Changes in Physician Assistant and Occupational Therapy Students’ Knowledge and Attitudes after Interprofessional Case Studies: a Pilot Study

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Background & Purpose
- In 2011, the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) released core competencies for interprofessional collaborative practice: values/ethics for interprofessional practice, roles/responsibilities, interprofessional communication, and teams and teamwork. It states that “The purpose of this pilot study was to determine if exposure to interprofessional education activities during the didactic year would affect the knowledge and attitudes of physician assistant (PA) and occupational therapy (OT) students toward the others’ profession.”

Methods (cont.)
- Each small group:
  - Was assigned 1 of 4 patient cases
  - Provided discipline-specific recommendations
  - Presented their recommendations to the entire group.
- Using a pre-/post-test design, students were administered two surveys:
  - Professional Entry Level Scope of Practice (SOP) Survey to assess knowledge about the other profession’s scope of practice
  - Modified Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS) Questionnaire to assess their attitudes about collaboration in healthcare.
- The mean number of students who completed both the pre- and post- SOP and got the “correct” answers was compared using a students’ t-test.
- The proportion of students who agreed vs. disagreed with each statement on the RIPLS Questionnaire was analyzed using a Chi-squared test.
- While initially discouraging, the outcomes from this pilot study helped the faculty to jointly redesign the interprofessional education portions of the PA/OT curricula. The redesign included:
  - Dedicating class time specifically to the Lifestyle Performance Model, (Figure 1)—a different paradigm than the medical model under which PA students learn.
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Results
- 47 students completed both the pre- and post SOP survey
- 28 were PA students, and 19 were OT students.
- 59 students completed both the pre- and post-RIPLS questionnaire.
- 37 PA students completed the pre-, 40, the post-.
- 22 OT students the pre-, 19, the post-

Scope of Practice (SOP)
- The only overall change in knowledge was of what a registered nurse does (p<0.05)
- PA students’ knowledge of a physical therapist’s scope of practice changed, as well (p=0.005).
- All other measurements showed a non-significant change. (See Figure 2)

Results(cont.)

Modified Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS)
- Students’ attitudes started off positive, with a majority agreeing or strongly agreeing with all statements. (See Table 1)
- There were statistically significant NEGATIVE changes between the pre- and post-Questionnaires for eight of the seventeen (47%) statements
  - The OT’s attitudes changed regarding questions 7, 8, and 9; the PAs, regarding questions 4, 13, and 14

Discussion & Conclusions
- While initially discouraging, the outcomes from this pilot study helped the faculty to jointly redesign the interprofessional education portions of the PA/OT curricula. The redesign included:
  - Removing the theoretical model discussion
  - Introducing nine shared Clinical Medicine lectures to ensure similar baseline clinical knowledge, with two case studies
  - Assigning specific faculty members to case study groups to facilitate discussion.
  - Dedicating class time specifically to the cases
  - Evaluating content through standard testing for each discipline
- The faculty believe these changes will garner more collaboration and positive relationships in the future.