

## Interdisciplinary education with medical and pharmacy students in a hospice setting

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In a systematic review, evidence that student health professionals benefit from interdisciplinary education in the categories of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. (1) From 9 to 5000 students were included in the studies reviewed, although the majority of trials studied 10-50 students. Most of the health care discipline students in this review were medical students or nursing students, although social work, pharmacy, dentistry, laboratory science, speech therapy, dietetics, audiology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, health administration, chiropractic medicine and psychology students were also represented in much smaller numbers. The largest effects were shown on understanding of professional roles and team working.

A single study of interdisciplinary education in palliative care has been published. It examined medical students and social work students involved in a series of training sessions over 4 weeks in the palliative care setting.(2) Students volunteered to participate and individuals unable to attend the training session were assigned to the control group while the volunteers who could attend were assigned to the intervention group. This study showed that students who participated in the intervention group training sessions had a higher perceived understanding of the collaborative role in palliative care. This finding mirrors the results of the generalized systematic review. This study is significant because hospice care is a component of palliative care and requires a well-functioning health care team for high quality care delivery.

At the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Medicine, third year medical students are required to successfully complete a 4 week rotation in geriatrics. The majority of students participate in the rotation provided at the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging. One component of their rotation is 4 training sessions on hospice care in which students are assigned an older hospice patient to visit and assess. Information about each patient is presented to the other students in a group led by a hospice physician. Treatment decisions are made and carried out under the supervision of the hospice physician. The medical student subsequently sees the patient the following week to assess the outcome of these decisions.

Beginning with the 2008-09 academic year, fourth year pharmacy students completing a geriatric pharmacy advanced practice experience at the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging were required to participate in the hospice training along with the medical students. These pharmacy students were assigned to work with a medical student to evaluate pharmaceutical care aspects of the assigned hospice patient. They participated in the same training sessions as the medical students and visited the hospice patient at the same time as the medical student.

I propose a project to evaluate the hospice interdisciplinary education program and the perceived results from participating students through a survey. The goal of this evaluation is to compare the perceptions of medical and pharmacy students who participated in hospice education and were assigned patients to be seen as an interdisciplinary pair to medical students who were assigned patients to be evaluated as a solo student. Along with relevant demographic data, the survey would collect information from sections of a validated instrument, the Interdisciplinary Education Perception Scale.(3) This scale would measure perceptions of the need for cooperation, perceptions of actual cooperation and perceptions of understanding the roles of physicians and pharmacists in the hospice setting.

References:

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- (3) McFadyen AK, MacLaren WM, Webster VS. The interdisciplinary education perception scale (IEPS): An alternative remodeled sub-scale structure and its reliability. *J Interprofessional Care*, 2007; 21: 433-43.