

Simulation-Based Interprofessional Education in a Rural Setting

Abstract

The purpose of this project was to examine the feasibility and acceptability of a simulation-based IPE experience for pre-licensure nursing, pharmacy, and medical students on a rurally-located campus. Using a mixed-methods, explanatory sequential approach, this project: 1) examined the feasibility of implementing a simulation-based IPE experience using telehealth tools; and 2) evaluated student perceptions of inter-professional teamwork, roles and responsibilities, and patient outcomes for collaborative practice, both pre- and post-scenario.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. Results revealed 94% agreed/strongly agreed the IPE experience resembled a real-life situation. 100% of nursing/medical students and 80% of the pharmacy students indicated they would recommend this experience to their peers. Significant positive changes in attitudes towards using an inter-professional team approach were noted for pharmacy students, especially in regards to patient outcomes, reduced costs, and improved patient-centered care. Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Four themes emerged: 1) better understanding of technology; 2) improved communication among team members; 3) benefit of true to life experience; and 4) increased knowledge level and confidence. Participant suggestions for improvement included: 1) improve the simulation/telehealth equipment orientation; 2) consider a grand round-type simulation; and 3) address technical challenges with the robot.

Although limited by a small sample size, this project confirmed it is feasible and acceptable to offer simulation-based IPE in a rural setting facilitated by the use of telehealth tools, and collaborative teamwork is enhanced by using “remote in” technology during a simulation-based IPE activity. Complex healthcare now requires a collaborative and team

approach to patient care. A simulation-based IPE approach using “remote in” technology allows for the development and mastery of these competencies. Future work will incorporate student suggestions to improve the experience, as well as integrate students from other healthcare disciplines, such as physician assistant students.