

Title: Development, Implementation and Evaluation of a Distance E-Learning Interprofessional Education (IPE) Course on Health Bioethics in Suez Canal University, Egypt

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What problem was addressed: Interprofessional education (IPE) refers to occasions when students from two or more professions in health and social care learn together during all or part of their professional training¹. The goal of interprofessional education is to prepare health professional students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for collaborative interprofessional practice. Worldwide, there is a growing emphasis of IPE as a result of research demonstrating the benefits of inter-professional collaboration in health care².

A set of challenges affects the practices of IPE on a wider scale. These challenges to IPE can be psychosocial, cultural, logistical or structural. In Egypt, the main challenges to IPE are complex due to the required curricular design as well as the attitudinal barriers between professions³. Through this project alternative, solutions to overcome these challenges in relevance to our local context are looked for.

What was done: An 8-week elective course was developed according to the Six-step Approach for Curriculum Development in Health Professions Education. There are three main features of the developed course which are: the IPE context, the distance e-learning vehicle and health ethics content.

To fulfil the IPE nature of the course, a group of 30 nursing and medical students, 15 from each school, were enrolled in the course. Students' female to male ratio is 3:2. Four faculty members are assigned to design, manage, teach and evaluate the course. Content selection and organization were based on an EMRO-WHO guide on new trends for teaching health ethics⁴. A closed Facebook group was developed and utilized as an e-learning interface where large-group/case-based discussions, followed by small group assignments and feedback, were the main teaching methods.

Evaluation of students' achievement of learning objectives was conducted through rating of their assignments submitted in small groups. Overall course evaluation was conducted using validated tools which are: The Interprofessional Socialization and Valuing Scale (ISVS) as well as an Online-Course Evaluation Questionnaire respectively. Interprofessional collaborative learning was evaluated using peer evaluation form and monitoring of the online interaction between students with different backgrounds.

What was learned: Results suggest that students' inter-professional online experience is valuable. Submission rate of small group assignments was 90%. After scoring of these assignments, success rate was 100%. Response rate to online discussions was 63%. Through peer evaluation as well as direct observation of online interactions, there was evidence on distinctive contributions of medical students in discussions.

As a result of this experience we conclude that main challenges to IPE in our local contexts are: belonging to a group and distinct identity formation, lack of resources, particularly trained and

motivated faculty members, and shortage of time in already crowded curricula. These challenges to IPE can be overcome through utilization of e-learning, redistribution of available human and financial resources, introducing relevant courses on elective bases, and seeking assistance of volunteer and interested faculty members.

Conducting relevant practical and hands on sessions, maintaining equal opportunities of contributions between students of different backgrounds as well as sustainability of this IPE e-learning experience remain main challenges.

References:

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