

Evaluation of an Inter-professional Education Placement Resource Pack in Practice Education Settings

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Abstract (no more than 300 words)

Introduction: Inter-professional education (IPE) aims to create an environment where health professionals from different disciplines learn with and from each other, resulting in improved health outcomes (WHO 2010), and a developed workforce that effectively treats the needs of the population (Olenick *et al.* 2010). The University of Limerick (UL) IPE Placement Resource pack was developed to support IPE in practice education for students engaging in clinical placements.

Aims: To examine the content and usage of the UL IPE resource pack.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study of mixed methods. Students, practice educators, and practice education staff of the physiotherapy and speech and language therapy (SLT) courses in UL were invited to participate. Participants received the IPE placement resource prior to placement and were contacted about participation in the study (online survey) post-completion of placement. Data analysis was completed using quantitative tools (Microsoft Excel; SPSS) and qualitative methods (thematic analysis).

Results: 45 individuals responded. 14 respondents, physiotherapy students (50%; n=7), SLT students (14.29%; n=2), physiotherapy staff (21.43%; n=3), SLT staff (14.29%; n=2), were included in the study. Participants responded positively to the pack, 100% (n=14) stated they would use it on subsequent placements and 85.72% (n=12) stated they are 'very likely' or 'likely' to recommend it to another. Respondents commented on the pack's clarity, and ability to direct IPE interactions. Respondents noted that more support/education is required to use the pack and suggested improvements to the layout, such as increased writing space.

Conclusion: Overall, the participants from both disciplines have positive attitudes towards the resource pack and IPE, with some minor improvements suggested to the structure and implementation of the resource.

The World Health Organisation (2010) define inter-professional education (IPE) as where two or more health professionals from different disciplines are provided with the opportunities to learn about, from, and with each other for effective and safe collaboration with improved health outcomes. IPE is central in developing health personnel capable of providing holistic healthcare to patients in a range of services. By engaging in IPE and teamwork, healthcare professionals work more effectively and efficiently, improving staff attitudes and moral (Morey *et al.* 2002) and IPE has shown to improve patient care and delivery of service (Reeves *et al.* 2016).

Schmitt *et al* (2011) identified four core inter-professional competencies required for effective inter-professional collaboration. The competencies are; values and ethics for inter-professional practice, fulfilling roles and responsibilities, inter-professional communication, and teamwork. The inter-professional education placement resource pack aims for students to develop these competencies by engaging with the pack. Within the University of Limerick (UL), IPE is supported by the provision of the resource pack to the students for use on practice education placements and the incorporation of multidisciplinary academic modules across four cohorts; physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and human nutrition and dietetics.

This was a cross-sectional study, with mixed methods, that investigated the participants' usage and opinion of the UL IPE resource pack. Participants included in the study were students that have completed a practice education placement, practice educators, and practice tutors that have used the IPE resource pack when involved with a placement of the physiotherapy and speech and language therapy courses of UL. The occupational therapy cohort of UL was not included in the study due to the coinciding of research projects. The human nutrition and dietetics cohort of UL was not available in the university at the beginning of the project.

Prior to commencing placement, the IPE resource pack was circulated to potential participants. They were contacted via email with details of the study, its purpose, and an invitation to participate in it. Participation involved completing an online survey, consisting of twenty questions, lasting approximately fifteen minutes. Participants that used the resource pack while involved in a practice education placement and completed seventy percent or more of the survey were included the results. The quantitative data of the survey was analysed using Microsoft Excel and Jamovi and the qualitative data of the survey, the open-ended questions, were analysed using thematic analysis.

The results show that participants were informed of the resource pack from multiple sources, with over seventy-five percent informed by regional placement facilitators and practice tutors. In fifty percent of cases a member of the practice education team from UL initiated use of the resource pack. Users engaged strongly with the pack, participating in multiple IPE activities described in the pack and working with numerous health professionals. By partaking in different IPE activities and interacting with other professionals, the students are developing the four competencies mentioned earlier. Participants had positive attitudes towards IPE after using the resource pack and became aware of the impact of IPE with themes such as the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration in patient centred care discovered in the data.

Participants liked the design of the pack, including the layout, the examples of IPE provided within the pack, transferability of the pack between placement sites, clarity of the pack and the packs ability to direct and improve learning. Over eighty percent of participants stated they were 'very likely' or 'likely' to recommend the pack to another. Respondents identified the layout and content as an area for improvement, stating there is inadequate space for answering if using the pack as a

hard copy and some questions are irrelevant depending on placement site, and some felt there is insufficient user direction provided. Participants found the pack increased the workload for students and found it difficult to encourage the students to engage with the pack and IPE.

The main findings of the study show that users of the resource pack value IPE, its benefits, and the pack itself, with minor improvements suggested. The advised recommendations to the pack were communicated to the research project supervisor who is a member of the practice education team and will be communicated to the remaining practice education team. It is evident that UL supports the use of the pack as members of the practice education team were the main informants and initiators of use of the pack.

The positive aspects of the IPE resource pack identified by the participants are related to the design and structure of the pack. The participants found the resource pack easily understandable, simple to use with clear directions, and a helpful tool in facilitating MDT interactions and reflection. The majority of participants were either 'very likely' or 'likely' to recommend the pack to another. This indicates the participants support the use of the pack on practice education placement and found it to be a valuable tool, aiding and improving the practice education experience.

Overall, the participants' suggested improvements to the pack were minor, with no significant issues present. The layout was referred to as an area for improvement, larger answering spaces after questions and allowing sections of the pack to be optional should be implemented as layout improvements. Participants requested the provision of a more detailed user manual, education and guidance for the pack. The pack should be explained to and discussed with students in the preparation for practice education module held before the students begin their initial placement and an online forum on SULIS (UL's Learning Management System) should be created to facilitate the sharing of IPE ideas between practice educators/tutors.

IPE is an important part of health professional training. In the practice education setting, the UL IPE resource pack is a useful tool to aid and direct IPE. The resource pack positively impacted the users' practice education experience and the improvements will permit easier use of the pack for future students. The pack allowed users to recognise the importance of effective inter-professional collaboration and its beneficial impact on the healthcare system.

References:

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