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Interprofessional education and collaboration: Healthcare students' attitudes and perceptions in an introductory educational experience

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Research suggests that health professions do not collaborate well together, and that separation of health profession education continues to be the standard, despite the benefits to patient outcomes. To address this issue, an introductory interprofessional learning workshop was implemented in the spring of 2014, 2015, and 2016 with first year physician assistant (PA) students and second year associate degree nursing (RN) students to provide an opportunity for the students to learn and collaborate with other health profession students. The purpose of the study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of associate degree nursing students and physician assistant students towards interprofessional learning; describe the students' perceptions of the workshops; and determine long-term effects of the interprofessional workshops. The Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS) was used before and after the workshops to survey the students. Additionally, a two-item qualitative questionnaire was used to assess the students' perceptions of the learning intervention and to identify long-term effects. Results showed overall positive attitudes and perceptions before and after the workshops with slight increases in RIPLS scores post-workshop. Qualitative analysis of student's written responses revealed six dominant themes: opportunity to interact with other health care students, understanding professional roles and responsibilities, building confidence; importance of communication; importance of teamwork; and patient benefit. Follow-up post-workshop assessments a year later, suggests long term effects of the interprofessional workshops. The workshop is presently part of the curriculum for both nursing and physician assistant programs.

Biography

Shirley Gharbin is an Associate Professor of Nursing at Cecil College in Maryland, USA and has been an educator for nine years. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from College of New Rochelle in New York, her Master of Science in Nursing Education Leadership from Wilmington University in Delaware, and her Doctorate in Higher Education Leadership from Wilmington University in January 2017. In addition to teaching full-time at Cecil College, she has been a Registered Nurse for seventeen years and works part-time as a cardiovascular nurse.

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