

INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN HEALTH COURSES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE TRAINING PROCESS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Marina Fazzi Benjamin

Graduating in Nutrition

Universidade de Ribeirão Preto - UNAERP

Ribeirão Preto/SP Brazil

Renata Dessordi

Nutritionist

Universidade de Ribeirão Preto - UNAERP

Ribeirão Preto/SP Brazil

Telma Maria Braga Costa

Nutritionist

Universidade de Ribeirão Preto - UNAERP

Ribeirão Preto/SP Brazil

Cristiane Martins Peres

Psychopedagogue

Faculdade de Medicina de Ribeirão Preto -

FMRP

Ribeirão Preto/SP Brazil

Marcelo Rieira

Doctor

Universidade de Ribeirão Preto - UNAERP

Ribeirão Preto/SP Brazil

Tufik José Magalhães Geleilete

Doctor

Universidade de Ribeirão Preto - UNAERP

Ribeirão Preto/SP Brazil

Karina Pfrimer

Nutritionist

Universidade de Ribeirão Preto - UNAERP

Ribeirão Preto/SP Brazil

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Abstract: Interprofessional Education (IPE) according to World Health Organization (2010) is characterized when students of two or more professions learn about others, with others and among themselves to qualify professional performance. In the educational field, a multifaceted approach aggregates learning and guarantees the safety and efficiency of professional content, as well as stimulating skills for teamwork, in addition to providing a complete and transforming experience when it comes to the training process. It is known that the EIP is one of the strategies that have been discussed, expanded and implemented in the political and pedagogical action plans of health education. Therefore, this study analyzed the influence and perception of interdisciplinarity in learning in practical activities, such as clinical care by university students of the medicine and Nutrition course who are in the disciplines of Internal Medicine and Professional Internship in Clinical Nutrition at the University of Ribeirão Preto - UNAERP. All students who participated in the practical activities of clinical care in the Nutrition and medicine courses were selected. A questionnaire was applied that seeks to understand the students' view of the two areas of activity and the positive and negative variables. The study had the participation of (n=124) participants, from medicine and Nutrition courses. Being 66% (n=82) participants of the medicine course and 34% (n=42) participants of the Nutrition course. The results were satisfactory in relation to the participants' perception of interprofessional learning. More than 80% of the students classified the experience as extremely relevant for professional training. Positive points were described by 100% (n=65) of the participants, such as sharing knowledge, therapeutic integration, clarification and alignment of conducts.

Negative aspects were mentioned by 28% (n=18). Including conduct disagreement and time limitation for discussion. However, interprofessional education is considered a potential transforming tool in the training process of university students, encouraging the development of skills and abilities for collaborative work and breaking the paradigms of vertical relationships between health professionals.

Keywords: Interdisciplinarity. Learning. University education. Health courses.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of interprofessional training has been evidenced according to changes in educational perspectives. The training of health professionals is going through a historic moment, supported by the strengthening of health systems (FREIRE FILHO et al., 2019). Global recognition and the need for change made the WHO value debates and publications in this context, with the aim of forming technical-political documents, as a framework for Action on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (WHO, 2010).

In relation to Brazil, the national curriculum guidelines initiated the implementation of IPE in undergraduate and graduate courses, consistent with the principles of SUS (Unified Health System) and the need for approximation between users (BARR, 2015). In this regard, IPE can be offered through some mechanisms, whether through the educator, such as training academic professionals and institutional support, or through curricular mechanisms, which include content, schedule, logistics and assessments (W.H.O., 2010).

As proposed by Guizard et al. (2006), the inclusion of students in health service spaces enables an exchange environment, breaking the hegemonic and uniprofessional paradigm.

Expanding the notions and possibilities of handling and intervention with the patient, associating it with integrality and the multidisciplinary model.

The literature states that the interprofessional model seeks a perspective of advancing the fragmented concept of individual work, seeking to strengthen integrality in health, training and qualification of the workforce. It is believed that health work can be subdivided into instrumental action and communicative action. Instrumental action is the applicability of technical-scientific fundamentals considering professional performance. In contrast, communicative action encompasses the search for this knowledge and understanding between the health team, patients and family members (PEDUZZI et al., 2020).

