

The Indiana University Student Outreach Clinic as a Substrate for Interprofessional Education: A Physical Therapy Perspective

Banas, Kathryn E.; Cappel Maggie L. (Loghmani, Terry M)

Department of Physical Therapy
IU School of Health and Rehabilitation Science
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

Purpose

The World Health Organization defines Inter-Professional Education (IPE) as “two or more professions learning about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration & improve health outcomes.” IPE is being stressed in education to prepare students for Inter-Professional Care (IPC). IPC occurs when multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds provide comprehensive health services. Our purpose is to discuss the Indiana University Student Outreach Clinic (IU-SOC) as an exemplar in IPE/IPC in preparing PT students for clinical practice.

Description

The IU-SOC has implemented IPE/IPC by collaborating with partners from the schools of medicine, pharmacy, law, social work, dentistry, and most recently, physical therapy. Student leaders collaborate to provide comprehensive patient care. Different committees are in place to facilitate communication between disciplines. One PT student is designated in the IPE role to assist other partners in determining if a patient is appropriate for PT. This model has allowed PT to communicate reciprocally with medicine to ensure best patient care.

Summary of Use

IU-SOC is unique because it is a student-run pro bono clinic where teaching IPE/IPC is a primary purpose. Students benefit from this model by learning the importance of communication between disciplines early in their education to better prepare for IPC; making them more likely to utilize it during clinical practice. The community has increased access to services and is utilizing healthcare resources more efficiently, with less reliance on emergency services. Occupational Therapy is anticipated to join rehab services in the near future.

Importance to Members

IPC helps to sustain the health care system, improve outcomes, enhance organizational efficiency, and provide more comprehensive care. IPC is the future of health care; the foundation of which must be established in education. Multi-disciplinary, student-led outreach clinics, such as IU-SOC, can serve as an IPE/IPC substrate to prepare PT students for practice.