

# Interprofessional Collaboration:

An opportunity to address health inequalities



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## INTRODUCTION

Interprofessional Collaboration refers to a practice in health care where professionals from different disciplines work together to provide comprehensive and integrated care to patients. This approach has become increasingly important in recent years as healthcare systems seek to address health inequalities and improve patient outcomes in various settings where access to healthcare is limited. By bringing together the expertise of professionals from diverse backgrounds, Interprofessional Collaboration can help to identify and address the social determinants of health that contribute to health disparities. This research will explore the readiness of European dental students for interprofessional education and their attitude change after peer-training intervention. The aim is to explore the opportunities and challenges of interprofessional collaboration in addressing health inequalities, and the role that it can play in promoting health equity.

## MATERIALS

PRE-TRAINING RIPLS QUESTIONNAIRE

PEER TRAINING INTERVENTION

POST- TRAINING RIPLS QUESTIONNAIRE

WILCOXON SIGNED RANK TEST

## OBSERVATIONS/RESULTS

Peer training has positively affected the attitudes and the readiness of the students regarding Interprofessional Collaboration.

Some challenges and benefits of Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) were identified in the group discussions during the scenario-based trainings:

- IPC can help healthcare providers to take a more holistic approach to patient care. When professionals from different disciplines work together, they are better able to identify the underlying factors that contribute to health disparities, such as socioeconomic status, education, and access to healthcare.
- IPC can help to improve the quality of care that patients receive. When professionals from different disciplines work together, they can share their expertise and knowledge, leading to more informed decision-making and better outcomes for patients.
- IPC can help healthcare professionals to learn from each other, adopt to teamwork and gain various competences.
- A big challenge is overcoming the cultural differences and communication barriers that can arise between professionals from different disciplines.
- IPC can require significant time and resources, which may be difficult to obtain in an increasingly complex healthcare environment.

## PROCEDURE

25 European Dental students were surveyed with the Parsel and Bligh(1999) Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS) Questionnaire. After the pre-training questionnaire the survey participants joined a peer training about Interprofessional Collaboration where they discussed different scenarios of Interprofessional Collaboration settings. The professions raised in the scenarios were; medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, dental hygienists, psychologists and social workers. Post-training RIPLS were applied to the same group of dental students. The survey results were investigated via SPSS (Statistics Software) using Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

## CONCLUSION

Interprofessional Collaboration represents an important opportunity for health care providers to address health inequalities and improve patient outcomes. By working together to identify and address the underlying factors that contribute to health disparities, healthcare providers can promote health equity and improve the quality of care that patients receive. While interprofessional collaboration presents a number of challenges, these challenges can be overcome through effective communication, collaboration, and the development of systems and processes that support coordinated care. The research with the focus group of 25 dental students from different countries has shown that Interprofessional Collaboration should be embedded into the health care education curriculum and that Interprofessional Education (IPE) could be a strong response to eliminate inequities.

References

