

DEFINING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES: FIRST STEPS FOR INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Evidence-based practice (EBP) content is mandated by national curricular standards for nursing, medical, physician assistant, and physical therapy students. At the same time, there is an increased interest and emphasis on interprofessional education (IPE) as seen by the development of the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) core competencies and the Duke Health strategic goal to increase IPE.

At Duke, Research and Education librarians currently collaborate with each of the student programs within EBP instruction. While all professions participate in EBP, they may have different approaches and terminology that would make it difficult to merge in an IPE setting.

Our study identified how health professions conceptualize and teach EBP. Specifically, we investigated differences in EBP instruction for the 2016-2017 academic year among the health professions academic programs at Duke in order to inform any future interprofessional EBP curriculum development. We sought to identify commonalities and variations among EBP contexts, processes, types of questions, and terminology.

METHODS

We collected EBP curricular materials from the medicine, nursing, physician assistant, and physical therapy programs at Duke.

Curricular materials included:

- health professions educational standards
- concepts within assigned EBP textbooks
- EBP course syllabi
- student project topics

We compared course structures, contexts, and objectives, as well as librarians' roles and other elements.

ROADMAP TO INTEGRATING IPE INTO EBP EDUCATION



WHAT IS EBP?

- EBP combines clinical experience, patient values and preferences, and the best available research evidence when answering questions about patient care.
- There are 5 steps to EBP:
Assess > Ask > Acquire > Appraise > Apply



EBP CORE CONCEPTS

- Importance of EBP
- Question formation
- Search strategies
- Study types and critical appraisal
- Self-directed learning and critical thinking



EBP CONTEXTS

- Professional identity
- Statistics
- Quality improvement
- Patient safety
- Clinical skills
- Research



WHAT DOES IPE ADD?

- Interrelationship among information needs of professions
- Importance of consulting other disciplines
- Value of each discipline's expertise
- Limits of a profession's role
- Clinical decision making in a team environment
- Actions team members must take based on evidence



APPLICATION

- Case based, which requires multidisciplinary actions (e.g., stroke bundle)
- Pre-licensure students (DPT, SOM, SON, PA, Path Assist.)

RESULTS

- All programs include the same four core course objectives: recognize relevance and skills needed for EBP; formulate questions; construct searches and acquire evidence; critically appraise evidence.
- EBP course times ranged from 12-24 weeks and credits ranged from 2-4 hours per program.
- Half of the courses occurred before students began clinical learning, and half took place after clinical learning began.
- For their assignments, students most frequently chose therapy questions, as opposed to diagnosis, etiology/harm, administrative, educational, or other types.
- All programs use the five EBP steps, but some include more.
- The SOM and PA programs teach EBP within the context of clinical skills and biomedical statistics; meanwhile, the SON and PT programs teach EBP within professional identity formation.

CONCLUSIONS

The challenges in delivering a single EBP course to an interprofessional group of health professions students include logistical concerns and the consideration of the academic context in which students are taught. However, these challenges are minimal compared to the benefits student would receive from interprofessional curricular efforts addressing students' abilities to locate, appraise, and apply the best available evidence.

Potential merits of IPE EBP could include students experiencing how their information needs interrelate, practicing the decision making process in a team environment, and seeing how actions one profession takes based on evidence and expertise might impact what other team members are doing. An interprofessional EBP course would emphasize the importance of EBP across disciplines, as well as Duke's commitment to fostering interprofessional collaborative practice.