

POSTER ABSTRACT

Safer Patient Mealtimes: An interdisciplinary Educational Initiative for HSCP students in a neurorehabilitation setting

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Marie Cox, Fiona Haughey, Niamh Leonard

National Rehabilitation Hospital Dublin, Ireland

Aims & Objectives: To outline the development and implementation of an interdisciplinary educational initiative regarding safer patient mealtimes for third level HSCP (Speech & Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy) students. Learning aims, approaches and outcomes will be outlined as well as participant feedback.

Methodology: The topic of safer patient mealtimes was addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective focusing on swallowing, positioning, sensory, and compensatory and adaptive perspectives. Experiential, participatory, interactive and peer-learning methods were used.

Discussion of Results: Interdisciplinary forms of learning are prevalent and growing in abundance and stature throughout higher education. Repko¹ asserts that interdisciplinary education fosters advances in cognitive ability and other educational researchers have identified a number of distinct educational benefits of interdisciplinary learning including gains in the ability to think critically and acknowledge and appreciate ethical concerns^{2 3}. Research suggests that educational experiences are more authentic and of greater value to students when the subject-matter reflects real life, which is multi-faceted rather than being compartmentalized into neat subject-matter packages. Students who took part in this initiative reported improved understanding of their own roles and the roles of other team members in promoting safer patient mealtimes in a neurorehabilitation setting. They also indicated greater likelihood to liaise with colleagues from other disciplines when working with patients with swallowing and feeding difficulties. The participants also reported a preference for the experiential and active participatory learning approaches adopted in the tutorial.

Conclusion: Interdisciplinary education is a cost-effective, rewarding and valid method promoting a holistic approach to patient-centred care.

References:

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Keywords: interdisciplinary student education; dysphagia; neurorehabilitation
