considerable research has focused on student learning, but recently researchers have begun to look beyond the classroom and into the impact of IPE (Institute of Medicine et al., 2015).

SIGNIFICANCE

Inter professional education is necessary because it prepares a “collaborative practice-ready” approach within the health workforce (World Health Organization, 2021).

IPE allows for professionals to respond to local health needs in a more effective manner as well as decreasing communication and medical errors (World Health Organization, 2021).

“Problems with communication and collaboration amongst different health and social care professionals continue to be a concern as they can compromise the delivery of patient care” (Reeves, 2016).

Topcu reported a medical error rate of 1.6% in nurses. The lack of communication was a major source of misconduct (2017).

Interprofessional education is significant because it promotes communication among professionals. Therefore, decreasing errors that may harm the patient.

POSITION STATEMENT

Inter-professional education is essential in promoting patient safety within the healthcare setting. Collaborating with other professions as students allows for improved health outcomes in future practice.

SUPPORT FOR POSITION

After 60 years of enquiry, there is now sufficient evidence to indicate that effective interprofessional education enables effective collaborative practice” (World Health Organization, 2021).

A number of studies report positive changes to the delivery of care and clinical outcomes such as infection rates, clinical error rates, length of patient stay and satisfaction scores (Reeves, 2016).

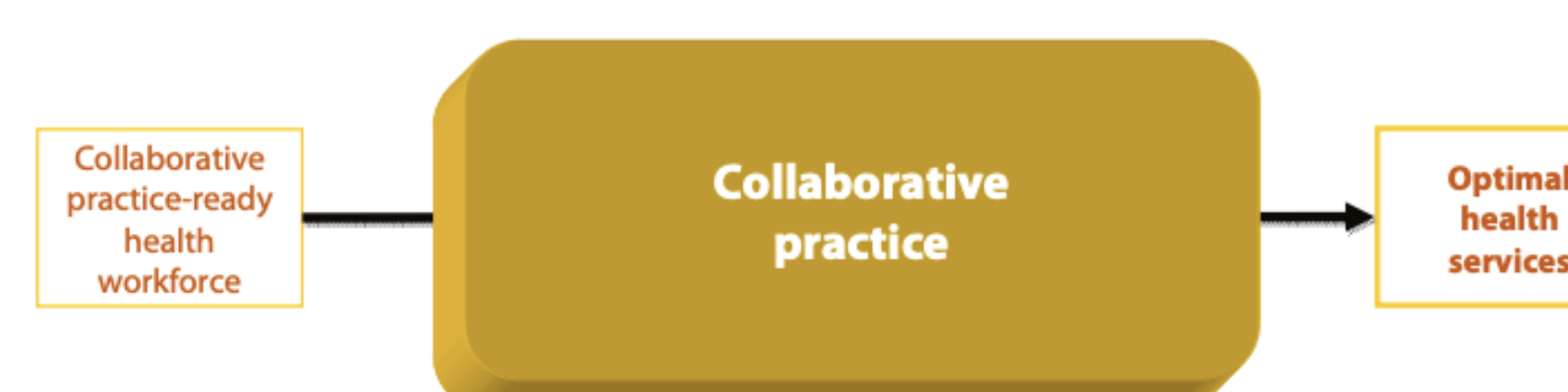
A study found “benefits to patients of interprofessional collaborative practice” consisted of patients receiving more high quality care and improved patient safety (Lee, 2020).

Participants of the same study noted “positive learning outcomes” and had enhanced collaboration and confidence with their communication skills. As well as a better understanding of their own roles and responsibilities (Lee, 2020).

Figure 2. Interprofessional education



Figure 3. Collaborative practice



IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Student nurses can benefit from inter-professional education experiences because it establishes tools that will enhance communication in future practice. This can reduce medical errors and enhance patient outcome.

Collaborative practice provides an environment where health systems and health outcomes are improved. Effective interprofessional education and collaborative practice is shaped through integrated health and education policies (World Health Organization, 2021).

Topcu found considerably high rates of medical errors among physicians and nurses. The majority of medical errors originated from communication failures (2017). IPE safety experiences can be a preventative step to reduce the number of errors among nursing staff.

“Considering the majority of medical errors that originate from physicians and nurses, medication error can be considered the most common type of error that treated patient safety” (Topcu et al., 2017).

“Problems with communication and collaboration amongst different health and social care professionals continue to be a concern as they can compromise the delivery of patient care” (Reeves, 2016).

One study found IPE is effective in practicing and developing undergraduate nursing and medical student’s collaboration through hands-on experience (Lee et al., 2020).



CONCLUSION

Inter-professional education is a vital step in shaping students for future practice in the healthcare system. Through these types of events it will produce collaborative practice ready students. This will promote safety and improve clinical outcomes for patients.

Students will have the tools and understanding on how to increase communication among other professionals. Therefore, decreasing medical errors and providing a safe environment for clients.

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