

Simulation As A Vehicle For Enhancing Collaborative Practice Models

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Abstract

Clinical simulation used in a collaborative practice approach is a powerful tool to prepare health care providers for shared responsibility for patient care. Clinical simulations are being used increasingly in professional curricula to prepare providers for quality practice. Little is known, however, about how these simulations can be used to foster collaborative practice across disciplines. This article provides an overview of what simulation is, what collaborative practice models are, and how to set up a model using simulations. An example of a collaborative practice model is presented, and nursing implications of using a collaborative practice model in simulations are discussed.

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I. Simulation Definition, Purposes, And Uses

Simulation, in specific reference to health care, is an attempt to replicate essential aspects of a clinical scenario so that when a similar scenario occurs in a clinical setting, the situation can be managed readily and successfully.² The educator decides if the simulation will focus on the process of teaching–learning and progress toward an outcome (formative) or on the attainment of the learning objectives (summative).

II. When Simulations Are Used In A Formative Manner, As In A Teaching–Learning Overview

In today's health care system, no profession or discipline can operate alone. Interdisciplinary collaboration is vital for creating a safe system of care. Health care providers need to understand that teamwork and communication reduce errors.⁴ Quality client outcomes rely on professional teamwork, and the level of collaboration that takes place can affect safety outcomes directly.⁵

Studies among professional health science students have shown a strong relationship between communication skills

Collaborative Learning with Simulations

Although communication skills may be learned by trial and error in a clinical setting, a formal approach to instruction has been shown to be more efficient and to enhance student confidence.⁸ Collaborative learning with simulations also has been found to increase a sense of collegiality and teamwork.²³ One way to develop mutual respect, to enhance communication, and to improve relationships among disciplines is to involve the members of the various disciplines in a group-learning simulation

Example of a current collaborative practice model

The demands on health care professionals have become more complex because of advances in technology and increased patient acuity in the clinical agencies. Health care providers face increasingly complex patient-care situations; often decisions must be made rapidly in an atmosphere of conflicting or incomplete information. Given this situation, the need for members of the health care team to collaborate effectively is imperative.³¹ Such realities challenge nurse educators to develop teaching

III. Nursing Implications Of Using A Collaborative Practice Model In Simulations

Physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals must be prepared to create and establish safer and more efficient practice environments. Faced with many challenges today in health care education, educators must explore innovative ways to teach medical, nursing, and other health care professional students the skills they will need in real-world clinical practice in a cost-effective, productive, and high-quality manner. Discoveries and developments in educational technology make a wide

IV. Summary

Collaborative practice models that embrace simulation as a vehicle for improving patient care are timely and necessary. Interdisciplinary education is critical to delivering safe and holistic patient care.³ Simulations that enhance collaborative practice models facilitate knowledge and appreciation of the contributions each discipline brings to the patient care arena. Moreover, understanding the expertise and abilities of each health care provider improves the likelihood that patients will

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