

Stakeholder Summary

Health science workshops focus on collaboration

Providing effective patient care and treatment requires health professionals from a number of disciplines working collaboratively. However, it is difficult to teach the core skills needed for effective teamwork and cooperation to large groups of students studying diverse subjects with limited clinical access. A new study by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario finds that in a large group setting, health science students from different programs were able to learn key components of interprofessional collaboration through workshops. After completing the workshops, students demonstrated an appreciation for team collaboration, effective communication and a respectful working environment.

Project Description

The qualitative study examines 129 students from five undergraduate health sciences programs at McMaster University who volunteered to attend workshops on key skills for effective collaboration. The workshops focused on the needs of children with Down syndrome and autism as providing care for these conditions requires professionals working collaboratively. The workshops allowed students to interact with each other, watch videos of effective teamwork in a pediatric setting, and engage in questions and discussions about clinical conditions. Fifty-five of the students took part in a facilitated version of the workshop, which included the opportunity to have a guided discussion about interprofessional teamwork. Following completion of the workshops students participated in semi-structured focus group discussions.

Findings

Students were able to identify the importance of collaboration — for the families of patients, the professionals providing care and the health system as a whole. While there was no discernable difference in student learning between the two types of workshops, students who attended the non-facilitated sessions indicated they would have liked to have had more guided discussion about interprofessional practice. The students in non-facilitated sessions said that the focus groups also provided a positive experience for discussion and learning, although this was not the case for the facilitated group.

The authors note that this model is easily adapted to accommodate a variety of medical conditions, settings and team structures.

Clinical Teaching of Interprofessional Child Development Assessment Skills in a Large Group Setting was written by Teresa Carter, Eileen Hanna, Marilyn Swinton, McMaster University.