



Interprofessional meetings in action : An interactional analysis in three Swiss hospitals

Author: Keel, Sara¹, Staffoni, Liliana¹, Didier, Amélia¹, Bielser, Félicia¹, Bécherraz, Camille¹ Schmid, Anja¹, Schoeb, Veronika¹

Institution:

¹School of Health Sciences (HESAV), University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Western Switzerland, Lausanne, Switzerland

Format & Type

Poster, Scientific

Background

Interprofessional collaboration (IPC) is known to contribute to a better health care system. However, the literature indicates that IPC is challenging as teams are required to make a constant effort to share understanding and negotiate decisions in order to provide high quality patient-centred care. Meetings are highly relevant for hospital settings as they provide the space and time for the care team to discuss each patient and draw up the management plan, including discharge decisions. It has been argued that appropriate leadership, time management and skilled communication are key for team meetings to be successful.

Research Question / Aim

The aim of this project was a) to identify interactive practices (leadership, turn of speech, decision-making) contributing to effective interprofessional collaboration during team meetings; and b) to identify the challenges health professional leaders face when conducting interprofessional teams. The project studied group processes as they unfold during the interaction and investigated participants' perceptions regarding factors important for successful interprofessional meetings.

Method / Procedure

This qualitative study took place in an internal medicine ward and two rehabilitation hospitals in Switzerland. Data comprise 23 hours of video-recorded interprofessional meetings (67 team meetings) and 20 semi-structured interviews with healthcare leaders. Video-recorded data was analyzed using Conversation Analysis, and thematic analysis was performed for all interviews.

Results

The detailed analysis of video data demonstrated the impact that specific healthcare settings (i.e. internal medicine, rehabilitation) have on the organization, aim, team composition and the structure of IP meetings. Furthermore, it showed on the one hand how participants of the meeting have to comply with these setting specific organizational and structural factors: they need to follow meeting procedures, adapt to availability of resources and respect the distribution of roles and responsibilities that are set in the first place. On the other hand, it revealed that participants of IP meetings developed interactive practices that enhanced the possibilities of active participation of professionals and/or patients.

Discussion

The concept of psychological safety brings to the surface the need of sharpening each team member's skills and competencies to improve and learn from each other. In order to meet both effectiveness and success of interprofessional meetings, the understanding of the interactive accomplishment of activities is fundamental. In this paper, we point out different practices leading to interprofessional participation during IP meetings and discuss their implication with regard to interprofessional practice and the setting specific organization of IP meetings.

Conclusion

Effectiveness and success of interprofessional collaboration during team meetings in hospital settings require high level of communication, collaborative and interactional skills that are most effectively learned in practice. Institutional culture is shaped through day-to-day interactions, and each opportunity to practice



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these skills are relevant for all team members. Awareness of processes – of how things are done during interprofessional meetings - will help health professionals conceptualise interprofessional collaboration in action.