

AN INTER-INSTITUTIONAL INTERPROFESSIONAL NETWORKING EVENT TO GROW REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Poonam Sharma, MD (1), Megan Holmes, PhD (1), Chan Park, MD (2), Jeff Hodor, DPT (1)

Duke University School of Medicine (1), Durham VAMC (2)

Background: Professional and institutional silos present a significant barrier to advancing interprofessional education (IPE) and improving interprofessional practice (IPP). We hypothesized that an interprofessional networking event involving participants from multiple regional health centers including Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, and the Veteran Affairs Health Care System could facilitate the development of new inter-institutional and interprofessional collaborations.

Methods: Through a collaborative initiative between Duke AHEAD and UNC-Chapel Hill, a networking event was hosted at UNC for regional health professionals and health professions educators. The event was advertised via local email groups which focus on interprofessional education or collaboration (such as Duke AHEAD) and advertised by conference organizers at other local educational events with paper flyers. Prior to the event, registrants were sent an email invitation to a Qualtrics survey to collect demographic information, attitudes towards IPE and IPE using validated tools (NIPEAS and ACE 15) and to gather baseline data on participation in interprofessional collaborations and inter-institutional interprofessional collaborations.

The event was held on the UNC campus and started with an ice-breaker activity. Following the introduction, five topics (IPE in the classroom, IPE in the clinical setting, IPP for patient care, curricular design of interprofessional activities, and assessment and evaluation of interprofessional activities) were discussed during a breakout session lead by volunteer faculty members. Participants were asked to complete a paper survey which included questions about which breakout group they participated in, how the session influenced their view towards future participation in IPE and IPP activities and how confident they felt about initiating an inter-institutional collaborative event in the future to promote IPE and IPP. Five months later, a follow up Qualtrics survey was distributed via email link asking if the participant was involved in any new interprofessional collaboration and if so, the impact of the networking event in making the new collaboration more likely.

Results: Thirty-seven of forty-two registrants attended the workshop, with representation from a diverse group of health professions from each of the participating institutions. Twenty-four people completed the pre-session survey. The initial survey showed the majority of participants held a positive attitude towards IPP and IPE while only 3 respondents reported interprofessional collaboration with parties outside of their own institution.

Twenty-nine people completed the post event survey in which the majority of the participants reported they felt “moderately” to “completely” prepared to create new inter-institutional collaborations because of attending the workshop.

On the 5 month follow up survey, 6/14 respondents reported starting or joining an interprofessional initiative that they were not engaged in prior to the networking event. Four respondents reported involvement in inter-institutional interprofessional collaboration.

Significance/Implications/Relevance: A regional networking event involving health professionals and educators from diverse backgrounds and different institutions may serve as an effective strategy to help break-down professional and institutional silos and promote regional collaboration.