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Does IPE Improve Patient Safety?

Kathryn Jeffries – Student Nurse

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) and its cohorts identify interprofessional education (IPE) in practice as an innovative approach that will play an integral role in mitigating the global health workforce crisis (World Health Professional Alliance, 2019).

IPE occurs when two or more professions learn with, about, and from each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes (World Health Professions Alliance, 2019).

SIGNIFICANCE

- The total number of Sentinel Events reviewed by The Joint Commission from 1995-2020 was 16,126 (The Joint Commission, 2021).
- There is a 1 in a million chance of a person being harmed on an airplane whereas there is a 1 in 300 chance of a patient being harmed in healthcare (WHO, 2019).
- In high-income countries 1 in 10 patients is injured undergoing hospital care. This injury could have many causes, although it is preventable 50% of the time (WHO, 2019).
- In low- and middle-income countries, the rate of adverse events was around 8%. 83% could have been prevented and 30% led to death (WHO, 2019).
- Approximately two-thirds of all adverse events occur in low- and middle-income countries (WHO, 2019).
- Collaborative practice improves health systems and advances health outcomes (World Health Professions Alliance, 2019).

POSITION STATEMENT

IPE is crucial to improving patient safety through effective collaboration of healthcare disciplines by creating mutual understandings of patient treatments and goals.

SUPPORT FOR POSITION

Patient safety is a serious global public health concern (WHO, 2019).

The WHO and its partners recognize that there is satisfactory evidence to denote that effective IPE enables effective collaborative practice (World Health Professions Alliance, 2019).

IPE plays a significant role in diminishing various challenges handled by health systems around the world (World Health Professional Alliance, 2019).

IPE is fundamental to the improvement of a “collaborative practice-ready” health workforce. It is within these settings where the most progressive advances toward strengthened health systems can be made (World Health Professions Alliance, 2019).

Several advantages of IPE have been reported including (Homeyer et al., 2019):

- increasing mutual trust and respect in the workplace
- increased understanding of professional roles and responsibilities
- effective communication among disciplines
- increased job satisfaction
- positive impact on patient outcomes including a reduction in medical errors and decreased length of patient stay

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Evidence pertaining to the efficacy of IPE improving health outcomes continues to be built; however, through practice and research as well as education interprofessionally, great strides are being made toward IPE being the forefront of new advancements in healthcare (World Health Professional Alliance, 2019).

Future research focal points beyond the educational setting must include and address the impact of IPE and practice on issues such as patient safety, patient and provider satisfaction, quality of care, health promotion, population health, and the cost of care (NLN, 2015).

To promote IPE, educators must see themselves as interprofessional faculty in order to develop an overall interprofessional team-based healthcare system. Institutional support is critical for groundbreaking initiatives to be a success (NLN, 2015).

Creating or using evidence-based strategies specifically aiming to reduce preventable harm could lead to major advancements in health care which could additionally be more cost effective (Panagioti et al., 2019).



(PAN American Health Organization, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Evidence provides that, IPE provides collaboration among healthcare disciplines as well as a mutual understanding pertaining to patient care decisions and goals.

Providing comprehensive care in a wide range of healthcare settings will allow great strides to be made toward patient safety as well as patient and provider satisfaction.

In summary, many challenges faced globally can be mitigated using IPE focusing primarily on effective collaborative practice.

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