

Title: An Interprofessional Learning Collaborative on Women's Health Across the Lifespan for Dental, Nurse-Midwifery, and Pharmacy Students.

Abstract

Purpose: An interprofessional, asynchronous educational experience connecting learners across two universities. In Spring 2024, dental, nurse-midwifery, and pharmacy learners participated in educational activities across a two-week timespan to explore their unique roles in aiding dental and pharmacologic complications and education arising in pregnant or menopausal women. Objectives of this experience were to 1) identify when to utilize other professionals in the healthcare team, 2) use effective teamwork and communication strategies when working within an interprofessional team, and 3) collaborate with other health professions to diagnose and develop age-appropriate health maintenance and preventative care for a simulated patient.

Methods: Three cases were developed involving either pregnant or menopausal women. Videos were created of interviews with these three simulated patients that described their health situations. Learners were divided into interprofessional groups to address the issues for each patient and connected with each other virtually to discuss ways to help each patient.

Results: 145 learners completed the experience and post-experience evaluation materials: dental (n=64), nurse-midwifery (n=3), and pharmacy (n=76); two participants did not specify their profession. Of these, 88 identified as female, 56 identified as male, and 1 refrained from selecting a gender. Several core themes emerged as participants reflected on how the course impacted their interprofessional skills. Communication (active listening), open-mindedness, respect, and the ability to accept critical feedback were commonly identified as being critical for effective interprofessional teamwork. Challenges learners faced included communicating effectively and avoiding "jargon," coordinating meetings that worked for all team members, and ensuring all participants contributed to the case assignments. Following the experience, learners reported they would more actively work to 1) have a more holistic view of the patient's health, 2) more frequently consult with other professions, and 3) strive to build a diverse healthcare team in whichever community they serve.

Conclusions: Overall, this inaugural interprofessional experience was well-received by the learners. Participants reported an enhanced understanding of their colleagues' scopes of practice and identified key components of interprofessional teamwork that they can continue to develop and implement throughout their education and career. Areas for improvement are being explored to improve this opportunity in future years.