

Inter-Professional Simulated Education: evaluating a diabetes simulation with students from Nutrition and Dietetics and Exercise Physiology

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Background:

Current workforce demands require new graduates to competently work within health care teams. In Australia, initiatives such as Chronic Disease Management plans see a coordinated multidisciplinary approach to patient care. To better prepare students for this work, universities have spent much time developing Inter Professional Education (IPE) activities. The body of literature supporting IPE of allied health students is growing momentum. The use of standardised patients has introduced another dimension, with students reporting increased confidence in working with both patients and other professions.

Aim:

The aim of this study was to evaluate allied health students' perceptions of the effectiveness of an IPE simulation.

Method:

Ten Nutrition and Dietetics and 14 Exercise Physiology students took part in a simulation module designed to provide students with the opportunity to observe and collaborate in the development and delivery of an inter-professional treatment plan. We measured the outcome of learning according to levels 1 and 2 of Kirkpatrick's (1994) framework for adult learning evaluation, *reaction* and *learning*, as well as the perceived impact on behaviour.

Results:

Intrinsic Motivation Inventory scores indicated moderate-high levels of interest, competence, tension and usefulness, with interest and competence rated significantly higher ($p < .05$) post-simulation for both cohorts, and tension rated significantly lower post-simulation for exercise physiology only. The students' confidence in communication, assessment, management and ability to work with another health professional significantly increased ($p < 0.05$). Students perceived that the simulated learning would have a positive impact on their clinical skills and ability to work with another health professionals. Students reported that learning from and about others, experiential learning, and the learning environment were the most effective aspects.

Discussion:

Differences in outcomes between the disciplines may be attributed to differences in clinical, simulated learning and IPE experience. The overall positive results demonstrate the potential that this method of education has for preparing allied health students for working in inter-professional teams.