

Evaluating Interdisciplinary Collaboration of Nursing Students and Health Care Practitioners in Community Health Nursing: Basis for Policy and Program Enhancement

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ABSTRACT

In community health nursing, interdisciplinary collaboration is essential because it improves communication, teamwork, and the provision of comprehensive care. However, issues such as inadequate integration of interprofessional education, institutional limitations, and a lack of formalized platforms for collaboration persist, especially in community-based settings. As a foundation for improving policies and programs, this study sought to assess the extent of multidisciplinary collaboration between nursing students and healthcare professionals and to investigate its association with perceived efficacy in achieving community health goals. A quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design was used. Purposive sampling was used to gather information from nursing students assigned to a barangay health clinic in Tagum City. Interprofessional collaboration and perceived efficacy were measured using standardized tools, specifically the Community Care Competency Scale (CCCS) and the Assessment of Interprofessional Team Collaboration Scale (AITCS). To examine the data and identify correlations between variables, statistical techniques such as the mean and Pearson correlation were used. The findings showed a very high degree of interdisciplinary interaction, coordination, and partnership. In a similar vein, participants showed a high degree of perceived efficacy in achieving community health objectives. Additionally, the results showed a positive correlation between perceived efficacy and interdisciplinary collaboration, indicating that more effective collaboration is associated with greater perceived efficacy in community health outcomes. To improve healthcare delivery in community settings, our findings highlight the need to strengthen collaborative behaviors through structured programs, policy support, communication training, and curriculum.

Keywords: interdisciplinary collaboration, community health nursing, perceived effectiveness, nursing students, healthcare practitioners

INTRODUCTION

Integrating community engagement and interprofessional education (IPE) into healthcare curricula is essential for optimizing community-based care; however, the efficacy of traditional service-learning models and established pedagogies such as problem-based learning and simulation is frequently compromised by restrictive academic timelines, institutional silos, logistical conflicts, and a pervasive deficit in multidisciplinary instructional design [Gomez et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2024]. This preparatory deficiency directly mirrors operational fragmentation within the healthcare sector, exemplified by the Philippine health system, where interprofessional collaboration remains predominantly informal, ad hoc, and constrained by systemic silos and resource limitations (Moncatar et al., 2021). Addressing the critical shortage of localized empirical evidence, this study investigated the collaborative dynamics between nursing students and healthcare practitioners within the resource-constrained barangay health centers of Tagum City (Kuo et al., 2021). By systematically evaluating contemporary practices and systemic barriers, this research establishes a vital

empirical baseline necessary to inform context-specific pedagogical frameworks, optimize training initiatives, and ultimately advance equitable patient care outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the level of interdisciplinary collaboration and perceived effectiveness in achieving community health goals among nursing students and healthcare practitioners in community health nursing. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of interdisciplinary collaboration among nursing students in their collaboration with healthcare practitioners in community health nursing, in terms of: Partnership, Coordination, and Cooperation?
2. What is the level of perceived effectiveness in achieving community health goals among participants?
3. Is there a significant relationship between interdisciplinary collaboration and perceived effectiveness in achieving community health goals?
4. Based on the results, which policies and programs can be enhanced

Scope and Delimitations

Data were collected via survey questionnaires from nursing students in community-based healthcare settings. The study's setting is limited to community health, specifically the Barangay Health Center in Capagnan, Visayan Village. The study's findings may not be generalizable to other settings. The respondents' perceptions are influenced by their lived experiences, training, and institutional culture, which may affect the objectivity of their responses. Lastly, the study investigated perceived effectiveness rather than measurable health.

Review of Related Literature

Although existing literature demonstrates that interdisciplinary collaboration enhances team dynamics and patient care, current evidence remains predominantly skewed toward hospital settings rather than community health contexts (Yamamoto, 2022; Matusov et al., 2022; Zumstein-Shaha & Grace, 2022). Furthermore, while Philippine and international research highlights growing nursing involvement and systemic barriers in primary care, it fails to directly link interdisciplinary teamwork with perceived success in achieving community health goals (Moncater et al., 2021; Tuppal et al., 2025; Kuo et al., 2021)]. This empirical gap in regional practice and educational contexts underscores the urgent need for the current study to provide data that can guide local community health nursing policies and programmatic improvements.

Theoretical Framework

Grounded in the shared-power model and Bronstein's paradigm, this study defines effective interprofessional collaboration as characterized by shared goals, role flexibility, and group accountability (D'Amour & Oandasan, 2005; Bronstein, 2003; WHO, 2010). The research employs the Assessment of Interprofessional Team Collaboration Scale (AITCS) to measure cooperation, coordination, and partnership (Orchard et al., 2012)], while using the Community Care Competency Scale (CCCS) to evaluate the perceived efficacy of these practices in achieving community health outcomes (Lau et al., 2019).

