

Integrating Interprofessional Education into a Practicum centered on elderly populations to address healthcare needs.

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Background & Objectives

Puerto Rico has one of the oldest fastest-growing elderly populations in the United States and territories. The current lack of appropriate healthcare services to the elderly demands the transformation of curriculum and teaching practices using the Inter-Professional Education (IPE). The objective of this educational project is to develop a framework for action among the six schools of the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus to engage in teamwork and collaboration while working with elders with chronic diseases in a practicum.

Methods

Three interdisciplinary teams composed of 6 students (one from each school), guided by 2-3 faculty preceptors during the 2016 summer session. An orientation seminar on IPE will be offered prior to the field experience. The subjects will be selected after screened at home by Nursing and Gerontology students. One subject will be assigned to each team. The practicum will be conducted at independent living facility. The practicum consists of: 1) A minimum of 3 visits by each team for health data collection, perform assessments, and conduct case discussions about the elder; 2) Design collaborative work plan to address the health needs; 3) Presentation of the work plan to each participant, primary caregiver and/or family, and administrator of the living facility; and 4) one follow-up visit 3 months after initial intervention.

Results

Individual and team self-directed assessments will be performed. Student teams will discuss how good their performance was in relation to other teams. Facilitated group discussions will provide them with a better understanding on how to collaborate effectively and develop appraisal of lessons learned.

Conclusion

A team-based approach using IPE and collaboration is critical for the achievement of more efficient, affordable educational and healthcare services tailored-made for the complex health needs of elders. Cultural entrenchment in traditional education among our health sciences schools is still a challenge for collaboration.

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