DEVELOPING A MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION PROGRAM: CHALLENGES AND INCENTIVES

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Background: A lack of teamwork and interagency liaison were identified as barriers to optimal management of mental health within the pre-hospital setting in Australia.

Objectives: This project aimed to address these issues by creating an interactive education program focusing on the multidisciplinary management of mental health crises such as suicide, to be integrated into existing mental health and interprofessional units within the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University.

Methods: Staff and students enrolled in medicine, nursing, paramedics, occupational therapy and social work participated in the project. An education program with four modules was developed after extensive consultation with key stakeholders. Each module consists of a one hour lecture with embedded video clips and scenarios and a one hour interactive tutorial with activities such as role play, case based learning and group discussion. The program was piloted with Double Degree (Nursing/Paramedic) students prior to implementation. Post implementation feedback was obtained through student and staff focus groups and surveys.

Findings: Focus group and survey analysis revealed that the program was well received by participants. Strategies to improve the program were identified and modifications were made prior to official implementation of the program. The multimedia nature of the program enhanced student satisfaction and staff willingness to engage.

Conclusions: The preliminary findings show that the program can be successfully integrated into existing curricula of undergraduate health science courses. Extensive stakeholder consultation was seen as an essential component to its success. With continued broader dissemination, this program has the potential to improve outcomes for consumers and their carers during a mental health crisis within the pre-hospital setting.

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