In 2010, a Canadian organization entitled *Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative* characterized the profile and competences for interprofessional action that must be taken into account for the effectiveness of the action. Based on six assignments that are interdependent and influenced according to the needs of the environment and work routine. Among them, communication and dialogue between professionals, patient-centered care, team alignment and clarification, clarity of team roles, collaborative leadership and finally, the ability to resolve conflicts (CIHC, 2010).

OBJECTIVES

The present study has the general objective of analyzing learning with the positive and negative aspects in the interprofessional practice of clinical care among university students of the Nutrition and medicine course at the University of Ribeirão Preto (UNAERP).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

STUDY DESIGN

The study has a descriptive character with a mixed approach, encompassing quantitative and qualitative analyses. The research was carried out in the surroundings of the Hospital Sociedade Beneficência Portuguesa, located in Ribeirão Preto. The research was developed from the collection and analysis of data between the years 2020, 2021 and 2022. CAAE number: 33497120.7.0000.5498.

PARTICIPANTS

Undergraduate students from the medicine and Nutrition courses who are in the disciplines of Internal Medicine in the ninth and tenth semester of the course and Professional Internship in Clinical Nutrition in the seventh and eighth semester of the course were selected. Participants excluded from the collection were those who are not enrolled in the mentioned disciplines or who refused to answer the survey.

The research started after signing the Free and Informed Consent Term (TCLE).

SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION

The survey was carried out using an Interprofessional Perception Assessment questionnaire, developed using the likert scale method to assess the opinion among undergraduate students about interprofessional learning, classifying it on a scale of 1 as no relevance, and 5 as extremely relevant to the following questions:

- (I) What is the relevance of the professional for the treatment of the patient?
- (II) What is the degree of contribution of the interprofessional visit to your training?
- (III) What is the degree of contribution of case discussions between professionals from two professions?

PROCEDURES

Initially, meetings between Nutrition and medicine students were held once a week, with monitoring by internship preceptors. The meetings brought together initiatives to propose a patient-centered view and reconcile all the factors that affect the clinical picture. To assess the students' opinion about the exchange of experiences between the courses, the questionnaire was applied in two moments of the clinical meetings.

The first moment of application of the questionnaire was before the meeting between the students, with the objective of seeking to identify the general view of the participants about the function and responsibility of each specialty. Subsequently, the students were led to a case discussion mediated by supervisors and professionals from the two health areas and, at the end, the same questionnaire was applied, with the aim of proposing a comparative analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis included the accounting of quantitative data as relative frequency (in percentage) and qualitative data with discourse analysis. The results were analyzed with the sum of the detailed variables in a worksheet of the *Excel*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study evaluated the participation of 124 students from medicine and Nutrition courses. Being 66% (n=82) participants of the medicine course and 34% (n=42) participants of the Nutrition course.

The answers obtained revealed that more than 80% of medical students consider the professional nutritionist, the interprofessional visit and the discussions of clinical cases to be extremely relevant. Likewise, Nutrition students demonstrated a relative frequency of more than 90% of the

responses regarding the extreme relevance of the proposed actions.

In fact, the results obtained by the Likert scale revealed the degree of importance and relevance of interprofessional action among undergraduate students. When analyzing the change of perspective after the meetings between the students, there was an increase in the percentage in relation to the relevance of the professional, changing from 89.5% to 95.4% as "Extreme Relevance" among the students.

Thus, when asked if there was a change in the impression of the undergraduate student in relation to the other professional, of the 65 students, from both courses, who responded to the survey after the case discussions, 61% (n=38) answered that "Yes", there was a modification of the impression. Among the reasons, it must be noted that it was possible to better understand the behaviors and function of each profession. As well, the multidisciplinary experience contributed to clarifying the cases and ensuring the best patient care. Among the recorded speeches, they pointed out that:

"The approach to Nutrition clarified the importance, the types of diet and the repercussion of food in clinical cases".

"The medical conduct leaves a little to be desired in the nutritional part and having a professional nutritionist adds to the conduct".

"I noticed that the other professionals respect and value the suggestions of the whole team".

On the other hand, 39% (n=24) did not change their opinion about the other professional, recording reports such as:

"I always knew about the importance of this professional for the management of the patient's clinical condition".

"I always thought dialogue between professionals was necessary".

