

A new approach for pharmacy student placements: the student-led ward

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Background

Student healthcare placements are often conducted exclusively within professions.

Interprofessional education, defined as “occasions when members or students of two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care and services”¹ is an innovative approach recognised by government frameworks aimed at promoting high quality clinical education and training.²

The interprofessional, student-led ward model has been established in Europe, however, to date there have been limited local adaptation and experience.³

Aim

To describe a student-led ward structure at Eastern Health (EH) and report on preliminary results and experiences of a pharmacy student participating in an interprofessional practice placement (IPP).

Methods

Pre-placement planning

- A 2-week IPP block was conducted on the geriatric evaluation and management (GEM) ward at Wantirna Health from 25/9/17 – 6/10/17

Student selection

- Agreement between EH pharmacy & one university provider to facilitate involvement of one final year pharmacy student
- Cohort of students approached to provide expression of interest – **5/16 students responded**
- Student selected by Senior Pharmacist Education & Training and Director of Pharmacy, and approved by university to participate in IPP

Placement

- 7 students total – 1 pharmacy, 1 medicine, 2 nursing, 1 occupational therapy, 1 physiotherapy, 1 social work
- Student timetable: 0800-1630 or 0700-1530 hours
- Activities facilitated by one interprofessional facilitator

Sample of student activities:

- Students receive clinical handover and work together to assess patients
- Students present patient care plans to supervisor
- Weekly multidisciplinary team meetings
- Students participate in medical ward rounds, medication administration rounds, wound care, cognitive assessments, Personal Activities of Daily Living (PADL) assessments, assess vital signs/observations, medication reconciliation & counselling

Methods (continued)

IPP pilot aims:⁴

1. To provide an interprofessional learning environment for allied health, medical and nursing students. The students will seek opportunities to learn from and with each other, developing an understanding of their own and each other's roles.
2. To provide multidisciplinary learning opportunities as the clinical facilitators guide and instruct the student group.
3. To provide patient centred care, whereby the patient is an integral part of the team and contributes to the understanding of their condition and the care requirements.
4. To support the student in the development of their discipline specific clinical skills.
5. To provide a student led placement (focused on the students taking responsibility for assessing, planning and delivering care, as a collaborative team and as independently as possible, within the limits of their scope of practice).

Validated tools to assess achievement of IPP pilot aims:⁴

- **Patient Experience Survey**
- **iTOFT Basic Individual Teamwork Observation and Feedback Tool** to evaluate the students' progress in achieving interprofessional learning aims
- **Interprofessional Clinical Placement Learning Inventory** measured students' perceptions of IPP
- **Clinical Mentor Survey** identified facilitators and barriers to the role of mentor in the clinical setting

Other data collection methods:⁴

- **Clinical Facilitator focus group**
- **Electronic communication** - video message created by students on the last day of their placement; emails and other electronic messages with the IPP facilitator
- **Anecdotal IPP facilitator observation**

Vlog transcripts – the pharmacy student perspective

“... My favourite part of the placement has been the amount of time we have all been able to spend with each other, and the fact that as students we have been able to get so much out of each other. Normally on placements we're always with our preceptors, with our supervisors so we don't really get to see much of what other professionals especially other students get to do, and so the fact that we were able to, you know, spend that time and learn off each other was a really unique experience and something that I feel that anyone going into...an interprofessional setting really should do...apart from that I feel like us as a group were definitely the best group and for sure we worked absolutely brilliantly together as a team.”

Patient experience survey results:

Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment
→ 100% of patients answered “YES TO SOME EXTENT” or “YES, DEFINITELY”

Did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity
→ 100% of patients answered “YES”

How would you rate how well the students worked together
→ 100% of patients answered “GOOD” or “VERY GOOD”

Results

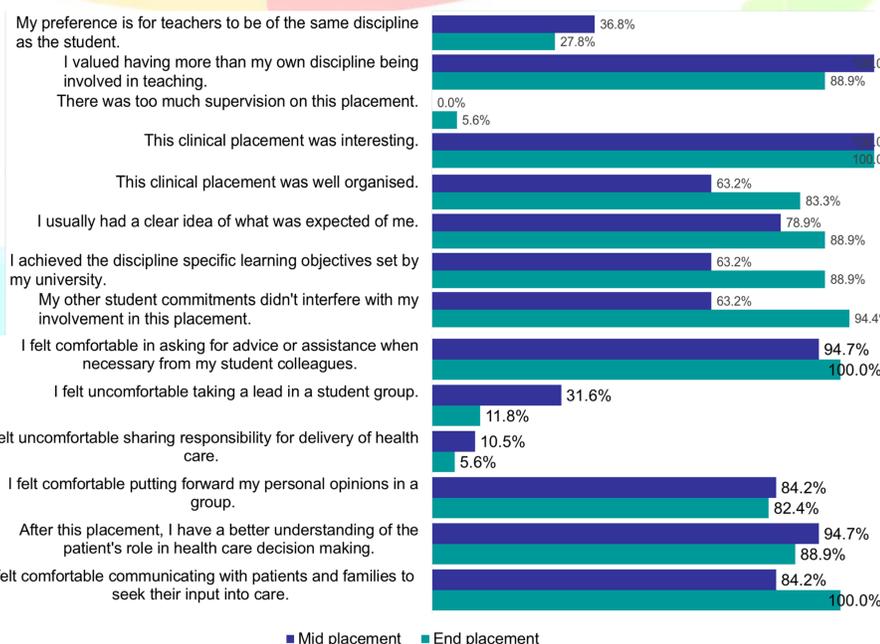
Pilot objectives were met and positive outcomes were reported for all evaluations. Students reported adequate team work and support. Facilitator observations included self-direction and acknowledgement of all discipline roles. The pharmacy student valued interdisciplinary learning and working within a team.

Implications for practice

As the pharmacy student was selected to participate in this placement, future considerations include reviewing the feasibility of integrating IPP into standard clinical placements.

Conclusions

The IPP provides a unique opportunity for students to gain insight into roles and responsibilities of other health professionals and develop skills in teamwork and collaboration. Additional placements have been implemented in 2018.



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Acknowledgments

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