Interactive inter-professional teaching session on labour and childbirth for undergraduate medical and midwifery students

Abstract for NET Conference Theme Paper (Interprofessional Learning and Working)

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**Abstract**

**Title: Innovative interprofessional teaching session on labour and childbirth for undergraduate medical and midwifery students**

There is an increasing recognition of the need to improve interprofessional relationships within clinical practice (Midwifery 2020, 2010). Evidence supports the assertion that healthcare professionals who are able to communicate and work effectively together and who have a mutual respect and understanding for one another’s roles will provide a higher standard of care (McPherson et al, 2001; Miers et al, 2005; Begley, 2008). The joint Royal College of Obstetrics & Gynaecologists (RCOG) / Royal College of Midwives (RCM) report (2008 Page 8) on clinical learning environment and recruitment recommended that “Inter-professional learning strategies should be introduced and supported at an early stage in the medical and midwifery undergraduate students’ experience and continued throughout training.” Providing interprofessional education within a University setting offers an opportunity for a non-threatening learning environment where students can develop confidence and build collaborative working relationships with one another (Saxell et al, 2009). Further research supports the influence of effective team working on increased client satisfaction. Additionally it identifies that the integration of interprofessional learning into a curriculum improves students’ abilities to interact professionally and provides a
better understanding of role identification within the workplace than students who have only been exposed to uniprofessional education (Meterko et al, 2004; Pollard and Miers, 2008; Siassakos, et al, 2009; Wilhelmsson et al, 2011; Murray-Davis et al, 2012).

An interprofessional education indicative has been developed by teaching staff from the School of Nursing and Midwifery and School of Medicine at Queen’s University Belfast. The aim of the collaboration was to enhance interprofessional learning by providing an opportunity for medical students and midwifery students to interact and communicate prior to medical students undertaking their obstetrics and gynaecology placements. This has improved medical students placement experience by facilitating them to learn about the process of birth and familiarisation of the delivery suite environment and it also has the potential to enhance interprofessional relationships. Midwifery students benefit through the provision of an opportunity to teach and facilitate learning in relation to normal labour and birth and has provided them with an opportunity to build stronger and more positive relationships with another profession. This opportunity also provides a positive, confidence building forum where midwifery students utilise teaching and learning strategies which would be transferable to their professional role as registered midwives.

The midwifery students were provided with an outline agenda in relation to content for the workshop, but then were allowed creative licence with regard to delivery of the workshop. The interactive workshops are undertaken within the University’s clinical education centre, utilising low fidelity simulation. The sessions are delivered 6 times per year and precede the medical students’ obstetric/gynaecology placement. All 4th year medical and final year midwifery students have an opportunity to participate.

Preliminary evaluations of the workshops have been positive from both midwifery and medical students. The teaching sessions provided both midwifery and medical students with an introduction to inter professional learning and gave them an opportunity to learn about and respect each other’s roles. The midwifery students have commented on the enjoyable aspects of team working for preparing for the workshop and also the confidence gained from teaching medical students. The medical students have evaluated the teaching by midwifery students positively and felt that it lowered their anxiety levels going into the labour setting. A number of midwifery and medical students have subsequently worked with one another within the practice setting which has been recognised as beneficial. Both Schools have recognised the benefits of interprofessional education and have subsequently made a commitment to embed it within each curriculum.

**Contribution to knowledge development in the selected theme of interprofessional learning and working**

- Inter professional learning has provided both medical and midwifery students with an opportunity to learn about and respect each other’s roles.
- Interprofessional learning provided confidence building to midwifery students and relieved anxiety levels of medical students in the delivery suite setting.
- Interprofessional learning has the potential to improve working relationships in the clinical area.
Reference list


