



An Interprofessional Education Program To Address Cardiovascular Disease In Older Adults

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Rationale

There is an increasing need for health care professional students to receive training to provide preventive and self-management interventions to older adult patients, given the prevalence of chronic diseases, especially heart disease, in our rapidly aging population^{1,2}.

This program supports two health professions core competencies cited by the Institute of Medicine, i.e. provision of patient-centered care and working in interdisciplinary teams³.

The program also addresses two of the Healthy People 2010 targets specific to older adult health, i.e. physical activity and nutrition⁴.

This program received support and training from the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research through the Institute of Interprofessional Prevention Education, Washington, DC, September, 2008.

Program Goal

To develop and implement a competency based curricula to educate an interprofessional team of healthcare professional students in interventions to prevent or slow the progression of cardiovascular disease in adults over age 65.

Objectives

Increase knowledge and understanding of healthcare interprofessional teams and each member's contributions to patient care.

Increase knowledge of human development to include health promotion and disease prevention practices in older adults that may reduce risk of and/or help manage cardiovascular disease.

Identify recommended lifestyle modifications in the areas of nutrition and physical activity that target age-specific needs and enhance medication efficacy in older adults.

Identify patient-centered counseling strategies that support autonomy and foster healthy behaviors in older adults.

Methods

Ten students were recruited from existing professional and pre-professional programs at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS), Boston, MA.

Two 5-student interprofessional teams representing Pharmacy, Nursing, Pre-medical Studies, and Health Psychology were formed. Teams participate in didactic instruction while they develop and implement community-based health promotion projects to address cardiovascular disease in older adults.

Student Interprofessional Team Projects

A discussion-based community needs assessment that was conducted by the student teams with residents and staff at Edelweiss Village, an assisted living facility in West Roxbury, MA determined focus and content of the on-site projects.

Results of the assessment indicated that the teams should create intervention projects that are simple yet entertaining, and include opportunities for:

- one-on-one interaction between team members and residents,
- discussion of health behaviors, including physical activity, nutrition, oral health, and sleep,
- activities that promote an understanding of medication adherence, including prescription, herbal, and OTC recommendations,
- informational sessions that address the importance of cognitive-behavioral strategies to support positive aging.

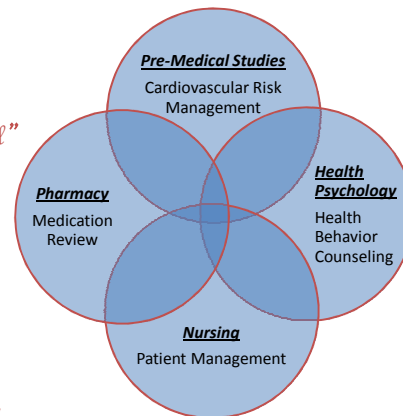
'Team Rx' and 'Team Elder Helper' are each developing intervention programs with faculty support, and staff and resident consultations. Projects will be delivered over the course of three days in April, 2009.

Upon completion of these projects, teams will conduct qualitative evaluations through staff and resident reports at the community site to determine project effectiveness.

Team Rx "Happy Hearts Fun Festival"



- Cardiovascular Health Literacy
- Medication-Food Interactions
- Emergency Awareness of cardiovascular episodes
- Motivation and Self-management of cardiovascular risk factors, focusing on physical activity



Team Elder Helpers "Food Fun Festivities"



- Nutrition education and dietary modifications related to Mediterranean diet
- Targeted stage-of-readiness motivation interventions
- Positive psychology interventions to support subjective well-being and self-efficacy

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Learning Outcomes

Literature review of each profession's role on an interprofessional health team

Four sequential submissions to a personal reflection journal that address interprofessional team collaboration and project development while integrating readings and class discussions

Proposal submission for team's community project based on results of community needs assessment

Implementation of team's community project

Poster presentation of community project to MCPHS community

Outcomes Assessment

Pre/post survey comparison of experimental (students enrolled in program) and control (matched students not enrolled) groups:

*Geriatric Knowledge Student Assessment Scale*⁵: knowledge of aging, and nutrition, physical activity, and medication needs specific to older adults.

*Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale: RIPLS*⁶: student attitudes toward interprofessional learning.

This program has received approval from the MCPHS Institutional Review Board.

References

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