International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology (ICEEPSY 2011)

The Attitudes of Medical, Nursing and Pharmacy Students to Inter-Professional Learning

Zoriah Aziz, Lim Chong Teck, Pang Yen Yen

Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Abstract

Inter-professional learning (IPL) has the potential to promote collaboration among healthcare professionals in providing quality healthcare. For the IPL to have a positive influence on inter-professional collaboration the healthcare students must be willing to learn together. Attitudinal factors have been identified as the major factor hindering the implementation of IPL. In Malaysia, little is known about attitudes of healthcare students towards IPL. The aim of the study was to examine the attitudes of undergraduate medical, pharmacy and nursing students towards IPL. The medical, pharmacy, and nursing students at the University of Malaya, Malaysia self-administered the Readiness for Inter-Professional Learning Scale (RIPLS) questionnaire. Out of 850 undergraduate students approached, 836 completed the questionnaire giving a response rate of 98%. The internal reliability of RIPLS was acceptable (α = 0.84). Between groups analysis with ANOVA showed there was a statistically significant difference between the healthcare groups on the subscale “teamwork and collaboration” (F₂, 833 = 16.35, P< 0.001). Post-hoc comparisons with Tukey test indicated medical students (M=36.21, SD = 5.50) had significantly the least score on this subscale compared to pharmacy (M= 38.21, SD= 4.31) and nursing students (M=38.47, SD= 4.73). Significantly higher proportion of medical students agreed that they have to acquire much more knowledge and skills than other healthcare students. Overall, the findings showed that pharmacy and nursing students were significantly more willing to be engaged in IPL compared to medical students. The results also suggest that a favourable attitude towards IPL exists among the medical, nursing and pharmacy students and this provides support for the introduction of IPL in their undergraduate curriculum.

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Keywords: questionnaires, perceptions, team-work, collaboration, curriculum, Malaysia