

The Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a Longitudinal Interprofessional Education (IPE) Initiative in Southland, New Zealand.

The Interprofessional Education (IPE) initiative began in 2014, a tripartite relationship with the Southern Institute of Technology (SIT), the University of Otago, and Southland Hospital (Southern District Health Board, SDHB). Traditionally education of health professionals occurs in self-contained specialty silos. The assumption of this training method is that interprofessional skills will be acquired in clinical practice, however this does leave development of these skills to serendipity.

Our vision is that interprofessional education by means of shared learning, active communication, optimising of team dynamic and, furthermore, collaborative assessment and treatment planning can potentially improve teamwork amongst health professionals (Stefanidis, Ingram, Williams, Bencken, Swiderski, 2015; Scherer, Myers, O'Connor, Haskins, 2013).

From small beginnings IPE started, and the team often pondered how do we prove its worth to the training health professionals participating in IPE. A research study focusing on the third year of implementation, to evaluate our initiative was decided. Our study has begun with pre, post, and post-post questionnaires measuring the training health professionals' perceptions of the initiative. The hope is to have enough data using this pre-test post-test, post-post-test quasi-experimental design to establish cause and effect relationships among the variables.

Students enrolled in health professional programmes at the Southern Institute of Technology, and the University of Otago attending the IPE initiative will be given the opportunity to participate. The desire is to advance teaching, learning, and interprofessional collaboration in health disciplines through exposure to IPE. While an improvement to health consumers/patients' outcomes are not explicitly measure in this study, they remain the central focus of why this initiative commenced. Potentially approximately 120 training health professionals will be involved during 2017 in this IPE research. The preliminary findings of this IPE initiative will be presented as data collection and interpretation begins.