The experiences of health professionals who participate in teamwork education programmes in acute hospital settings: A systematic review of qualitative evidence

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Abstract

Background: Teamwork is seen as an important element of patient care in acute hospital settings. The complexity of hospital settings, the changing care needs of patients and the increasing specialisation of clinicians highlights the need for health professionals to collaborate and communicate clearly with each other. Health organisations in western countries are committed to improving patient safety and the quality of care. A common intervention to achieve this is through education - and teamwork education programmes have been integral to this focus.

Objectives: The objective of this systematic review was to search for the best available evidence on the experiences of health professionals who participate in teamwork education in acute hospital settings.

Methods: A three-step search strategy, following the Joanna Briggs Institute method was used to find published and unpublished qualitative studies meeting set inclusion criteria. Critical appraisal and data extraction were completed using the Joanna Briggs Institute Qualitative Assessment and Review Instruments.

Results: Following the search and appraisal process, seven papers were selected for this review. Thirty-six findings were extracted and assigned to fifteen categories based on identified similarities across the papers. The categories were integrated into six meta-syntheses. The key themes that influenced health professionals experience of teamwork education were organisational culture, understanding how successful teams function, the quality of the teamwork education programmes, the starting points of individual participants when they participated in education programmes, the tools and strategies used in
teamwork education and the confidence and motivation of health professionals to transfer new skills into practice.

Conclusions: The review has identified qualitative evidence that can guide organisations and education facilitators in the preparation of participants for training and the development and implementation of teamwork education in acute hospital settings that changes practice. There are a number of issues that impact on the experiences of health professionals who participate in teamwork education programmes.

Implications: All members of a team should be encouraged by their organisation/managers to participate in teamwork education programmes in order to foster a positive culture of learning and teamwork within the team.

Facilitators of teamwork education programmes should understand how successful teams function and consider these factors when planning or delivering training.

Facilitators of teamwork education programmes need to explore participant learning needs and their prior experiences of working in teams before implementing teamwork education programmes.

Facilitators of teamwork education programmes should provide learning opportunities that are relevant, practical and foster constructive debriefing and reflection.

High fidelity simulation should be considered in acute hospitals for the training of teamwork skills in addition to clinical skills. Scenarios provide realistic opportunities for participants to practice collaboration and communication strategies that enhance teamwork.

Team managers should harness the new confidence and motivation of staff around teamwork skills following participation in teamwork education programmes and ensure that
there are opportunities in the workplace to apply new skills and knowledge into daily practice.

Keywords:
Health professionals
Teamwork
Education
Acute hospitals
Qualitative
Statement of Originality

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