

Evaluation of an Interprofessional Workshop for the Student-Run Free Clinic at Case Western Reserve University

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Introduction

The goal of interprofessional learning is to prepare all health professions students for working together, with the common goal of building a safer and better patient-centered and community/population oriented U.S. health care system (Panel, 2011).

Preparing health care professional students for working in patient-centered teams needs to begin early and it has been identified that interdisciplinary teams decrease care costs and increase patient safety and satisfaction (IOM 2001, Allen 2006). Additionally, research on teams and teamwork has suggested that there are tools and strategies that can be taught to health professionals in order to enhance team functioning and thereby improve patient safety (King, 2008).

The CWRU Student-Run Free Clinic (SRFC) is an interprofessional student organization founded and operated by students from the Case Western Reserve University schools of medicine and nursing. The organization operates a free, bi-monthly, acute-care medical clinic that is staffed and operated entirely by CWRU students and volunteer practitioners. The clinic provides free health-care and counseling to underserved populations within the Cleveland community.

Currently, students attend a short orientation to familiarize them with the clinic, but there was confusion around roles and responsibilities and no training about teamwork or interprofessionalism. We created an interprofessional workshop/orientation for first-year graduate nursing and medical student volunteers at the SRFC in order to address these needs.

Study Questions

Will a workshop for healthcare professions student volunteers lead to:

- An increased understanding of each other's training, roles, and responsibilities;
- Increased appreciation for the use of agenda-setting and feedback in the clinical setting;
- Use of agenda-setting and feedback while volunteering at the SRFC;
- Increased support for a team-based approach to the patient interview, assessment, and plan?

Goals of Workshop

The goals of the workshop were as follows:

- To increase students' understanding of each other's training, roles, and responsibilities and appreciation for interprofessional teamwork;
- To increase students' appreciation for and use of agenda-setting and feedback when volunteering at the SRFC;
- To increase the students' appreciation for a team-based approach to patient interviews, assessments, and plans;
- To orient the students to what they will be doing at the SRFC and give them the opportunity to practice in a simulated setting;
- To study the effectiveness of our workshop to improve interprofessional teamwork at the SRFC.

The Workshop

At the SRFC, first-year students volunteer in one of two roles – case manager or junior clinician. Clinical teams are composed of one senior clinician, one junior clinician, and one case manager.

The interprofessional workshop had three components:

1. A brief power point presentation on the training (i.e. coursework, classes, etc.) of both nursing and medical students and a discussion about the meaning of "nursing" and "medicine."
2. Viewing and discussion of a video showing an ideal clinical team interaction at the SRFC with an emphasis on agenda-setting and giving feedback.
3. Participation as a clinical team in two standardized patient encounters. The standardized patient encounter required students to interview the patient as a team, use agenda-setting, and give feedback.

Sixteen first year medical and nursing students attended the workshop prior to volunteering at the SRFC. A group of students who did not attend the workshop prior to volunteering was used as our control group.

Workshop group



Points of comparison between the two groups



Control group

Evaluation Tools

Students attending the workshop were surveyed prior to the workshop, after the workshop, and after volunteering for the first time at the SRFC. Students in the control group were surveyed prior to volunteering at the SRFC and after volunteering for the first time at the SRFC.

The 20 item survey (ICCAS) was used to assess the following categories of interprofessional competencies:

1. Communication
2. Collaboration
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Collaborative patient/family-center approach
5. Conflict management/resolution
6. Team functioning.

We developed nine Likert-scale questions regarding working in teams, agenda-setting, feedback, and understanding the training/roles/responsibilities of each profession. Students were also asked to answer free-response questions about the workshop, use of agenda-setting and feedback, and team interactions.

Insights

Our data has not yet been analyzed, but preliminary feedback from workshop participants included the following comments:

- A medical student wrote that he/she liked "working with nursing students; feeling more prepared to volunteer."
- A nursing student wrote that he/she liked "the opportunity to get positive and negative feedback."

After volunteering for the first time at the SRFC, students wrote some of the following comments regarding the usefulness of the workshop:

- "The workshop really helped me feel comfortable with the other profession which made it easier to set goals, ask questions, and receive feedback. The workshop did help establish a team mentality."
- "I think the workshop really helped overcome the barriers when working with similar, yet different professions. I felt like the workshop put everyone on the same playing field which made gave patient care a boost since everyone was functioning with a team mentality."

References

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