

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About Interprofessional Education

1. What is interprofessional education (IPE)?

A profession is an occupation, vocation or career requiring special training (for example, doctor, licensed practical nurse, respiratory therapist, lawyer, accountant).

Interprofessional Education (IPE) occurs when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other in order to improve collaboration and the quality of care. (CAIPE, 2002)

(Also see http://www.cihc.ca/resources-files/CIHCStatement_IPE_Final.pdf)

2. Why does IPE matter?

IPE has the potential to enhance practice, improve the delivery of services and make a positive impact on patient care. Health planners are beginning to look at changing the way health services are delivered and the manner in which providers interact with each other. IPE is one process that teaches students and practitioners how to effectively work across professions.

3. How could improved IPE research benefit decision-makers?

In order for decision-makers to allocate funding and resources, more research into the links between interprofessional education and collaborative practice is needed.

Decision makers would benefit from research that demonstrates how interprofessional collaboration can help increase patient safety, reduce wait times, improve management of chronic diseases, revitalize the workplace, etc.

4. What are some practical applications of IPE?

IPE can be delivered effectively in a variety of settings. CIHC has documented the successes and outcomes of many interprofessional initiatives. Please see <http://www.cihc.ca/resources/ipe-in-action.html> for details.

5. What are the key ingredients for successful IPE?

- ◆ Resources (e.g. for implementation and evaluation)
- ◆ Curricula changes (e.g. incorporating IPE into every health science program)
- ◆ Collaborative learning environments (e.g. team practice/field placements)
- ◆ Structures to support collaboration (e.g. faculty cross-appointments)
- ◆ Lifelong learning (e.g. continuing interprofessional education opportunities)
- ◆ Interprofessional Competencies (e.g. shared knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, judgments)
- ◆ Sustainability (e.g. embedding pilot projects into the system)

6. How does IPE benefit healthcare providers and patients?

Evidence shows that IPE can enable students and practitioners to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to work collaboratively. Interprofessional collaboration can enhance practice, improve delivery of services and may also have a positive impact on patient care.

7. How can students learn to be interprofessional?

Many universities and colleges now offer interprofessional courses and practicums to health and human service students. For more information on student engagement in interprofessional collaboration, the National Health Sciences Students' Association at www.nahssa.ca is a national student-run organization with active chapters across Canada.

8. How can practitioners learn to be interprofessional?

In Canada, most health professionals are employed through or affiliated with hospitals and health authorities, which offer courses and projects specific to IPE. Quality improvement approaches can advance IPE by enhancing practice, delivery of services and patient care. Health providers who mentor or preceptor can share interprofessional and collaborative experiences with students.

9. Where do I go to find out more about IPE?

CIHC is the national hub for interprofessional education and collaborative patient-centred care. Membership in CIHC is free. Sign up on our website www.cihc.ca

10. How do we strengthen the evidence base for IPE?

- ◆ Research reports should articulate details of the IPE program being evaluated and provide a clear discussion of limitations.
- ◆ Research reports should provide specific information about the IPE processes and outcomes, using both qualitative and quantitative data.
- ◆ To improve the quality of studies, researchers should combine existing data sets and/or undertake multi-institutional studies.
- ◆ To understand how IPE links to collaborative practice long-term studies are required.
- ◆ Effective knowledge exchange strategies are needed to ensure that research results can be effectively translated into practice.