INTRODUCTION

• Interprofessional education (IPE) is an important part of curricula for all health science disciplines.
• It is imperative for senior citizens to receive comprehensive healthcare.
• According to Healthy People 2020, senior citizens are at an increased risk for chronic illnesses and the problems associated with uncontrolled health conditions.
• Senior citizens oftentimes see multiple providers with a lack of continuity of care.
• Older adults are also on more prescription and non-prescription medications, which can put them at an increased risk for adverse effects including falls.
• Dental services are not covered under Medicare, so many seniors may forego dental care due to the lack of coverage.

OBJECTIVES

• To assess student and faculty perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of other disciplines on a health care team.
• To describe the impact of an interprofessional experience on participants.

METHODS

• This study included students and faculty from pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, nursing, physical and occupational therapy who worked together to screen and educate older adults at a local senior center.
• Seniors 60 and older were recruited to participate.
• The seniors participated in an initial screening session with a follow-up visit one month later.
• Each student group included one representative from each discipline and was dedicated to one participant. These student/participant groups rotated through each screening and educational session together. Stations included health education and medication history, blood work, fall risk assessment, oral health education, and a car fitting.
• Students and faculty completed the Interdisciplinary Education and Practice Perception Survey (IEPS) and the Interprofessional Health Education Competency Survey (IHEC) prior to and following the event. They also completed a brief reflection at the conclusion of the experience.
• IHEC and IEPS were analyzed using JMP 12.0 (JMP Version 12.1, SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC).
• Senior participants completed a knowledge based pre- and post-questionnaire.
• Staff at the senior center completed a short evaluation at the end of the event.

RESULTS

Quantitative Student Perceptions Surveys:
• Descriptive statistics included frequencies for the pre- and post-participation items. Inferential statistics were also obtained for these same items using a Pearson chi-square to analyze the differences in distribution of frequencies of ordinal responses of the pre (n=58) and post (n=49) scale items.
• Level of statistical significance was set a priori at α = 0.05. Those items that reached this level are highlighted in the charts below.

Qualitative Student Reflections:
Forty three students completed a post-project open-ended reflection question asking for a brief description of the activity including their meaning or value of the project. These results were analyzed and coded according common themes and these results are summarized as follows:
• Students felt it was overall very positive, relevant to their education, and impactful on future work as a healthcare professional.
• They learned more about the role of the other health professions and their scope of practice.
• They improved communication skills with students from other disciplines and patient education skills.

"I really feel that interprofessional education is key to our success as practitioners and as well-rounded healthcare professionals. As I move forward in my career, I will likely look back on this experience and take comfort in knowing that there are great practitioners in every field, and I can count on them for help and support in the future."

IMPLICATIONS

• This outreach activity successfully utilized the expertise of faculty and students from pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, nursing, physical and occupational therapy.
• This IP activity was found to be valuable for students, faculty, participants and the community partner.
• The faculty who implemented this IPE activity have since worked together on two additional outreach projects as a result of this collaboration.
• In the future students who participated in this activity will potentially better utilize the areas of expertise of their colleagues based on what they learned through this project.

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