

Interdisciplinary simulated learning

A qualitative exploration of the effectiveness of interdisciplinary simulated learning in the acquisition of clinical skills and students' decision making: toward the development of an embedded clinical skills joint interdisciplinary learning and curricula approach

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Abstract

Introduction: The Undergraduate programmes of Medicine and Nursing at the University of Edinburgh are currently participating in an innovative, interdisciplinary teaching approach involving the use of medium fidelity simulation. The programme involves several elements of 'cutting edge' learning and teaching such as 'real time' experiential learning, team work, feed forward and debriefing techniques. Crucially the innovative approach involves full student engagement in their learning experience. Our multidisciplinary, collaborative team has evaluated this innovation and is currently embedding this initiative across the two programmes of Bachelor of Nursing and MBChB.

Aims: To evaluate this initiative through both student and staff eyes and assess its impact on perceived clinical competence and confidence in the group of undergraduate medical and nursing students.

Objectives: 1. To prepare students for professional interdisciplinary working. 2. To use experiential learning as an approach to achieve knowledge, skills and effective decision making. 3. To foster direct research-teaching links within Nursing Studies and Medicine.

Methods: Qualitative interviews and focus groups were used to evaluate the student and staff experience of participating in this learning environment.

Results: Experiencing interdisciplinary learning using 'safe' scenario based settings allowed both competence and confidence attainment to be identified in terms of resulting better patient care skills, decision making and team working.

The above project has progressed exceptionally well and the results are at the stage of being analysed and prepared for dissemination at local, national and international levels. This project has emphasised the 'beauty' and complexity of interdisciplinary working from an early career stage, with great benefit being seen from both staff and student perspectives.

We are keen to continue to develop this on a larger and, indeed, reciprocal scale. Students can learn so much about each other's professions by walking in the other's shoes.