



The Benefit of an Interprofessional Training Ward for Pharmacy Students

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Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, interprofessional education and collaborative practice are leading to improved health outcomes (1). Interprofessional education occurs when students from two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration (1). Therefore, a cohort of two medical and two pharmacy students as well as four nursing trainees were selected to take over ward management and patient care for up to four real patients in a hospital setting during a five weeks' period. They were supervised by experienced professionals who "sit on their hands and look out of the window" only interfering when patients are endangered or situations are getting risky for patients.

Method

As we have just started this project and there are not enough students for qualitative research yet, we interviewed the six pharmacy students included in last year's interprofessional training wards using guided, problem-centred interviews to find out what the benefit for them taking part in this project was. Their experiences were qualitatively explored and evaluated with regard to content, structure, supervision, feedback and interprofessionality of this training.

Results

Pharmacy students reported that the current structure, supervision and feedback enabled them to learn clinical pharmacy in a very profound way. Furthermore, it made other health care professionals aware of how they could benefit from clinical pharmacists and what the role of clinical pharmacists really is. The experience of being responsible for patients together with medical students and nursing trainees in this interprofessional setting was extremely helpful for their learning success and made them realize which influence on patients' outcome working together in a team like that can have. This qualitative research revealed the potential for further optimization of this programme in order to meet the learning objectives and expectations of the pharmacy students even better.

Conclusion

The Interprofessional Training Ward is a great setting for developing clinical pharmacy. It generates „collaborative practice-ready“ health professionals. The concept of interprofessional precepting enabled the students to work in a very independent way. Interprofessional Training wards will be continued and rolled out on further departments of the hospital.

Questions from the guided, problem centred interviews

Why did you study pharmacy?

What does „clinical pharmacy“ mean to you?

Did you have any idea what you wanted to learn in an interprofessional training ward before it started?

Do you think you were prepared well by your studies for the practical experience of an interprofessional training ward?

Did you have the possibility to learn clinical pharmacy profoundly by the structure of the interprofessional training ward (e.g. caring for patients on your own with your peers)?

What did you miss during your practical experience to learn clinical pharmacy profoundly?

How were you supervised during the practical experience?

Did you get feedback for your performance?

How did you benefit from the interprofessionality of the interprofessional training ward?

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References: (1) Gilbert JH et al.: A WHO report: framework for action on interprofessional education and collaborative practice. J Allied Health 2010; 39 (1):196-197.

