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Enhancing clinical skills and collaborative working: Developing an interprofessional simulated learning space

Background

This was a collaborative project between the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Department of Physiotherapy, and Department Community Emergency Health and Paramedic Practice at Monash University. This project was informed by Health Workforce Australia’s strategic directions for ‘interprofessional education and practice’. The aim of the project was to increase student capacity, improve professional development opportunities, and enhance interprofessional learning for health professional groups in the Mornington Peninsula Clinical Placement Network.

The project was funded and delivered in two parts. The first involved capital works to expand existing simulation facilities in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Peninsula Campus (Frankston). The capital works and fit-out has provided a four-bed medium-fidelity clinical simulation area and observation/debriefing room. The second part of the project focused on the commissioning and operational rollout of educational activities within the new simulation facilities, with a specific focus on interprofessional education and practice.

Problem/drivers

The Mornington Peninsula region did not have an interdisciplinary simulation area whereby undergraduate and postgraduate students and industry partners could learn together. The aim was to increase training and education facilities for students and staff allowing users the opportunity to rehearse skills in a safe environment without compromising patient safety and for the objective and controlled measurement of clinical performance.

Arriving at a solution

A project management committee was convened from the Monash University Schools of Nursing and Midwifery (SoNM), Physiotherapy, and Community Emergency Health and Paramedic Practice. The aim was to work together, to identify discipline specific learning material which could be reformatted into an interprofessional simulation and delivered to both undergraduate and postgraduate students and industry partners.

Implementation process

Once the initial planning had been completed staff recruitment was initiated. To facilitate the development of the position description and recruitment of staff, resources on the HWA SimNET online portal for simulation education and training resources were used ([www.simnet.net.au](http://www.simnet.net.au)). As a result the project appointed a flexible highly skilled staff member with ability to work across disciplines who has been a key enabler of the ability of the project to meet KPI requirements.

 A targeted set of learning scenarios were redeveloped from the existing Monash curricula to meet the project timelines but also to ensure that quality was maintained and consistent with all course curricula. Targeted staff were provided with basic simulation training focussed on technical and education delivery. Additional options in relation to clinical decision making which came to light during the implementation phase were assessed and integrated into the project as added value components which extended the interprofessional outcomes.

Outcomes

Interprofessional learning scenarios have been developed, tested and implemented. Instructor courses in SLE technical and education techniques have been delivered by expert providers. The interdisciplinary partners engaged in this project have enhanced the interprofessional teaching capacity for educators and clinical supervisors. This has resulted in an increased uptake of simulated learning. A key outcome has been the diversity of learning scenarios that have been conducted during the short implementation phase of the project.

Barriers

The integration of audio technology with the simulation software in testing and implementing learning scenarios has proved to be more complex and time consuming than anticipated. The project has emphasised the importance of having a project manager and team with suitable experience in the development and implementation of simulation education capacity in learning initiatives. The time it takes to integrate interdisciplinary simulation into multiple curricula was extensive. The completion of the project has its own set of challenges in regards to ensuring the ongoing funding to support the simulation coordinator position and further growth of interprofessional education across the Faculty.

Future directions

To complete an interdisciplinary pilot study and integrate the findings into a joint simulation research proposal. To continue to develop and incorporate simulation education across both undergraduate and postgraduate curricula and to work with industry partners including local health care networks to implement simulation exercises tailored to their needs.

Further information

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