



Tan Tock Seng
HOSPITAL

Learning about Roles of Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) through a Structured Job Shadowing Programme for Medical Students in an Orthopaedic Posting: Students' Perspectives.

H.M.Wong, E.C. Neoh, K.M.A.,Lum, F.L.Loy, C.Krishnasamy, S.K.H.Tan



Adding years of healthy life

Background

Inter-professional collaboration (IPC), which allows healthcare professional to work together to achieve a goal, have proven to be important in clinical setting (Zanotti, Sartor & Canova, 2015). Without IPC, patient outcomes are affected, leading to decreased work satisfaction and waste of resources (Robben et al., 2012). With increasing complexity of the local patient population, IPC is the key to enhance holistic patient care.

Inter-professional education is required to equip medical students with skills and competency in order to achieve good teamwork among different healthcare professionals. In our setting, medical students usually learn about Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) through on-the-job attachment with medical teams and ad-hoc shadowing opportunities with AHPs.

This has often resulted in uncoordinated execution of inter-professional education by AHPs, without clear objectives and post-evaluation of the programme.

The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of a structured job shadowing programme from the medical students' perspective.

Methods

A team of AHPs (Medical Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Podiatrist, Prosthetist & Orthotist) designed a structured shadowing programme for Year Three medical students who are in the orthopaedic posting. The programme aimed to promote inter-professional learning, enhance their understanding of AHP's roles and responsibilities and determining appropriate referrals. The 2-halfday programme is described below (Figure 1). An evaluation form was filled up by students after the programme.

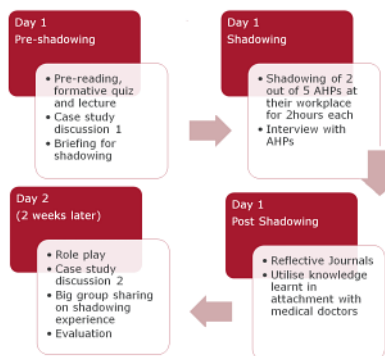
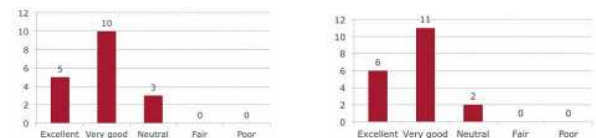


Figure 1. Programme structure

Findings

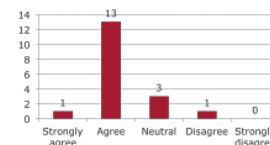
19 medical students participated in the programme. There was one missing data for Day 1's post-programme evaluation.

Question: How would you rate the programme

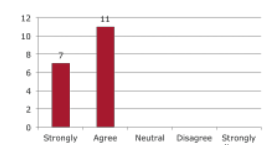


Majority of participants (86.4%) gave "excellent/very good" ratings for the programme indicating that learning objectives were achieved.

Question: Pre-reading was useful to understand the roles and responsibilities of AHPs

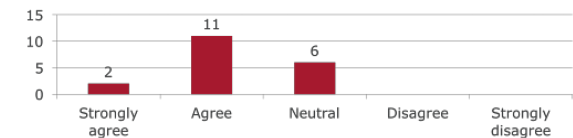


Question: Quiz was useful to understand the roles and responsibilities of AHPs



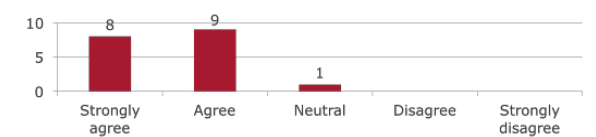
14 participants (77.8%) found pre-readings useful for understanding the roles and responsibilities of AHPs while all participants found the quiz helpful.

Question: Reflection journal increased my awareness of my role as a future doctor within an inter-professional team



13 participants (72.2%) found that reflection journal increased the awareness of their role as a future doctor within an inter-professional team.

Question: Observation and interview (during the job shadowing) of AHPs was useful for my understanding of what they do.



17 participants (94.4%) found observing and interviewing AHPs useful and all participants felt that the AHP they shadowed contributed to their understanding of AHP's roles.

Discussion & Conclusion

The findings suggest that students have a preference towards interpersonal interactions within clinical context. A structured shadowing programme with a variety of learning activities was well received by the medical students. This could be an effective mode of education delivery for inter-professional education in a healthcare setting in order to foster positive attitudes to inter-professional collaboration in all future medical doctors.

References

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- Zanotti, R., Sartor, G., & Canova, C. (2015). Effectiveness of interprofessional education by on-field training for medical students, with a pre-post design. *BMC Medical Education*, 15(1). doi:10.1186/s12909-015-0409-z

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