“Reinforced even more the importance of acting among professionals”.

Bringing the issues to the literature, a study carried out in two universities in the central-south region of Bahia analyzed the importance of interprofessionality and interdisciplinarity through interviews with students who participated in extension activities. The results reinforced the demand for integration between university, community and interactive pedagogical models. The study emphasizes the need to “[...] build spaces in which future professionals can interact dialogically with each other and with a community. (RIOS; SOUSA; CAPUTO, 2019, p. 16). This study corroborates the speeches of the students in the present study.

POSITIVE ASPECTS

The positive aspects were analyzed after the visit, characterized by the contribution of 53% of the total participants (n=65), being 44 Medicine students and 21 Nutrition students.

Both courses described and pointed out the interprofessional view during graduation, describing it as “The sharing of knowledge for the benefit of our patients”, “different views and a more complete therapeutic plan” and “Better alignment of the appropriate conduct of the case”.

Thus, like the results presented, a study by Costa, Azevedo and Vilar (2019) evaluated students from a public university in the northeast region of medicine and nursing courses. The study emphasizes the students’ recognition of the importance of integration among professionals, providing qualified care. Emphasizing the dialogue between professionals essential for the proper functioning of the health team.

The study by Eccott et al. (2012) worked with interprofessional learning for students of the Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, Physical

Therapy and Occupational Therapy course at a Canadian university. The results obtained signaled a good use of learning according to the reports, with the development of confidence in the collaborative process, expansion of knowledge, understanding of the team’s roles, decision-making and communication.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS

The negative aspects were limited to 28% (n=18) of the students, from both courses, who argued negative issues of interprofessional education. It was described as a negative aspect the fact that the discordant conducts and the misalignment of actions are notable, as well as the impediment of time for possible discussions of conducts:

“Difference of opinions with consequent friction between professionals”.

“Depending on the number of patients, time can be a limiting factor, making it difficult for professionals to interact”.

“The discomfort and exposure of the patient due to the large number of people in the room” when carrying out the visit to the bed.

“Misalignment of conduct due to lack of communication between professionals”.

Among the limitations reported by the participants and observed in the literature, structural and cultural barriers can be highlighted, such as the hierarchy between professions, divergences between theory and practice, and structural limitations (COSTA; AZEVEDO; VILAR, 2019). Analogously, the results of this study analyzed limitations similar to those expressed in the literature, such as the lack of previous experiences with other courses during graduation. The participants, when asked about their impression of the other professional. Another highlighted aspect was the undergraduates reporting that it was the first time they had

had practical contact with other courses at the university.

For Camera et. al (2016), Brazil demands advances in the training of health professionals, in order to create relationships above dialogue, linking university, managers, teachers, students and the population in search of the reformulation of the uniprofessional model, which does not meets the needs and principles of the current health system. In symmetry, the literature describes that “The importance of the theme, complexity and challenges highlight the need for greater investment in this proposal, with a view to inducing solid and promising changes in the context of educational institutions” (FREIRE FILHO *et al.*, 2019, p. 94).

Additionally, the authors Guraya and Barr (2018) believe that the IPE is an instrument that dissipates stereotypes, in parallel, it encourages students to learn about the appreciation and importance of professionals for patient care.

CONCLUSION

The profile of the curricular bases of health courses seeks professionals with a critical, humanistic and reflective eye, supported by the principles of the SUS. Even more, considering the current scenario, changes in lifestyle and the concept of health. The integration of the health team, as well as decision-making, must be valued with a view to the development of assistance and multidisciplinary care.

In fact, interprofessional education is an essential tool for the training of university students. Most students have understanding and understanding about the importance of different areas of activity, however, they do not have frequent contact with other courses during graduation.

The interprofessional visit proposed by the research proved to be positive, both in

terms of team integration and the conduct of the clinical case. There was a prevalence of positive aspects, especially after the visit, when the students were surprised by the experience and were aware of the importance of multidisciplinary management, emphasizing optimization and more assertive behaviors. The negative aspects fostered the need for IPE throughout graduation, the limitation of time to discuss the cases and the disagreement between conducts and lack of communication. For this, it is essential to include interprofessional practices in a continuous and permanent way in the educational field at undergraduate level.

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