

25. MODEL OF CLINICAL INTERNSHIP: A NEW APPROACH

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Clinical internship is an integral part of the University of Aveiro, School of Health study programs for all majors: Nursing, Physical Therapy, Radiology, Radiotherapy, and Speech-Language Pathology.

Clinical internship consists of a learning period where professional skills are integrated and promoted, and expertise is developed. It begins during the first year, and progressively increases in time during the subsequent semesters, until the last year, when it becomes full-time. The clinical internship of each major is a continuous growing process of professional capacities that gradually increases in development expertise, and is cumulative, synergetic and interactive.

This new learning approach is common to all the majors, it is characterised by innovation, and it strives to assure the development of professional skills through the integration of knowledge acquired during theoretical lectures.

Thus, future professionals should be autonomous, responsible, capable of thought-based critique, fit to implement innovations, and motivated for a life-time of self-learning. Within this context, an ecological model of thought-based clinical practice includes three factors: activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships. It is based on the principles of observation, experience and analysis of the pre-professional practice, thought-based, and systematically orientated by academic faculty and working professionals.

The methodology encompasses two areas: multidisciplinary (conceptualisation and organisation of the various internships programs, with faculty of the different academic programs as well as working professionals), and management model (forecast of the required material and human resources; creation of a Internship Program Centre; systematic monitoring of the structure, processes and results).

Analysis of the first and second clinical internship has shown a great acceptance on behalf of all participants (students, faculty and working professionals). Statistical data will be presented at the conference.

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