Working Together for Better Health

Prof. B. V. Kathyayani

Health care has been undergoing changes at a speed that makes it almost impossible to remain current and proactive. The ever changing health care environment creates multiple challenges for both providers and consumers. Efficiency and cost effectiveness in relation to health care services are now commonly discussed and emphasized to all health care practitioners.

One of the most significant changes to have occurred in the delivery of health care over the last 40 years is the expansion diversification of health care professionals. The desire of all health care providers for treatment to be efficacious and safe provides a necessary reference point for interaction and collaboration.

Sir Charles George had described working team as "an essential prerequisite to modern clinical care and maintaining good Medical Practice as one of the key tests of a good team. According to Celia Davies, working together means acknowledging that all participants are of equally valid knowledge and experts form their professional and personal experience.

It is interesting to note that Nestel et al., (2004) found a significant factor in their study on inter professional team and working together "the students evidently found the experience an illuminating one, and they gain considerable insight into the thoughts and feelings of a professional group with which they will work closely but about which they know little". They also expressed that facilitating a professional group discussion demands a high level of skill and insight.

According to Howarth et. Al., 2004 is the potential need that 'role awareness education for service users/carers should be considered essential to ensure effective communication and appropriate uses of services' that 'leaders of integrated health and social care services need to offer a supportive culture for integrated working and delivery of care.

The health care sector in India though underdeveloped in comparison to the developed countries is not as underdeveloped for our modest need as it is made out to be. There is basically nothing wrong in having a system, which has an appropriate combination of professionals and para professional workers.

To provide effective and comprehensive care, Nurses, Physicians, and other health care professionals must elaborate with each other. No group can claim total authority over the other. Each profession exhibits different areas of professional competence which when combined together provides a continuous of care that the consumer has come to expect.

The author is Principal of Dr. M. V. Shetty Institute of Health Sciences, Vidyanagar, Mangalore.

Statement of the Problem

An opinion survey of students of health science courses on inter-professional health care at a selected college in Mangalore.

Objectives

* To find out the opinion on Inter Professional Health Care Practices among different health science students.
* To analyse and interpret the findings.

Need for the Study

Contemporary Medical Practice brings adverse range of professions and disciplines together in greater and closer contact. This situation on increasing complexity and changing professional roles gives rise to multifaceted ethical dilemmas and theoretical and practical concerns. Multidisciplinary relationships to be facilitated and to progress towards interdisciplinary team work.

Health care professionals may share language, approaches, materials and therapeutic strategies. But it is also possible to find point of contrast within and between professional groups. Professionals differ in the kind of knowledge and skills that they contribute to the production of favorable patient outcomes and the interest they peruse and kinds of questions and problems that they deem important. They come from different traditions rooted in history with their own distinct moral heritages and accustomed ways of ensuring moral accountability.

According to Gallian Dalley 2002 study, our influence on the professionals on the policy process, arguing that difference in attitude among professionals is one of the factors which inhibits collaboration.

After studying the views of 233 health and social work professionals it is found that professional ideologies condition attitudes and behaviour. They are not the only influencing organizational culture and force of circumstances.

Multidisciplinary relationships

are also political. The health care practitioners establish clear professional demarcations and demand that their expertise be recognized.

A descriptive survey of 137 students of selected health science courses mainly nursing, physiotherapy, medical lab technology, speech & hearing and Master of Social Work to find out the opinion on inter professional health care.

The findings of the study reveals that only 67% of the students were aware of the term inter professional health care and 85% of the students know about health team and (92%) of the students know the health team members.

Only a few (20.43) students have expressed their satisfaction about the present health care delivery system and majority of them 86.13% students of the opinion that they will not feel inferior while along with other health team members and only 49.5% of the students say that health care cost in not reduced by inter professional health care. Most of them (69%) do not know other professionals' curriculum. Students (74%) are comfortable when they are posted for the clinical experience with other professionals. Students (67.5%) said that they do discuss about other professional work pattern while working in the clinical area. Most of the students (94.16% & 94.16%) are confident that inter-professional health care not only develops good team relationship but also builds up more confidence in solving problems.

Many students (51.8) expressed the view that role of the health care providers are not clearly defined. Majority of the students (93.4%) said that inter professional health care increases efficiency among the team members.

Many students (48.2%) felt that their curriculum does not discuss about inter professional health care and most of them (93.4) said that there was a need for this to be included in the curriculum.

Only (35.5%) students know what is other professional's knowledge and 68.6 students said that regulating policies in any profession requires autonomy of that profession and most of them (86.6%) said that Govt. and professional bodies can play a major role in activating inter professional care.

Majority of the students (97.6%) felt that the leaders of the profession need to support students in the team building effort and majority of the students (94.16%) expressed the view that it is necessary to have proper orientation of each profession.

Many of them (87.59%) were of the opinion that role reversal exercise fosters communication among team members.

Students (67.88%) said that it is confined satisfaction of the professions which is deeply rooted in our culture and hindrance to quality patient care.

Magnitude of Inter Professional Health Care

The following were listed problems according to the respondents :

- 64% no problems
- 27% inferiority / superiority complexes
- 19% lack of communication
- 16% disagreement
- 15% lack of co operation
- 10% misunderstanding

Summary

- To provide effective and comprehensive care. Nurses, physicians and other health care professionals must collaborate with each other.
- No group can claim total authority over the other.
- Each profession exhibits different areas of professional competence that, when combined together, provide a continuum of care that the consumer has come to expect.
- The definitions of collaboration have not been structured to reflect true practice. Instead, at best, they reflect compromise, and at worst are conditioned and tailored to limit competition.

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