

Poster Topic – IPE Program/ Ongoing Work/Project

Poster Title - SHARP: Students Helping At Risk Patients to Promote Health and Reduce Disparities

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Poster Description

Background: Research demonstrates that Interprofessional (IP) care teams can improve transitional care, reduce re-admissions and improve patient health status, contributing to reduction in health disparities. This is particularly important for patients with chronic illness from underserved and vulnerable groups. The objective of the SHARP program - Students Helping At-Risk Patients, is for students in nursing, medicine and social work to learn about working in IP teams as they support, educate and navigate patients with chronic conditions through their healthcare transitions and complex care experiences. SHARP student teams co-ordinate and carry out tasks associated with patient transitional care, promoting patient learning about their health status and providing system navigation.

Methods: An IP team of educators developed and integrated SHARP within existing clinical courses. A prospective mixed methods pilot evaluation was designed to test the program with 24 students and 8 patients at-risk for hospital re-admission; to assess student learning of IP teamwork and transitional care skills, patient experiences and health outcomes, and potential health system benefits. Program logistical factors were included in the assessment.

Results: We will report on quantitative data including student (at baseline and at program completion), changes in knowledge of professional roles within the team, attitudes towards IP healthcare teamwork (using the IPAS) and perceived utilization of IP team-based care skills. Qualitative data will include student narrative reflections on their experiences. Quantitative outcomes will be assessed for patients, including medication adherence (self-report), health literacy (REALM-SF), satisfaction with student interactions (visual analogue scale) and numbers of admission to hospital (data collected from medical record). Where possible, admission rates will be compared with matched controls of patients from the same clinics.

Conclusion: SHARP is an innovative integrated IP program designed by an IP team of educators to support students in development of skills necessary for future IP teamwork. The program has the potential to benefit the health system as students support and navigate patients through care transitions necessary to improve health of vulnerable patients in the community. Lessons learned from the pilot evaluation will inform scale up and broader program dissemination within other professional schools.

Proposal Summary:

We describe the development of an interprofessional (IP) program to improve transitional care and reduce health disparities. SHARP: Students Helping At-Risk Patients provides opportunities for students of nursing, medicine and social work to learn in IP care teams while supporting small groups of chronically ill patients at-risk for poor outcomes