Conceptual Framework

This framework begins with the idea that community health work becomes more effective when people from different professions genuinely learn to function as a team. In this study, interdisciplinary collaboration refers to the process by which nursing students and

healthcare practitioners come together through shared decision-making, clear role delineation, open communication, and collective responsibility for outcomes. These elements, expressed as partnership, coordination, and cooperation, describe how teams rely on one another's strengths to carry out community health activities. When these collaborative behaviors are strong, the team is more likely to perceive itself as effective in meeting community health goals because it can respond to community needs with clarity, unity, and well-aligned actions.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research. This study is quantitative, as it involves numerical responses from respondents. Additionally, the study employed a descriptive research design to assess the level of interdisciplinary collaboration and the perceived effectiveness in achieving community health goals among nursing students and healthcare practitioners. On the other hand, the correlational research design was utilized to determine the significant relationship between the two variables.

Research Design

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Research Steps

The researcher secured institutional permission, informed the participants about the study's purpose and ethical safeguards, administered the survey instruments, checked and coded the responses, and analyzed the data in accordance with the statement of the problem. Data were collected at specific times within the healthcare facility to prevent disruptions. Only the researcher had access to password-protected files and locked cabinets containing raw data and feedback forms.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Conducted at a barangay-level medical facility in Visayan Village, Tagum City, this study employed a purposive sampling design with a minimum sample size of 138 respondents, as determined via G*Power software for a two-tailed correlational test ($\alpha = 0.05$), ($\beta = 0.95$). Eligible participants comprised nursing students currently completing their clinical rotation at the center who had completed at least 72 fieldwork hours, while those failing to meet these thresholds, those with prolonged absences, and individuals who withheld informed consent were excluded. Data collection utilized two established, 5-point Likert scale instruments: the Assessment of Interprofessional Team Collaboration Scale (AITCS) to evaluate collaborative behaviors [Orchard et al., 2012], and the Community Care Competency Scale (CCCS) to measure the students' perceived effectiveness in achieving community health outcomes [Lau et al., 2019].

Data Analysis Methods

Data were recorded and organized to facilitate analysis using SPSS Statistics. The means were calculated to determine the level of interdisciplinary collaboration and the perceived effectiveness of achieving community health goals among nursing students. Furthermore, Pearson's r was used to assess the significant relationship between perceived effectiveness in achieving community health goals and interdisciplinary collaboration among

nursing students and healthcare practitioners. A significance level of 0.05 ($\alpha = 0.05$) was used to test the hypotheses.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The hypothesis of this study was tested at a 0.05 level of significance, stating that there is no significant relationship between the level of interdisciplinary collaboration and perceived effectiveness in achieving community health goals.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study closely adhered to ethical guidelines evaluating autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, confidentiality, privacy, fidelity, and integrity. Participation was completely voluntary, and written informed consent was obtained. Precautions were made to prevent psychological pain, pressure, or coercion. All personal information was securely stored in password-protected digital files and locked storage in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interdisciplinary collaboration among nursing and healthcare professionals showed high operational integration (Overall WM = 4.50), with top-rated indicators in cooperation (WM = 4.52) and partnership (WM = 4.49), suggesting that structured, community-based clinical experiences foster effective, high-level teamwork (Zeydani et al., 2021). The perceived effectiveness of community health goal attainment was high (Overall WM = 4.50), with participants indicating maximum confidence in providing health education and maintaining professional documentation (both WM = 4.71). A strong, statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.05$) exists between collaborative practices and the achievement of community health goals, underscoring the necessity of interprofessional teamwork in improving patient outcomes.

SUMMARY

Interdisciplinary collaboration among nursing and healthcare professionals showed high operational integration (Overall WM = 4.50), with top-rated indicators in cooperation (WM = 4.52) and partnership (WM = 4.49), suggesting that structured, community-based clinical experiences foster effective, high-level teamwork (Zeydani et al., 2021). The perceived effectiveness of community health goal attainment was high (Overall WM = 4.50), with participants indicating maximum confidence in providing health education and maintaining professional documentation (both WM = 4.71). A strong, statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.05$) exists between collaborative practices and the achievement of community health goals, underscoring the necessity of interprofessional teamwork in improving patient outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The study concludes that there is a very high degree of multidisciplinary collaboration in community health nursing between nursing students and healthcare professionals across the partnership, coordination, and cooperation dimensions.
2. Participants believe they are very successful in reaching community health objectives, showing confidence in identifying patient needs, implementing interventions, and promoting health education.
3. The results show a significant correlation between perceived efficacy in accomplishing community health objectives and the degree of interdisciplinary collaboration, highlighting the crucial role of teamwork in ensuring high-quality healthcare delivery.

4. Policies and initiatives that support organized interprofessional collaboration should be strengthened to facilitate precise role definitions and frequent workshops on cooperation and communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Boost Multidisciplinary Cooperation:** Academic institutions and healthcare organizations should implement strategies and initiatives that further encourage collaboration, coordination, and partnerships, such as workshops to strengthen collaborative skills in community health.
2. **Boost the Effectiveness of Community Health:** Training and practice should incorporate programs that emphasize thorough patient evaluations, health education, advocacy, and patient empowerment to maintain high efficacy in community health services.
3. **Strengthen the Connection Between Effectiveness and Collaboration:** Institutions might implement mentorship, peer evaluation, and regular reflective practices to assist teams in realizing how collaboration enhances the efficacy of care.
4. **Create Programs and Policies:** Healthcare institutions should implement clear position definitions, consistent communication protocols, patient-centered care frameworks, and continuous professional development to ensure the delivery of sustainable, high-quality community health services.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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