Breaking Bad News: Confronting Interdisciplinary Bias
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PURPOSE
The purpose of this inter-professional educational (IPE) intervention was to increase awareness of inter-professional bias and improve communication related to patient safety among three disciplines.

METHOD
A purposive sample of nursing, medicine, and pharmacy students (N=82) was recruited from 3 institutions located in an urban, US medical center to participate in a patient safety (heparin medication error) scenario simulation.

FOUR PHASES
The IPE phases were:
1) icebreaker session;
2) description of scenario, roles of providers, and development of plan for the encounter;
3) simulated encounter with a standardized patient (SP) family member, either angry or sad; and
4) debriefing session during which data was collected.

SCENARIO
• Heparin order 10x the usual dose
• Physician Ordered
• Pharmacist Dispensed
• Nurse Administered
• Communication
  • Ineffective
• Standardized Patient (SP) Family Member
  • Angry or Sad

FOCUS GROUP
• The Focus Groups
  • Students (n=15)
  • Faculty Facilitators (n=3)
• Topics of Discussion
  • Experience of the planning session
  • Experience of the encounter
  • Roles of and interactions with different disciplines
  • Stereotypical or controversial statements
• Written feedback from the SP Family Member
  • Respected each other
  • Nurse & pharmacist usually quiet
  • Nurse most empathic

THEMES
• Perception of Professions
  • “I didn’t know nurses could refuse to give a medication”
• Leader of the Pack
  • “I will take charge; I’m the one the family wants to hear from”
• Who was at Fault?
  • ‘… but I ordered it’
  • ‘… but I dispensed it’
  • ‘… but I gave it’
• Fear of the Lawsuit
  • “It’s not good to tell them everything”

OUTCOMES
• Acknowledged biases
• Improved understanding of multidisciplinary knowledge and roles in patient care
• Recognized need for better communication and respect among disciplines to improve patient outcomes